EXPLORING RECIDIVISM AMONG MALE EX-OFFENDERS IN THE
JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN AREA

By

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Abstract

South Africa continues to experience an increase in crime rate that is arguably linked to the high rate of recidivism. It is of great concern that the key purpose (i.e., to reduce crime) of correctional system is producing the opposite effect of recidivism. It is important not to haphazardly study the high rate of recidivism among male ex-offenders but also to understand their lived experiences. The primary purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of male ex-offenders in the Johannesburg metropolitan areas of Soweto and Ormonde. Literature seems to suggest that factors such as unemployment, peer pressure, the pressure of being a man and the struggles of reintegration, including judgement and acceptance from the community, friends and family among others, contribute to recidivism. The analytical framework for the study comprised two theories, which are Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory and the Labelling Theory by Howard Becker. An interpretivist paradigm was adopted to understand the multiple realities that exist around recidivism of male ex-offenders. A qualitative method was utilised to explore factors that contribute to recidivism. Six participants aged between 32 and 41 years participated in the study. Data was collected using semi structured, open-ended interviews. Due to the sensitivity of this study, snowball and purposive sampling techniques were used to select participants. The participants had previously reoffended more than once due to the challenges, such as the previous criminal record, unemployment, stigmatisation by the community and the struggle of providing for their family. In order to get full insight of the participants lived experiences, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) method was used to analyse data. This method of analysis allowed me to narrow down large amount of data into five meaningful themes, and categories. The identified themes were relevant to the research questions, and these included motivation behind recidivism (theme 1), life in Johannesburg as an ex-offender (theme 2), notions of reoffending (theme 3), reintegration and acceptance – a sense of belonging (theme 4), rejection and lack of support (theme 5). The findings of this research can contribute to existing research that has been conducted by others in exploring the lived experiences of male ex-offenders that have contributed to recidivism.

Keywords: Confinement, correctional facility, criminal record, ex-offender, offender, parole, recidivism, rehabilitation, social reintegration, COVID-19, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

Abstrak

Suid-Afrika ervaar steeds 'n toename in misdaadsyfers wat verband hou met die hoë koerse van herhaling. Dit wek groot kommer dat die sleuteldoel van fasiliteite soos die korrektiewe stelsel om misdaad te verminder, gelei het tot 'n stryd om die gewenste uitkoms te lewer. Dit is belangrik om nie net die hoë koerse van herhaling onder manlike oud-oortreders te bestudeer nie, maar ook om hul geleefde ervarings te verstaan. Die primêre doel van hierdie studie was om die geleefde ervarings van manlike oud-oortreders in die Johannesburgse metropolitaanse gebiede van Soweto en Ormonde te verken. Die studie het gefokus op die begrip van residivisme vanuit die perspektief van manlike eks-oortreders, en hul motivering vir voorheen heroortreding. Verskeie faktore soos werkloosheid, groepsdruk, die druk om 'n man te wees en die stryd van herintegrasie, insluitend oordeel en aanvaarding deur die gemeenskap, vriende en familie onder andere, is geïdentifiseer. Die analitiese raamwerk vir die studie het twee teorieë bestaan, naamlik Albert Bandura se Sosiale Leerteorie en die Etiketteringsteorie deur Howard Becker. Interpretivisme is as die navorsingsparadigma aanvaar om die veelvuldige realiteite wat bestaan met betrekking tot die residivisme van manlike oud-oortreders te verstaan. 'n Kwalitatiewe metode is gebruik om die faktore wat bydraende faktore van oud-oortreders wat heroortree, te verstaan. Ses deelnemers van tussen 32 en 41 jaar het aan hierdie studie deelgeneem. Data is ingesamel met behulp van oop onderhoudvrae oor manlike oud-oortreders. Die deelnemers is gekies deur gebruik te maak van beide die sneeubal- en doelgerigte steekproeftegnieke. Die mans het voorheen meer as een keer heroortree weens die uitdagings van 'n vorige kriminele rekord, werkloosheid, stigmatisering deur die gemeenskap en die stryd om vir hul gesin te voorsien. Die data is ontleed deur gebruik te maak van die Interpretatiewe Fenomenologiese Analise metode om volle insig te kry van die deelnemers se geleefde ervarings en het dan die groot hoeveelheid data in vyf betekenisvolle temas en kategorieë vernou. Die geïdentifiseerde temas was relevant tot die navorsingsvrae, insluitend motivering agter residivisme (Tema 1), lewe in Johannesburg as 'n voormalige oortreder (Tema 2), idees van heroortreding (Tema 3), herintegrasie en aanvaarding – 'n gevoel van behoort (Tema 4), en verwerping en gebrek aan ondersteuning (Tema 5). Die bevindinge van hierdie navorsing kan bydra tot bestaande navorsing wat deur ander gedoen is om die geleefde ervarings van manlike eks-oortreders wat tot herhaling bygedra het, te ondersoek.

*Sleutelwoorde***:** Bevalling, korrektiewe fasiliteit, kriminele rekord, voormalige oortreder, oortreder, parool, herhaling, herhaling, rehabilitasie, sosiale herintegrasie, COVID-19, Interpretatiewe Fenomenologiese Analise.

Kakaretso

Aforika Borwa e tswelapele ho ba le keketseho ya sekgahla sa botlokotsebe se hokahaneng le sekgahla se hodimo sa phetohelo. Hoa tšoenya haholo hore morero oa bohlokoa oa ho ba le litsi tse kang tsamaiso ea khalemelo ho fokotsa botlokotsebe o bakile ntoa ea ho hlahisa sephetho se lakatsehang. Ho bohlokoa ho se ithute feela litekanyetso tse phahameng tsa ho pheta-pheta har'a banna bao e kileng ea e-ba litlokotsebe empa hape le ho utloisisa liphihlelo tsa bona tse phelang. Sepheo sa mantlha sa phuputso ena e ne e le ho hlahloba liphihlelo tsa banna bao e neng e le batlōli ba molao litoropong tsa Johannesburg tsa Soweto le Ormonde. Boithuto bo ne bo tsepamisitse maikutlo ho utloisiseng ho pheta-pheta ho tsoa ponong ea banna bao e kileng ea e-ba batlōli ba molao, le sepheo sa bona sa ho khopisa pele. Lintlha tse 'maloa tse kang ho hloka mosebetsi, khatello ea lithaka, khatello ea ho ba monna le mathata a ho tsosolosoa, ho kenyeletsa kahlolo le ho amoheloa ke sechaba, metsoalle le lelapa har'a tse ling, li ile tsa khetholloa. Moralo oa tlhahlobo oa thuto o na le likhopolo tse peli, e leng Khopolo ea Albert Bandura ea Thuto ea Sechaba le Khopolo ea Ho Ngola ka Howard Becker. Interpretivism e ile ea amoheloa e le paradigm ea lipatlisiso ho utloisisa linnete tse ngata tse teng mabapi le ho pheta-pheta ha batlōli ba molao ba banna. Ho ile ha sebelisoa mokhoa oa boleng ho utloisisa mabaka a tlatselletsang hore batlōli ba khale ba khopise. Barupeluoa ba tšeletseng ba pakeng tsa lilemo tse 32 le 41 ba nkile karolo phuputsong ena. Lintlha li ile tsa bokelloa ho sebelisoa lipotso tsa lipuisano tse bulehileng ho banna bao e neng e le batlōli ba molao. Barupeluoa ba khethiloe ho sebelisoa mekhoa ea ho thella lehloa le mekhoa e metle ea ho etsa lisampole. Banna bana ba ne ba kile ba siteloa ka makhetlo a fetang le le leng ka lebaka la liphephetso tsa tlaleho ea pele ea tlōlo ea molao, ho hloka mosebetsi, ho khesoa ke sechaba le ho loanela ho hlokomela malapa a bona. Lintlha li ile tsa hlahlobjoa ho sebelisoa mokhoa oa Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis ho fumana temohisiso e felletseng ea barupeluoa ba phetseng liphihlelo ebe ba fokotsa palo e kholo ea data ka lihlooho tse hlano tse nang le moelelo, le mekhahlelo. Lihlooho tse khethiloeng li ne li amana le lipotso tsa lipatlisiso, tse kenyeletsang tšusumetso ea ho pheta-pheta (Tema ea 1), bophelo ba Johannesburg e le mofosi oa khale (Tema 2), maikutlo a ho fosa hape (Tema ea 3), ho kopanya bocha le ho amoheloa - maikutlo a ho ba setho sa motho (Morero oa 2). 4), le ho khesoa le ho hloka tšehetso (Theme 5). Liphuputso tsa phuputso ena li ka kenya letsoho liphuputsong tse seng li ntse li le teng tse entsoeng ke ba bang ho hlahloba liphihlelo tse phelang tsa banna bao e kileng ea e-ba batlōli ba molao ba tlatselitseng ho pheta-pheta.

Mantsoe a bohlokoa: Ho koalloa chankaneng, setsi sa khalemelo, rekoto ea botlokotsebe, mofosi oa khale, mofosi, parole, recidivisism, recidivist, recidivist, rekoto ea sechaba, COVID-19, Tlhaloso ea Phenomenological.

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COVID-19   :Coronavirus Disease 2019

CWP   :Community Work Programme

DCS   :Department of Correctional Services

IPA   :Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

NGO   :Non-governmental Organisation

RSA   :Republic of South Africa

SADAG   :South African Depression and Anxiety Group

SAFMH   :South African Federation for Mental Health

UNISA   :University of South Africa

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the background of the study, the rationale for the study, as well as an in-depth explanation of the challenges related to factors that contribute to recidivism in Johannesburg, South Africa. The study aimed to explore the lived experiences of male recidivists residing in the Johannesburg metropolitan area, specifically in Ormonde and Soweto and the meanings they attach to their experiences. In this chapter, the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, research aim, and objectives are explored. The significance of the study and overview of the study are outlined.

1.2 Background to the study

In 1990, South Africa's correctional system changed from a minimal structure to having boards and policies that allow offenders more effective treatment during incarceration (Steinberg, 2005). Similarly, Gear (2007) confirmed that in the past, when offenders were convicted, they were not disaggregated according to gender and their sentences. Furthermore, the offenders were kept in one cell, thus disregarding the danger posed to them based on the type of conviction (Gear, 2007). This meant that both male and female offenders were exposed to sexual abuse and other endangerments such as trauma.

With the advent of a new political dispensation following the 1994 general elections, the Correctional Services Act No. 111 was passed in 1998 to ensure that offenders exercise their constitutional rights (Muntingh, 2010). South African correctional facilities have maximised their structure to protect the offenders' human rights during incarceration. Further implemented, were therapeutic programmes such as offender rehabilitation and reintegration during and after serving their sentences (Singh, 2016).

According to Ngabonziza and Singh (2012), offenders released from South African correctional facilities either reform or relapse, with the latter, associated with high rate of recidivism. The rate of recidivism is a matter of great concern, given the rehabilitation and reintegration programme initiatives that the DCS has put in place to reduce recidivism. Notwithstanding these efforts, the rehabilitation and reintegration programmes still lack sufficient resources that are required to manage these programmes.

The study conducted by Singh (2016) suggests that the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders in South Africa plays a significant role during and after incarceration. According to the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (Department of Correctional Services, 2005), the correctional system is intended to protect and benefit the community, as well as to curtail potential offenders from reoffending in future. Despite the above, the number of offenders in South Africa's correctional facilities still continues to rise exponentially due to offenders that re-offend.

Several studies posit that the general numbers for recidivism are 50% to 70% of ex-offenders who reoffend within three years (Khwela, 2015; Ngabonziza & Singh, 2012). South Africa has the highest rate of incarceration in Africa and exhibited the highest rate of reoffenders (Chikadzi, 2017). Previously, a study by Henggeler and Schoenwald (2011) suggested that approximately 160 000 offenders in South Africa still need to undergo the process of rehabilitation. Against this backdrop, the South African Police Service (SAPS) 2021 Annual Report confirmed that during 2020/2021, a total of 2 797 097 arrests were made for all crimes, compared to 1 133 891 arrests made in 2019/2020, which culminates in an increment of 1 663 206 arrests.

According to the South African Police Service (SAPS) 2021 Annual Report, provinces with the foremost arrests for priority crimes were Gauteng, with 422 840, followed by the Western Cape with 378 267, KwaZulu-Natal with 246 266 and lastly, the Eastern Cape with 176 374 (South African Police Service, 2021). These statistics indicate that the Gauteng Province has the highest number of arrests and this high number (of arrests) could also imply that most perpetrators are ex-offenders committing crimes in the area of Johannesburg.

Two doctoral studies conducted at the Johannesburg's Female Correctional Centre confirmed that female offenders were the minority relative to male offenders (Parry, 2018; Qhogwana, 2017). This trend raises the need to explore the lived experiences of male ex-offenders residing in the Johannesburg metropolitan area to understand the phenomenon of recidivism from the perspective of male ex-offenders who have served sentence in a South African correctional facility more than once.

1.3 Problem statement

One of the core responsibilities of the DCS is to counter re-offending through various initiatives such as the Community Work Programme (CWP) to help ex-offenders reintegrate back into their community; however, the cases of recidivism remain high (Langa & Masuku,

2015). Such attempts have had a positive contribution in some communities, although not enough to decrease recidivism of ex-offenders, particularly in the Johannesburg metropolitan area, and South Africa in general.

The high rate of recidivism negatively impacts the offender, the family, the community, and constitutes an exorbitant cost to the government (Mareda, 2020). For instance, most ex-offenders residing in Gauteng, where I currently reside, seem to have difficulty finding employment, and in many cases, attribute this challenge to their known criminal records, which then makes it difficult for them to secure and maintain employment (Chen & Rine-Reesha, 2022).

Consequently, and based on the above evidence, recidivism is considered a violation of the values of family and society in general. Therefore, in problematising recidivism, this paper argues that if South Africa's correctional system does not serve the main purpose of rehabilitating offenders and reducing crime, then it is fundamentally imperative to conduct research on the male ex-offenders in order to explore recidivism from their perspective.

In support of the notion of reducing the rate of recidivism, the DCS's Annual Report (2020) also reiterates that preventing recidivism can only be achieved through effective interventions that prioritise understanding the factors that potentially contribute to ex-offenders' reoffending. Given the effects of recidivism at the individual, community and societal level, it is vital to explore this phenomenon to add to the existing body of literature. Thus, exploring recidivism from a purely South African perspective may provide an explanation of the motives associated with the high rate of recidivism in the country.

The vigorous ongoing cycle of re-offending is a problem that requires to be continuously studied in order to understand the lived experiences of ex-offenders that lead to recidivism. Recidivism plays a role in the criminal justice system within correctional facilities in South Africa. Recidivism has affected the safety of society and has had an immense impact on the economy in terms of various costs, such as the continuous tax increases (Quan-Baffour & Zawada, 2012).

Furthermore, the resulting increase in crime, as evidenced in recent statistics such as the depicted increase of 5% in all types of crimes every year, has several implications that are considered unsafe for the community (Monyeki, 2021). Although high crime rate and recidivism being two different phenomena, it is difficult to deny the connection between the

two. Throughout this research, the increase in the crime rate results in an exponential increase in recidivism.

Based on the DCS Annual Report (2018), it is evident that the high rate of recidivism has contributed negatively to the ability of the correctional system to effectively rehabilitate offenders. As a result, the DCS is struggling to meet its main objective. The Correctional Services Act (111 of 1998) as well as the White Paper on Corrections (Department of Correctional Services, 2005) sought to reduce recidivism through rehabilitation. However, the rates of recidivism are still high (Murhula et al., 2019).

Despite the numerous attempts and processes of rehabilitation in correctional facilities as methods of trying to reduce rates of recidivism, the high rate of recidivism is common among male ex-offenders (James, 2014). The main objective of correctional facilities is to reduce the crime rate. It is imperative to understand the realities that expose ex-offenders to consider re-offending, by unpacking and investigating the phenomenon of recidivism in South Africa.

The occurrence of recidivism among male ex-offenders could suggest that the underlying experiences may motivate ex-offenders to re-offend after spending time in a correctional facility. The high rate of recidivism has a knock-on-effect on South Africa's socio-political circumstances, poverty, and unemployment, as well as the ineffective rehabilitation and treatment of ex-offenders (Herbig & Hesselink, 2012).

Although several offenders are released from South Africa's correctional facilities yearly, only a few of them have been assisted by the various intervention programmes (Singh, 2016). Most ex-offenders re-offend and find themselves in a correctional facility once again. This negatively impacts the DCS's mission of reducing crime, and may manifest through poor rehabilitation approaches, insufficient resources, overcrowding, and the lack of appropriate support post-release.

Additionally, Naidoo (2021) notes how recidivism seems to be an uncontrollable phenomenon where an increase in re-offenders results in overcrowding of correctional facilities. Furthermore, the study shows that despite the attempt to reduce the high rate of recidivism through rehabilitation programmes during incarceration, there is still the challenge of sustaining the efforts that have been directed towards reducing re-offending in the correctional facility once the offender is faced with the challenges that come with being released and reintegrated into the community. Therefore, DeVeaux (2013) maintains that a solid relationship between the ex-offenders and their community is crucial to the successful

reintegration of the ex-offenders into society to reduce the chances of them reoffending due to fear of being rejected by their society.

Although the above notion is ideal, there seems to be a tendency from the community to reject and judge ex-offenders, which works against the mission of the DCS (DeVeaux, 2013). Innovative rehabilitation and reintegration strategies should be put in place to assist in reducing recidivism. Considering the challenges faced by the DCS (which are addressed in the latter chapters of this dissertation), it is worth noting that ex-offenders encounter numerous challenges such as lack of support from families and communities, unemployment, and low socioeconomic status once they are released from the correctional facility (Jasni, 2020). This study unpacks the various interventions employed in correctional facilities and the challenges that are faced by ex-offenders in their different communities.

1.4 The rationale of the study

According to the White Paper on Corrections (Department of Correctional Services, 2005), rehabilitation aimed at reducing recidivism among ex-offenders is not only the responsibility of the DCS, but it is also a societal responsibility. However, the high rate of recidivism makes it hard for the DCS to achieve this objective (Murhula et al., 2019). Therefore, I, as an emerging scholar within the discipline of Psychology and a member of society, conducted this study with the aim of exploring the lived experiences of a group of male ex-offenders residing in the Johannesburg metropolitan area, and the meaning they attach to the recidivism experience. Based on the study by Ngabonziza and Singh (2012), recidivism can be attributed to the stigmatisation and mistreatment that ex-offenders receive from the community after serving their time in a correctional facility. Inevitably, this affects a considerable number of ex-offenders who succumb to community pressure and subsequently reoffend.

The above evidence implies that there is a gap between the interventions implemented by the DCS and the challenges encountered by ex-offenders upon reintegrating into society. Chikadzi (2017) emphasises that additional studies should be conducted on the challenges faced by ex-offenders once they have been released into society. Several factors could lead to desistance, including the support that ex-offenders receive, the environment, and socioeconomic factors. Oyola (2019) reflects on the sad reality of increasing rate of recidivism by ex-offenders, despite DCS's several interventions and rehabilitation programmes.

According to a study conducted by Rix and Adams (2019), which focused on exploring male ex-offender's experiences within Johannesburg, when reintegrating back into society, there is a wide range of challenges which include but not limited to stigmatisation, unemployment and challenges around access to social services. Based on the studies that have been covered so far and yet to be covered throughout the dissertation, it is evident that male ex-offenders face numerous challenges that require further research and interventions.

The study conducted by Louw and Kathree (2018) further unpacks another challenge that ex-offenders face in South Africa, which is unemployment. The study shows that it is a challenge for ex-offenders to find stable employment due to continuous discrimination. Employment can be a critical factor in reducing recidivism amongst male ex-offenders, thus making this study crucial to better understand and address the stumbling blocks of employment within the population.

Seedat (2017) conducted a study that reviewed the most recent challenges affecting the current and future prospects of ex-offenders. The study found that there is a need to look into more challenges that male ex-offenders may face, such as mental health, rejection from loved ones and the community, and substance abuse. Due to the many complex challenges that male ex-offenders may experience, it is important to conduct continuous research to identify interventions that are tailored to meet the needs of male ex-offenders.

In addition, this study addresses the relevance and significance of developing a better understanding of the lived experiences of ex-offenders which have potentially led to the high rate of recidivism amongst male ex-offenders in Johannesburg. The challenges faced by ex-offenders re-entering society, amongst other challenges faced by ex-offenders after spending time in the correctional facility, have been shown to increase the rates of recidivism (Salem et al., 2013).

1.5 Significance of the study

In the context of the present study, I acknowledge that a variety of factors (social, historical, economic, and political) may be associated with recidivism; hence, the study is important in two ways. First, the study is grounded in the discipline of Psychology and makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the reasons behind the high rates of recidivism among a group of male ex-offenders who have reoffended. Secondly, the study can contribute to the discipline of Criminology, especially towards our understanding of the contextual factors and the motives associated with recidivism.

According to Cronje (2017), studying recidivism is important because it provides valuable knowledge which contributes to the effectiveness of the current interventions being implemented by the DCS. Therefore, conducting research on recidivism will likely improve our understanding of the lived experiences of male ex-offenders who have reoffended, how they make sense of reoffending and their motives for doing so. Lastly, Cronje (2017) adds that studies on recidivism have the potential to impact the interventions designed specifically for correctional facilities and this contributes towards policy development. The next section reflects on the research questions, aim, and objectives of the study.

1.6 Research questions

This study sought to explore the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of male ex-offenders who have reoffended and what meanings do they attach to these experiences?
2. How do male ex-offenders who have reoffended make sense of recidivism?
3. What motives do male ex-offenders who have reoffended ascribe to their experience of recidivism?

1.7 Aim and objectives of the study

The study's objectives were:

1. To explore the lived experiences of male ex-offenders who have reoffended and the meanings attached to these experiences.
2. To explore how male ex-offenders who have reoffended make sense of recidivism.
3. To determine the motives that ex-offenders who have reoffended ascribe to their experience of recidivism.

1.8 Study site

The study was conducted in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa. Johannesburg (popularly known as the "city of gold") is largely perceived as the economic hub of Africa and is located in the wealthiest province of the country, Gauteng. It has a population of almost five million (Statistics South Africa, 2017), the largest of any South African city because many people migrate from other provinces in South Africa and elsewhere to look for better economic opportunities. Two study sites were selected, which are Soweto and Ormonde, south of Johannesburg. Soweto is a township which is in the south-western side of the

Johannesburg metropolitan area and situated about 20 kilometres south-west of the Johannesburg city centre. Ormonde is a suburb which is located south of Johannesburg and roughly 10 kilometres south-west of the Johannesburg City Centre within the Gauteng Province. Gauteng is situated in the Highveld and is considered South Africa's smallest province in terms of land area.

1.9 Definition of keywords

The terms used throughout the study as defined below are discussed in detail in chapter 2.

Confinement: According to Mabuza and Roelofse (2013), confinement refers to the imprisonment and detention of an offender until their sentence comes to an end.

Correctional facility: This is defined as an area in which individuals are legally incarcerated for an offence or, in some cases, several unlawful acts they are believed to have committed while awaiting trial (Singh, 2016).

Criminal record: This is a person's collection or record of all criminal offences (Prescott & Starr, 2020).

Ex-offender: This is an individual who is no longer on parole and whose probation period has come to an end (Langa et al., 2019). Similarly, James (2014) defines an ex-offender as an individual who has spent time in a correctional facility after being convicted of a crime and then released after serving their sentence.

Offender: Refers to any person who has been convicted and/or sentenced to a term of incarceration (Murhula et al., 2019).

Parole: This is a treatment programme in which an offender serving a sentence is, after serving part of a sentence, conditionally released under supervision to spend the remainder of his/her sentence outside of the correctional facility (Lekalakala, 2016).

Recidivism: Schoeman (2010) defines recidivism as a "behaviour process or pattern whereby an offender, who was previously found guilty of a crime and sentenced in a court of law, commits a further unspecified offence and is found guilty of this offence, and receives a further undetermined sentence in a court of law." (p. 91).

Recidivist: Anderson (2019) describes a recidivist as an individual that was previously found guilty of a crime and sentenced in a court of law, and who, upon release, is re-incarcerated and re-convicted for the commission of a new crime.

Rehabilitation: This refers to the application of therapy, education and training for managing offenders with a view to alter their behaviour to law abiding citizens (Vandala, 2019).

Social reintegration: Maruna (2012) describes this term as the process that prepares and facilitates offenders for their eventual release and accentuates the maintenance of the ex-offender's ties with their family and community.

1.10 Overview of the structure of the dissertation

Chapter 1 of the dissertation presents the introduction to the study, the research problem, the rationale of the study, the research questions, the aim, and objectives of the study. In chapter 2, the review of the literature and the theoretical framework of the study are presented. Chapter 3 presents the methodology where the processes and methods involved in conducting the research study are outlined. The findings are presented and discussed in chapter 4. Finally, chapter 5 outlines the conclusions as per the objectives and the limitations of the study. It further provides recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the problem statement, the rationale for the study, the research question, aims, and objectives of the study. Furthermore, the overview of the dissertation was presented. The present chapter begins with a brief discussion of recidivism and the socio-economic context within which ex-offenders are required to navigate after they are released from correctional centres. This is followed by the exposition of strategies used to discourage ex-offenders from re-offending and whether they work or not. I then move to discuss challenges faced by correctional services and how these hinder one of the aims of DCS to reintegrate ex-offenders into society. I conclude the chapter by discussing the theoretical framework informing this study, which incorporates the social learning theory and the labelling theory. I juxtapose these theories against the literature on the experiences of ex-offenders particularly after they have been released from the correctional centres.

2.2 High rate of recidivism

The number of ex-offenders engaging in crime has been on the rise in South Africa, with Johannesburg being a major hotspot (Lekalakala, 2016). Recidivism is one of the leading concerns within the criminal equity framework and remains a common problem in South Africa (Govender, 2017; Mareda, 2020). This problem affects the family, the community, and the government, indicating that recidivism is a serious predicament that disrupts the social order and governments throughout the world (Mareda, 2020). Some studies (Dadashazar, 2017; Lekalakala, 2016; Mdakane, 2016) outline some of the theories that explain the reasons behind recidivism. These studies elucidate how ex-offenders re-offend despite going through a rigorous rehabilitation process of transforming, from ex-offenders to law-abiding citizens.

According to Lekalakala (2016), the increasing number of ex-offenders who reoffend should be well-managed as it contributes to the overpopulation of correctional facilities and affects communities and the country's overall growth and stability. Correctional facilities for both males and females are overcrowded, and the conditions in male correctional facilities are severe (Agboola et al., 2017). Therefore, the focus on male recidivism is significant, as there is a higher rate of recidivism and subsequent correctional facilities overpopulation for male ex-offenders than female ex-offenders in South Africa (Iyobebe, 2021; Khwela, 2014; Mdakane, 2016).

A study conducted in Musina, Limpopo, in South Africa, on the psychological effects of recidivism on males, found that the high rate of recidivism is due to peer pressure, lack of education and unemployment, substance abuse, poverty, child neglect, poor parenting and supervision (Mulaudzi, 2017). Various factors contribute to recidivism in South Africa. Below, I discuss some of these factors.

2.2.1 Poor socioeconomic status (SES) of the families

Ex-offenders generally return to criminal activities after leaving the correctional facility due to the low socioeconomic status of their families (Adu-Boateng, 2019; Bello, 2017). As a consequence, ex-offenders may feel pressured to engage in crime after leaving the correctional facility (Bello, 2017). Oruta's (2016) study showed a statistically significant link between recidivism and socioeconomic variables, implying that socioeconomic variables such as gender, age, education level, employment situation, and housing have an impact on the likelihood of reoffending.

Some ex-offenders tend to commit crime to support their families (Soeker, 2014). Paradoxically, the very people that reject the ex-offender could be the very reason that the ex-offender resorte to crime to support. Albertus (2010, as cited in Langa & Masuku, 2015), concurs that families often find it hard to accept ex-offenders while potential employers discriminate against them. This lack of acceptance is one of the factors that can contribute to ex-offenders re-offending (Langa & Masuku, 2015). Therefore, the challenge of ex-offenders failing to find job opportunities after they have been released from the correctional facility may be a big hurdle (Chikadzi, 2017). Thus, ex-offender's failure to fend for themselves in the current South African economy potentially leads the former ex-offender to re-offend.

2.2.2 Lack of community and family support

Family and community support are vital components for the reintegration of ex-offenders into the community (Dockery, 2019; DuFour et al., 2015). Ex-offenders face barriers to reintegration into communities, including negative public attitudes (Rade et al., 2016). Therefore, lack of family and community support can be considered to be one of the factors contributing to high rate of recidivism (DuFour et al., 2015). Due to a lack of support and trust from the community, ex-offenders find themselves frustrated and isolated. In turn, they seek consolation from other ex-offenders and offenders in the community (Besin-Mengla, 2020). This means that ex-offenders find a sense of belonging in a community of other ex-offenders instead, which can be considered a risk likely to increase the rate of recidivism.

Literature indicates that family relationships and family support mechanisms are vital in the successful re-entry of ex-offenders into the community (Derricks, 2015). In this sense, the first platform of support after their incarceration and release can be seen as the family. Thus, the family is regarded as the primary entity for social interactions where ex-offenders may experience acceptance and support (Nchabeleng, 2018). Therefore, without the support of the family and the community, ex-offenders might find it difficult to reintegrate.

Some ex-offenders perceive themselves as outcasts and find themselves engaging in crime, which becomes the bane of their existence (Honeywell, 2021). Consequently, an ex-offender's choice to engage in criminal behaviour leads them back to a correctional centre (DeVeaux, 2013). Additionally, Besin-Mengla (2020) states that ex-offenders are still labelled offenders even after rehabilitation, making them prone to reoffending. Nonetheless, some studies have shown that family and community support have some direct and indirect effect on recidivism (Berg & Huebner, 2011; Taylor, 2015).

Mdakane (2022) postulates that various studies in West Africa reveal that social rejection, such as community and family rejection, is a challenge amongst ex-offenders. Similarly, Chakadzi (2017) argues that most ex-offenders are stereotyped by the community, thus ostracising the former. This negatively affects ex-offenders, making them feel as though they do not belong, which could lead to reoffending. Thus, when ex-offenders feel rejected by the community, they subsequently find acceptance among other ex-offenders, making them likely to reoffend, which in turn results in high rate of recidivism (DuFour et al., 2015). Furthermore, in some circumstances, good community support may decrease the rate of recidivism among ex-offenders (Besin-Mengla, 2020; DuFour et al., 2015; Mdakane, 2022).

Among other findings, Langa et al. (2016) observed that most of the cases involving ex-offenders from Black townships, there is a very close relationship between the families of ex-offenders and the community such that the community is aware of the ex-offender having spent time in a correctional facility. This results in the community rejecting the ex-offender (Eshareturi & Serrant, 2018), which makes the reintegration process difficult. Concurring with these observations, Glover et al. (2018) "found inadequate support from family, stigma by society, lack of job opportunities, lack of income and accommodation as the most prominent risk factors of recidivism among offenders in the Kumasi Central Prisons despite the important roles played by Christian churches through their prison ministries" (p. 1). This shows that there is a lack of integration in communities.

2.2.3 Lack of education

According to research, lack of education is one of the factors contributing to high rates of recidivism amongst male ex-offenders in South Africa (Tegeng & Abadi, 2018). Lack of skills and education makes it difficult for offenders to find employment or other legitimate means of making money (Payton, 2021). Other researchers suggest that lack of education also contributes to offender recidivism in South Africa, culminating in offenders becoming more difficult to rehabilitate (Gray, 2021; Vandala, 2019).

Lockwood et al.'s (2012) longitudinal study conducted in the United States of America found that offenders' education and post-release employment were significantly correlated with recidivism, regardless of the offender's classification. This study also revealed that employment status, age of the offender, and the offender's level of formal education are the most important predictors of recidivism among released offenders, regardless of their type of offense. This implies that the ex-offender's level of formal education is an important predictor for re-entry because it has an effect on both post-release employment and recidivism (Magee, 2021).

However, offenders who register for formal education still experience challenges (Mkosi, 2013). These include a lengthy approval process for stationery; the correctional facility not being a conducive environment for learning; poor infrastructure; offenders' limited access to technology, as well as the absence of support. These challenges may discourage offenders from enrolling in formal education thus, increasing the levels of recidivism (La Roi, 2022). According to a study conducted by Jacobs et al. (2017) on human rights of ex-offenders and access to education in South Africa, when ex-offenders do not have access to education, it contributes to recidivism. This study reveals that access to education is one of the factors contributing to recidivism.

2.2.4 Inability to secure employment

The rate of unemployment in South Africa was 34.5% in the first quarter of 2022 and may contribute to the high rate of offenders reoffending (Koloane & Bodhlyera, 2022). Lucas (2021) found that the unemployment of previously incarcerated people, poor qualifications, low budget funding for education within DCS, vindictive approaches to crimes without proper rehabilitation, emotional, social, and psychological support, all contribute to recidivism in South Africa. The same author suggests that some individuals may consider offending as the only way of making ends meet before and after spending time in a correctional facility, which

explains the high rate of recidivism. At the same time, even though some ex-offenders have the necessary skills and qualifications, there are still very few employment opportunities available for them (Nixon, 2022).

Moreover, Flake (2015) suggests that a prison term has the potential to further impair existing job skills and integrate offenders into criminal networks. An example is a case in Chikadzi's (2017) study where one participant secured three different jobs but was subsequently fired when employers learnt about the participant's criminal record. Another study conducted in the United States of America on infinite punishment and criminal records by Ispa-Landaand and Loeffler (2016) found that the participating ex-offenders had tried, but failed, to persuade potential employers and landlords to overlook their criminal records to secure employment. Furthermore, they were distressed by the stigmatisation they constantly experienced (Ispa-Landa & Loeffler, 2016). Similarly, I have personally watched my ex-offender cousin struggling to find employment, and on many occasions, ultimately resorted to crime, in a desperate effort to provide for his family.

Most employers conduct background checks on potential employees. As a recruitment manager who hires people for a living and has done recruitment for various companies, it is part of the standard recruitment process to conduct background checks which include a criminal check for most companies. Ex-offenders with a criminal record are less employable than other job seekers (Brown, 2011). Similarly, Flake (2015) found that ex-offenders know that any term is essentially a life sentence as they must continue serving long after their obligation to society has been fulfilled, due to the persistent stigma and stereotype about a criminal record.

The Criminal Procedure Amendment Act 65 of 2008 states that an ex-offender may apply for their criminal record to be removed after ten years of their conviction (Pinard, 2010). This is applicable if the ex-offender has not been convicted of any other offence during the ten years. The ten-year period is lengthy, considering that ex-offenders must provide for themselves and their families. Findings from a study conducted by Butler et al. (2020) shows how the American public is in favour of providing second chances to ex-offenders, allowing the expungement of previous criminal offences when there is a low risk of public crime in the society. Consequently, a study conducted in South Africa alludes on how a criminal record should not be an automatic disqualification from employment as criminal records are unique to each case (Mdakane, 2022).

2.3 Strategies used to discourage ex-offenders from re-offending

There are different types of strategies to dissuade ex-offenders from re-offending, such as education, employment, community support, family support and rehabilitation. Below, I explain some of these strategies.

2.3.1 Access to education

Education is one of the key interventions that has been seen to reduce the high rate of recidivism (Payton, 2021). Achebe (2021) identifies higher education and positive developments as strategies designed to achieve current programmes and interventions to improve access to education for incarceration. However, Mkosi (2013) highlights that managing schools in the correctional service environment is challenging because education is not prioritised. A quasi-experimental study done by Kosyakova and Bills (2021) suggests that education programmes with more direct content or skills linked to employment would increase the overall impact of education on successful re-entry into society.

According to Mkosi (2013), education in the correctional facility must be in line with the education system in society at large such that it could aid in lowering crime and recidivism rates. Along the same lines, Vandala (2019) viewed correctional education an altar for good behaviour, which boosts self-esteem, lowers recidivism rates, and helps ex-offenders become law-abiding citizens after being released. In addition, Mkosi (2013) affirmed that education in correctional facilities has driven recidivism rates down and helped to prepare offenders for the outside world. Payton (2021) believes reducing recidivism through correctional education may advance the betterment of society by providing opportunities for ex-offenders to make positive changes in their lives, so that they become productive members of the community upon their release.

2.3.2 The employability or unemployability of ex-offenders

Attaining employment has been recognised as a crucial turning point in the lives of ex-offenders (Schnepel, 2017; Yu, 2018). Access to employment during probation decreases the chances of offenders committing crimes again (Cottle, 2017; Ndike, 2014). Correctional services run education and training programmes to help offenders develop job skills during incarceration, which can increase employment opportunities (Schnepel, 2017; Valentine & Redcross, 2015; Yu, 2018). However, analyses of these initiatives have produced contradictory findings. Some studies have found a favourable impact of employment opportunities on

recidivism (Ramakers et al., 2016; Valentine & Redcross, 2015) while others have observed a minimal effect (Cook et al., 2015; Yu, 2018).

However, this does not mean that attempts by ex-offenders to find employment do not lead to some ex-offenders staying away from reoffending; it simply means the rate of change of ex-offenders that find employment moving away from reoffending is not as high as those that still go back to reoffending. This means employment opportunities for ex-offenders positively impact the rate at which ex-offenders reoffend, but simply not at the desired rate. Moreover, Schnepel's (2017) comparison of incarceration experiences in Norway and Texas revealed major differences.

As an example, incarceration in Norway focuses on rehabilitation and devotes substantial resources to health, education, and employment programmes. Therefore, it increases the quality of employment opportunities in contrast to Texas where incarceration is without access to extensive health, education, and/or employment services (Bhuller et al., 2016; Mueller-Smith, 2014). Leasure and Andersen (2016) suggest that better labour market results can be achieved by supplying companies with "certificates of release" that show when an ex-offender is rehabilitated, thus relieving employers of any future liability associated with hiring such an applicant.

Another study conducted in South Africa by Kriegler and Kriegler (2015) focuses on the major development area in South Africa that needs to be addressed in order to help ex-offenders find employment through educating employers on the benefits of hiring ex-offenders and educating employers on stigma and negative perceptions placed on ex-offenders. Practically, this could assist ex-offenders to provide for their loved ones and reduce the need to reoffend in order to provide for their families.

2.3.3 Social reintegration and rehabilitation

Social reintegration refers to the assistance provided to offenders upon their release from correctional facilities as they re-enter into society (Smith, 2020). The concept of social reintegration of offenders is used interchangeably with re-entry of ex-offenders (Antwi, 2015). According to the above definition and synonym, social reintegration ensures that ex-offenders successfully re-enter society. The fight against recidivism calls for stringent rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders into society. When ex-offenders are properly rehabilitated, the possibility of re-offending is minimised (Smith, 2020). Therefore, social reintegration might play a significant role in reducing recidivism. Muleya (2021) and Kaplan and Nussio (2018)

concur that social reintegration is essential in lowering recidivism and combating crime; therefore, the process should be prioritised. For this reason, the main objective of the DCS in South Africa is to facilitate the reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-offenders.

The reintegration of past offenders into society has been a great challenge in reducing recidivism (Berghuis, 2018). After incarceration and rehabilitation, ex-offenders are (supposedly) expected to be transformed. However, most offenders encounter serious social integration challenges, such as stigmatisation and exclusion from their families and communities, which negatively affect their capacity to find employment or housing, go back to school, or restore their personal and social capital (Moore & Tangney, 2017). These challenges are detrimental to the transformation of ex-offenders and may result in an ex-offender relapsing into criminal behaviour. Therefore, the community and family of ex-offenders play an important role in mitigating the challenges that ex-offenders face in their reintegration process. Without support to address these challenges, ex-offenders run the risk of falling victim to a cycle of failed social integration, recidivism, and social rejection (Chin & Dandurand, 2012).

Some communities are more supportive of ex-offenders than others. Where the community and family members are supportive, Bosman et al. (2017) report reduced rates of recidivism. Additionally, instrumental support from family and community, such as housing, employment, and financial support, relates to decreased offending and delinquency (Hlavka et al., 2015). In efforts to assist ex-offenders reintegrate successfully into the community, Langa and Masuku (2015) explored the execution of the CWP to prevent crime and reduce recidivism, focusing on ex-offenders who have reoffended. Interventions such as the CWP are meant to decrease the number of offenders or ex-offenders from reoffending.

The ex-offender involvement in the programme had a positive impact on their lives and has provided a platform for smoother social reintegration. According to Langa and Masuku (2015), the CWP has not only helped ex-offenders to acquire new skills, but it has also contributed positively to other people's lives through campaigns that address criminal behaviour, such as domestic violence and motivated others in the community to stay away from criminal behaviour.

2.4 Challenges encountered by the Department of Correctional Services

Criminology is a crucial aspect in the rehabilitation of ex-offenders, as it contributes to evaluating and understanding criminal behaviour (Hesselink & Booyens, 2014). Therefore,

criminologists play a significant role in reducing recidivism by assisting ex-offenders to positively change their behaviour and reintegrate successfully into their communities (Murhula et al., 2019). Criminologists use interventions that aim to transform previous offenders into law-abiding citizens. Although South African correctional facilities administer similar rehabilitation programmes to reduce the high rates of recidivism (Cullen, 2011), the system in place seems to fail to address the specific needs of male ex-offenders. As such, the correctional and rehabilitation approach is not as effective as it should be in order to reduce cases of recidivism to avoid an increase despite attempts in reducing rates, the rates of recidivism are still high.

The DCS, with its hopes of transforming the ex-offender's future narrative from a cycle of reoffending, has adopted the needs-based model. This approach targets specific factors as a measure to reduce recidivism. Services offered by programmes in the needs-based model include counselling, social work, healthcare, skill-building, and spiritual care to ensure that all offenders are positively developed and supported while they are in correctional facilities (Lotter, 2018). However, the DCS faces systemic issues that make it difficult for it to uphold its legal obligations for the rehabilitation of offenders and communicate its moral message (Murhula et al., 2019). According to Murhula et al. (2019), the systemic issues include poor rehabilitation approach, resource constraints, correctional centre overcrowding, deficiency of staff, and lack of ex-offender support upon release from correctional centres.

The DCS has gone an extra mile in putting measures and strategies in place such as rehabilitation programmes (psychological services, skills development, spiritual care and social work services) that can be used to transform ex-offenders into individuals who can potentially contribute positively to society (Lotter, 2018). The rationale for equipping ex-offenders with skills is centred on the belief that it will allow them to be better prepared for reintegration into society. The correctional facilities are also expected to equip the ex-offenders with skills on how to handle challenges they will likely come across once they have been released from the correctional facilities. Despite all these attempts, the rate of the positive effect of these attempts is still not as fast as one would ideally like in order to reduce the rates of recidivism.

Unfortunately, the DCS has to date failed to reach its main objective to reduce recidivism and this is partially due to the lack of integration between its approach to the problem and the reality of the community the ex-offender reintegrates into (Maruna et al., 2019). The situation

has gotten worse, with more ex-offenders going into correctional facilities and those who are released being more likely to re-offend within a short period (Baffour, 2021).

2.5 Theoretical framework

Two theories were used in this study, namely the Social Learning Theory and Labelling Theory. These theories are interrelated in the sense that they point to social contexts as the basis of social behaviour. The theories help to unpack the motivation behind male ex-offenders who find themselves reoffending after spending time in a correctional facility and then being reintegrated into society once again. While the social learning theory perceives human behaviour as an outcome of observational learning, the labelling theory perceives human behaviour as a result of internalising and living out labels given by society (Akers, 2017). These theories are discussed individually as applied in the current study.

2.5.1 The Social Learning Theory

The Social Learning Theory (SLT) by Albert Bandura explains how individuals learn from one another by looking at what others do and imitating what they do (Bandura & Hall, 2018). The theory considers the attention, memory, and motivation of people (Akers & Jennings, 2015). The social learning theory suggests that human beings learn behavioural patterns from the social environment through observation (Akers & Jennings, 2015). For instance, the social learning theory refers to a crime that is learned as something that can be developed in a social environment. The social learning theory assists in exploring the recidivism of ex-offenders as they observe different behavioural patterns from their interaction with other ex-offenders. This theory is relevant to this study as it gives a clear picture of the context in which recidivism among male ex-offenders may take place.

The social learning theory can also be used to explain the behaviour that filters throughout society. For instance, a community member may treat an ex-offender (still) as an unreformed offender; this could arguably then lead to other community members learning the behaviour and replicating it. For example, if a group of influential community members such as councillors or community leaders treat an ex-offender as unreformed, the whole community might start behaving the same way. This behaviour may become acceptable and a norm in the community overtime. In the same vein, the social learning theory is relevant to this study. Hypothetically, a young man could learn criminal behaviour from other men or women (who are criminals) within society so that he grows up partaking in crime simply through learning this behaviour from other individuals. This aspect of the social learning theory has also been

described as copying the behaviours of others, which results in reinforcing consequences such as reoffending. Certain behaviours related to crime are copied from others, thus resulting in a satisfying feeling and repetition of the crime, which explains the high rates of recidivism (Astray-Caneda, 2011).

According to Anyango (2017), the social learning theory emphasises the influence that an individual has been exposed to within their family and peer groups as well as other factors in their society. The theory places great emphasis on internal and cognitive factors such as the attitudes, beliefs, and thinking styles of individuals being most impactful. This theory explains the notion of a crime stemming from an individual that identifies themselves with real or fictitious individuals whose behaviour in perpetrating crime seems acceptable or even admirable. According to Ilan (2017), crime can and has been considered a cool trend amongst those in communities openly exposed to crime. Despite this not being the focus of the study, it draws attention to the importance of conducting research among male ex-offenders, with an attempt of bringing awareness to avoid a situation where young men or boys perceive ex-offenders or offenders as role models.

The correctional facility may offer a suitable environment for learning to take place among offenders (Anyango, 2017), but it could also not be considered positive learning. For example, an offender serving a sentence for one offence may learn a different offence from a fellow offender during their time in a correctional facility. This is relevant to the study in that an offender might even learn from other offenders and leave the correctional facility having learned other offenders.

Social learning occurs through communication and interaction (Chen & Rine-Reesha, 2022). Therefore, the communication or interaction that offenders have with other offenders within the correctional facility and the interaction that ex-offenders may have with other ex-offenders in their community may be a contributing factor to the high rate of recidivism. Correctional facilities may be fostering an environment for negative learning, which results in some re-offenders resorting to much more serious crimes because of their interaction and learning from other offenders or ex-offenders. The social learning theory is relevant to this study because it is through the learned experiences from those around ex-offenders that might lead to the latter reoffending, essentially increasing the high rate of recidivism.

2.5.2 Labelling Theory

The Labelling Theory (LT) was proposed by Howard Becker in 1963. The theory focuses on how social labelling contributes to the growth of crime and deviance. According to Bernburg (2019), the labelling theory postulates that although what society considers taboo behaviour might initially be caused by a variety of factors and circumstances, once someone has been classified as what society considers taboo, they frequently experience new issues because of how others and themselves react to the stigma associated with what society considers taboo label.

The labelling theory considers that applying a label from childhood right through to adulthood has a long-term negative effect on the individual. Multiple related findings have shown evidence of the profound impact that labelling could have on individuals, as formal labelling has been shown to have a significant effect on a child's future education and employment prospects, which could lead to continued crime-related behaviour (Bernburg, 2019).

According to Anyango (2017), the labelling theory postulates that certain members of society can construct and relate attributes to other members of society at large. This theory identifies views of individuals that have taken part in behaviour that is considered unacceptable in a community such as reoffending, and the tendency to make those individuals feel excluded from society (Anyango, 2017). The labelling theory gives context to the importance of reintegration of ex-offenders into society and, in particular, avoiding recidivism.

The labelling theory conceptualises an individual's identity through their attitude, values, and behaviour about what is deemed normal and abnormal in the community. Individuals that feel excluded from society are generally those that internalise the label that society has given them (Liem & Weggemans, 2018). For example, an ex-offender may internalise being labelled as an offender. According to Atkinson (2018), it is unfair and discriminatory to continue viewing an ex-offender as an offender after completion of their sentence. The reality is that it is not a personal matter; society has made it a norm to consider and label an ex-offender a "criminal" and this treatment could result in the ex-offender reoffending. This theory speaks to an ex-offender that may be trying their best to change their lives yet still being seen in the same light, being the first to be accused of crimes that take place within a community simply because of the history of criminal behaviour. This could contribute to the ex-offender succumbing to the labelled behaviour, essentially resulting in continuous recidivism.

The labelling theory is considered important in this study as it has the potential to explain why ex-offenders find it hard to reintegrate upon their release from the correctional facility due to having been labelled by society as "criminals" – which could be considered a factor that contributes to recidivism. Being an ex-offender is associated with several negative labels and characteristics such as "dangerous" and "dishonest", and this automatically leads to the exclusion of ex-offenders from legitimate aspects of society such as job opportunities (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018).

The outcome of labelling can lead to recidivism if the ex-offender has not been well prepared or been afforded effective rehabilitation or even simply with the struggle of putting theory from prior training into action in difficult situations faced by the ex-offender. I have personally experienced this through a known family ex-offender, that even if the ex-offenders have been well prepared through rehabilitation programmes, the pressures, treatment, and ongoing labelling from society can push the ex-offenders to re-offend. This eradicates all the gains that would have been achieved by the ex-offender through all the rehabilitation platforms such as counselling, skills development and reintegration programmes that they have been afforded. Labelling ex-offenders can make it difficult for them to reintegrate into society, which may result in relapsing to wrongdoing while attempting to change the past into a brighter future that does not involve crime (Williams, 2021).

Once labelled, members of society could eventually respond to the ex-offender in a way that creates an expectation for the person to act in accordance with the expected role the label is supposed to confer on them. In this case, someone could be labelled a criminal instead of being seen as an individual that has been rehabilitated and ready to make a new start. These expectations compel the affected persons to act in ways that are consistent with the label as their deviation from the label will still be interpreted as conforming to that label. In other words, the ex-offender does not have any option other than behaving according to the expectations the label creates. Thus, tagging an ex-offender as a "criminal'' has the capacity to make the person act in accordance with the label as the society does not expect anything good from such a person other than a crime.

Both theories were useful in exploring recidivism of male ex-offenders based on their lived experiences as male ex-offenders. As the focus of the study was exploring recidivism of male ex-offenders, social learning theory and the labelling theory provide the basis for understanding and investigating recidivism in the social context.

As ex-offenders attempt to find their place in society once again after incarceration, they must be surrounded by people who will contribute positively to their reintegration into society. Considering the big adjustment that ex-offenders make after being released from the correctional facility, having role models that guide ex-offenders is important as well as being in the presence of other male ex-offenders, to help them learn new attributes for their continued survival and successful reintegration into society (Akers & Jennings, 2015). Ex-offenders and re-offenders should not be left to fend for themselves; neither should they spend their time in the company of people who are likely to influence them to re-offend or label them, making them feel negatively judged.

Therefore, society must play a leading role in ensuring that ex-offenders are welcomed back in a positive way, in order for the latter to become productive members of the community. Reintegration into society is not an easy process and it ought to be done correctly for it to work successfully.

2.6 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the factors related to recidivism were discussed in detail. These included the employability or unemployability of ex-offenders, the ex-offender's general state of education, as well as the family and community perceptions relating to previously incarcerated individuals. The social learning theory and the labelling theory were juxtaposed against experiences of (ex) offenders prior to committing a crime, and post release, when they re-enter into society. In the next chapter, the research design and methods adopted in this study are discussed in detail.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the literature review and theoretical framework underpinning this study. In this chapter, I discuss the rationale for using a qualitative methodology, and the process followed in selecting study participants and gathering data. Methodology is defined as a particular strategy that is used by the researcher during a study (Howell, 2012). In this chapter, the research method is discussed in detail. Details of the interview process are also discussed, including scheduling the open-ended interviews, conducting the interviews, and transcribing audio recordings of the interviews to text. IPA was used to analyse the findings of this study. Measures of trustworthiness and ethical issues will be further elucidated in the latter part of the chapter.

3.2 Selection of study participants

According to Sargeant (2012), the process of selecting participants is vital in ensuring that suitable participants can take part in and fulfil the purpose of the study. Study participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling, which are non-probability sampling techniques.

Purposive sampling is defined by Etikan et al. (2016) as deliberately choosing specific participants to take part in the research because they are directly related, are a good fit or are relevant to the study. It is also called judgement sampling due to the direct intention of selecting participants that have the qualities that fulfil the purpose of the study. Another name for this type of sampling is purposeful sampling, as it involves purposefully selecting participants that are aligned with the criteria of the study. It is known for sampling to acquire specific knowledge or information (Ranjbar et al., 2012). Purposive sampling methods are often focused on saturation, which means that data is collected continuously until enough information has been acquired for the study, and views are repeated (Etikan et al., 2016). Snowballing sampling was also used as the second approach.

Snowball sampling is the process of obtaining participants through networking and referrals. This simply means that the participants were acquired through someone that I knew by referring me to the other participant that met the minimum requirements to take part in the study. Snowball sampling is one of the most popular methods used in qualitative research (Parker et al., 2019). Both snowball and purposive sampling techniques were appropriate for

this study because the target population was not well-defined, and I knew a few individuals who could make referrals.

In terms of purposive sampling, I approached participants in the Johannesburg metropolitan area within the Soweto area. One participant came from Dobsonville Extension 2, and another one from Orlando West, and the other four participants were from the Ormonde Extension 16. These participants met the requirements of the study, as set out in the inclusion criteria of the study. Snowball sampling was then utilised by asking the participants recruited through purposive sampling to refer more participants who fit the inclusion criteria. Thus, the study participants were selected using both snowball and purposive sampling. The two sampling techniques are compatible, given that purposive sampling is used to describe the participant that I desire to generate data that is relevant in answering the key research question, while snowballing is a strategy used to identify the ideal participant.

The participants were male ex-offenders between the ages of 32 and 41. The reason for selecting this specific age-group in males is that this is the age that affects their ability to directly mould and build their dependents (their sons and daughters) and an age where some younger individuals might look up to them as role models. It can also be substantiated by using the theory of the age-crime curve, which shows the age at which it is applicable for a person to be included in the research. Moss (2016) noted that the age-crime curve refers to the assumption that crime is most prevalent during mid-to-late adolescence. That is, the incidence of crime increases with age until individuals reach about 16-20 years. The selection of participants aged between 32 and 41 years can be justified by this theory as means to fully show that crime is not necessarily age-specific but starts from late adolescence. This curve explains the observation that criminal behaviour increases at adolescence and decreases in adulthood.

According to Chettiar et al. (2012), crime declines drastically after the age of 55 years. This motivated me to focus on the middle-age years, from 30 and 50. Ex-offenders under the age of 30 were not considered as these individuals would fall within the youth group, which is not the focus of this study. A study conducted on the odds of recidivism shows that there tends to be an decrease in recidivism as age increases (Rakes et al., 2018). This means that the older the age, the lower the rates of recidivism compared to other ages.

3.3 Inclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria refer to the key characteristics of a specific population that the researcher focuses on to fulfil the purpose of the study (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). In its

application, this simply meant that the participants that were selected for this study aligned with the need to answer the research question or focus area. Ex-offenders aged between 30 and 50 years who had reoffended and been convicted more than once in the Johannesburg region within Soweto and Ormonde were approached and invited to participate in the study.

Participants aged between 30 and 50 years were recruited to participate in the study because they were considered adults. For the purpose of this study, the interviews were conducted in Soweto in Dobsonville Extension 2 and Orlando West area, as well as Ormonde, specifically in Extension 16. All the participants belonged either to the Black or Coloured race and were either unemployed or self-employed. According to Richardson et al. (2016), the rate of Black male ex-offenders that reoffend is far higher than that of other races in South Africa. This is the reason why the focus of this study was on male ex-offenders that were unemployed and struggling to find employment due to their criminal record.

3.4 Exclusion criteria

Exclusion criteria are the features that exclude potential participants that would not produce outcomes relevant to the focus of the study (Patino & Ferreira, 2018). Ex-offenders who had only offended once before, as well as ex-offenders that were younger than 30 years, but older than 50 years, were excluded from this study. The reason for excluding first-time ex-offenders was to ensure that the participants served the purpose of the study on re-offenders, and these were ex-offenders that had reoffended more than once.

Individuals who were still on parole were considered as serving their sentences as offenders until their parole is complete (Mujuzi, 2019). Only ex-offenders that were no longer on parole qualified to participate in the study because an individual who is on parole is still serving their sentence, which would make the individual an offender and not an ex-offender as per the focus of the study.

3.5 Sampling size

The data were collected according to the concept of data saturation. Six male ex-offenders were asked questions aligned with the objectives of the study until such a time that I felt that enough information had been collected for the purpose of the study. Data saturation was evident when repetitive answers were elicited from the interviews conducted with the participants; that allowed me to make a solid conclusion. Fusch and Ness (2015) conducted a study on data saturation in qualitative research and concluded that the number of interviews

needed for a qualitative study to reach data saturation could not be quantified. This means that interviews are conducted with as many participants as possible until enough information is collected for the purpose of the study. In determining the sample size, the researcher's discretion is key.

Fusch and Ness (2015) reflect on the benefit of unlimited interviews being conducted before drawing conclusions or having the flexibility to collect data until no new information is discovered in data analysis. In the case of this study, data saturation was reached after the interview with the sixth participant; therefore, the sixth participant was the last one to be interviewed. This is mainly due to the fact that the answers from the participants allude to similar answers around the challenges and lived experiences that have resulted in previous reoffending. These challenges are discussed in detail in chapter 4.

3.6 The paradigmatic perspective adopted by the study

A research paradigm is a model utilised to create a pattern in what has been observed and it is used to inform the potential reasons behind these observations (Babbie, 2011). It is seeing through the eye of the world and how the world would view phenomena, what people believe in and how they interpret the data collected in the research (Kuyini & Kivunja, 2017). The study employed interpretivism, which focuses on the subjective meanings of the participants. According to Thanh and Thanh (2015), interpretivism allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants.

The ontology of interpretivism assumes that there are multiple realities in the social world. Ontology refers to the state of being that describes the features of the matter (Burr, 2015). The epistemology of interpretivism suggests that the existence of multiple realities requires the phenomenological approach, which allows the obtaining of an in-depth insight into the lived experiences, perceptions, and motives of the participants (Gergen, 2009). Epistemology entails the means through which the truth or knowledge can be reached or acquired (Willig, 2013). This has been acquired through constant relations with the participants that took part in this study.

Blaikie (2010) also states that interpretivism helps to understand the world from the participant's perspective. Thanh and Thanh (2015) further assert that when seeking answers, the investigator that follows the interpretivism paradigm uses the experiences of the participants to construct and interpret the understanding of reality from the gathered data. Interpretivism enables researchers to understand the subjective reasons and meanings of the

individual's actions. I adopted the interpretive paradigm since the study was explorative in nature, seeking to understand the lived experiences of ex-offenders and what reoffending meant to them.

The current study adopted the qualitative approach, which seeks to establish the meanings that have been developed through the participants' lived experiences as interpretivism suggests. Therefore, it is not possible to separate the qualitative methodology and interpretivism as they are based on the quality of events as they occur, or on explanations from the participant's point of view (Blaikie, 2010). I was interested in gaining insight into the lived experiences, perceptions and meanings held by ex-offenders regarding their recidivist behaviour as well as how they make sense of it.

3.7 Qualitative approach

Qualitative research is fundamentally an exploratory inquiry that provides a deep overview of the phenomenon under investigation and obtains rich descriptions of lived experiences. Maree (2012) describes qualitative approach as a collection of descriptive data to study a specific phenomenon, all in an attempt to gain an understanding of the specific phenomenon. Information gathered using the qualitative approach is non-numeric but detailed in the participants' own words or quotes (Elhamdi & Hezam, 2020). Babbie (2011) emphasises the importance of studying the actions of humans through the perspective of the social actors themselves. This study adopted the qualitative approach to get insight and detailed knowledge on recidivism of male ex-offenders based on their lived experiences, subjective meanings, opinions, and perceptions.

The qualitative approach aims to interpret and structure the findings analytically so as to draw accurate conclusions from the data collected (Matthews & Ross, 2010). This study was conducted in an attempt to understand the phenomenon of recidivism. The qualitative research approach was used to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors that lead ex-offenders to recidivism. According to Creswell (2013), the qualitative method is ideal for research that is focused on the individual experiences of the participants. This is relevant to this study as its focus was to investigate the lived experiences of individual male ex-offenders in Soweto and Ormonde, Johannesburg. The data were gathered using semi-structured interviews.

3.8 Rationale for using the qualitative approach

Hammarberg et al. (2016) consider the qualitative approach ideal to use for investigating beliefs, attitudes, and concepts of normative behaviour through semi-structured interviews. The qualitative approach was therefore relevant for the current study, given the nature of the study, which sought to understand the subjective experiences of ex-offenders that have previously reoffended. Furthermore, similar studies have used the qualitative approach to collect data; they obtained valuable insights on recidivism using this approach (Lotter, 2018; Oyola, 2019).

A qualitative research approach was used in this study as it is appropriate for investigating the issues related to reoffending. Qualitative research seeks to understand people's underlying reasoning or their way of thinking, their opinions, and their motivations (Smith, 2015). Such inquiry aligns with this study which sought to explore the lived experiences of ex-offenders and how they make sense of reoffending. Further, the qualitative approach perceives social reality from the inductive assumption that social phenomena are complex and subjective, and they can be best understood from the subject's viewpoint (Rovai et al., 2014).

The qualitative approach considers the values, opinions, perceptions, lived experiences and meanings of the subjects as the primary focus of social inquiry (Tracy, 2019). It considers the detailed description of people's internal feelings and personal experiences (Fuster, 2019). In the context of this study, the lived experiences of ex-offenders and the meaning behind their actions were the primary focus areas.

3.9 Process of data collection

I acquired approval from the College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee at the University of South Africa to proceed with the study. The participants also completed informed consent forms agreeing to voluntarily participate in the study. This was important not only to ensure that ethical principles were followed but also to ensure that the participants were informed of the nature of the study as well as the data to be collected and how it would be utilised. According to Creswell and Plano (2011), asking for permission from the study participants and individuals who will be impacted by a study is essential.

For this study, semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were used to collect the data. This ensured that the participants were able to share their stories, which allowed me to observe their body language during the interviews. The interviews were guided by a semi-structured

interview schedule containing open-ended questions. The interviewees were male ex-offenders who provided detailed information regarding their lived experiences, and the motivation behind their recidivism. The interviews were conducted in March 2022 and overlapped into the first week of April the same year. Furthermore, the data was also collected through feedback sessions that took place over two months. The interviews were conducted in both English and/or Setswana, as these are the languages, I am fluent in. Among the six participants, five interviews were conducted in English and one in Setswana. The participants were asked which language they were most comfortable using and were informed to ask any questions if they needed further clarification.

Open-ended questions draw out responses with several elements, which include being able to take note of experiences, opinions and values, feelings and emotions, knowledge, sensory input as well as backgrounds, including participants' demographics (Patton, 2015). It was important to consider all these elements during the process of conducting the interviews. According to Rubin (2012), semi-structured interviews include the main question with subsequent follow-up questions as well as probing questions to get clarity on the answers that have been provided by participants. This was crucial in understanding the lived experiences of the participants by ensuring that the answers from the participants were valid and well understood. Semi-structured interviews have the advantage of being conducted in real-time and allow the researcher to immediately address any questions that may arise during the study (Brinkmann, 2014).

Open-ended questions were asked in line with the research questions and objectives to establish the holistic view of the participants. I used probing questions to adequately explore the subject matter in detail. Despite the set of questions contained in the interview guide (Appendix B), I was not limited to those questions. In addition, some of the questions were modified, reconstructed, and skipped as determined by the flow of the conversation. The ex-offenders involved in the study were asked if they had any questions at the end of each interview session and I answered all the questions that the participants asked. Each interview lasted between 40 and 45 minutes to ensure that the participants had enough time to answer the questions at a comfortable pace.

For the convenience and comfort of the participants, the interviews were conducted at the participants' homes, which was their preference, after an initial meeting with the participants was held to build trust and rapport. An appointment was set up for the interviews

and there was casual conversation before the interview took place, because there were hardly any distractions from the family members within the home. The interviews took place in the dining room, with two exceptions. One interview took place in the kitchen of a house close to a main road. In adherence to COVID-19 regulations, the door was kept open to promote good ventilation, and this resulted in noise from the road being a distraction; however, the participant and researcher managed to stay focused as the distractions were manageable. Due to the wall around the house, the only distraction was the noise from the road, but that was manageable and the people from the road were unable to see us or hear our conversation.

The other interview took place under a tree behind the house. In this case, distraction came from family members passing by twice; however, the interview was completed without any major disturbance. We would often take a break during the time that the family members passed and would continue shortly after. This was found to be beneficial as the participants got a chance to take a break. The interference from the passing family members did not take place often hence it did not create a big distraction. An audio recorder was placed between me and the participants during all the interviews. It was intimidating and scary for me, a woman, to interview male ex-offenders; however, I drew comfort from the fact that in each case, I had been referred to the ex-offender by someone they knew or knew the participant to a certain extent. Throughout the study, I was continuously aware that the ex-offenders being interviewed were humans and deserved to be treated with respect and dignity. Therefore, the open-ended questions were asked in such a way that the participants were able to answer drawing directly from their lived experiences as ex-offenders who had reoffended more than once.

Audio recording and note-taking were used as the recording methods to ensure that all the information was captured and used for data analysis. The two methods of recording were used to complement each other; when the audio seemed unclear, I used the notes for clarity. I used the audio recorder as the main recording instrument. The recorded audio was transcribed into text during data analysis. The storage of data and research materials plays a significant role in the research process and consequently, the participants' confidentiality was prioritised. All the notes and the USB flash drive that were used to store the recordings were locked securely in my office drawer for security and confidentiality purposes.

The semi-structured interviews also focused on the lived experiences of the ex-offenders so as to gain more contextual insights into the high rates of recidivism. According to Adams (2015), semi-structured interviews give room for flexibility to explore feelings, detailed

opinions and beliefs, without restricting the participant to merely answering the question that is asked. This means that the participants were able to fully express themselves in answering the questions aligned to their lived experiences. The information was then analysed and interpreted. When using interpretivism, the information I gathered through the research is interpreted to reflect the findings from the participants without being biased.

Through the process of analysing the data collected during the study, I was able to establish if the findings of the study were consistent or if the findings were drastically different. Trends of similar findings were identifiable during this process and a sense of confirmation of enough information that was collected to meet the main objectives of the study was established. It was vital to solely focus on the purpose of this study in analysing the collected data, which was done mainly through audio-recording and writing.

3.10 Scheduling the interviews

The first step was to meet the participants and build a relationship with them so that I could build rapport, trust and confidence with them. This was done face-to-face in the comfort of the participant's home. Once this was done, I commenced with the informed consent form after the study purpose and involvement of the participants had been clearly explained and all the relevant questions were answered. It is important to note that the interviews were scheduled to take place in an environment that was most comfortable for the participants, which was in the comfort of their homes.

Given that the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the required protocols were considered when scheduling the interviews. All the COVID-19 protocols were adhered to as I was well informed of the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) during the interviews which the participants were happy to receive and use for safety precautions. This included the equipment to do with pre-and post-self-checks as well as equipment to check my temperature and that of the participants beforehand. The participants were happy with the pre-checks and post-checks as this was an added safety measure to ensure the participant and my safety as well.

The interviews were also scheduled at the convenience of the participants and at a time the participants were most comfortable, which was during the day. The convenience of the participants was considered regarding their preferred day of the week, that is, when they were available, as well as the time that was most suitable to them. This helped to reduce distractions and allowed the participants to feel relaxed enough to answer the questions. Scheduling for the

interviews was done telephonically, as this was most effective for also conducting pre-screening telephonic checks to ensure that the participants were not feeling sick beforehand.

The first three participants' contact details came from my previous interactions with them prior to the study and the rest of the participants' contact details came from referrals, after getting permission from the referrals to share their contact details. The participants were assured that all COVID-19 protocols would be followed during the face-to-face interactions. These protocols are discussed in detail later in this chapter (Section 3.12). Scheduling the interviews with the participants also involved providing them with enough information about the study before obtaining their consent. This helped to ensure that the participants made well-informed decisions. The estimated timeframe to conduct the study was also communicated to the participants so that they could prepare and know what to expect.

3.11 During the interviews

Rapport was built during the first few interactions with the participants, before the actual interviews were conducted, which made it easy to interact with the participants during the interview. I started by thanking the participant for their willingness to partake in the research. The interview would start with basic questions to get to know the participants better and understand their general background. During the interview, I focused on the participants' lived experiences both before and after their time as ex-offenders. The crux of the interview was to understand what being an ex-offender meant to them, as well as how they felt the community at large perceived them. It was also important to confirm during the interview that none of the participants were on parole to ensure that the participants met the inclusion criteria.

Furthermore, I ensured that there was excellent preparation of equipment for the interview such as the provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), a digital audio recorder, a pen and paper. It was important to ensure that the participants were made to feel comfortable during the interview and that they were well informed about the purpose of the study. I ensured that the participants had received the information sheet, which detailed the purpose of the study, and that the informed consent form was signed by each participant. The interviews were scheduled for and conducted within a timeframe of 40-45 minutes.

Participants were made aware and reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage should they wish to do so. It was made clear that the study was being conducted to collect data and shared that I am undertaking this research in fulfilment of the requirements for my Masters' qualification. The participants were also informed and consistently reassured that

their identities would be kept confidential, and this was done through the use of pseudonyms. According to Gerrard (2021), the use of pseudonyms involves an individual using a fictitious name, which is different from their real, legal name, to protect their personal identity.

The participants were asked questions that were prepared beforehand, yet the interview was not limited to the prepared questions. In instances where I felt the need to probe on matters related to the purpose of the study, there was flexibility around the questions that were prepared. This was to ensure that valuable information aligned with the study was not missed while only focusing on the prepared questions. During the interview I also paid attention to body language, to avoid or limit distractions by trying to write down everything being said. The notes assisted with capturing expressions that could not be noted by the audio-record to ensure that body language was recorded.

3.12 Conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic

This study was conducted during the challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic. A pandemic is considered to be a disease outbreak that affects the country and the whole world (Morens et al., 2020). Since late 2019, the world has been affected by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2) that has caused the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic which to date is considered to be the greatest international biopsychosocial emergency (Ntusi & Herrey, 2020).

The novel virus is an infectious disease caused by the coronavirus, a part of a huge family of viruses that cause illnesses in humans, which are known to spread through respiratory droplets when one comes into close contact with an individual that is infected with the virus (Velavan & Meyer, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic had the impact of both losing potential participants and delaying the process of recruiting the participants.

Restrictions were put in place according to the Department of Cooperative Governance Disaster Management Act 2002 Amendment of Regulations Issued in Terms of Section 2(2) 69 (2021) under the safety and general measures for the duration of a period of national disaster:

Gatherings: 1) When attending a gathering, which included even research-related activities, every person must limit exposure to COVID-19 by:

    a) Wearing a face mask.

    b) Adhering to all health protocols.

    c) Maintaining a distance of at least one and a half metres from each other.

d) Adhering to the curfew hours as provided.

The recruitment and selection of study participants were the main challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Another challenge included the inability to see participants' facial expressions during interviews because of the safety protocol of wearing face masks. Despite the facial expressions being limited due to the masks, the body language of the participants showed various expressions that were noted.

Two potential participants contracted COVID-19 and felt uncomfortable continuing with the study even after they were cleared. They did not want to risk becoming reinfected with the virus despite me following all COVID-19 protocols and this being made known to all the participants. Three of the potential participants withdrew from the study due to fear of contracting COVID-19. Another potential participant lost a close family member to the virus and, as a result, withdrew from participating in the study due to fear of contracting COVID-19. Unexpectedly, COVID-19 became a big challenge in this study.

Despite these challenges, I managed to continue with the research, adhering to all COVID-19 regulations in the process of selecting participants and conducting the interviews. I ended up with six participants recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. Participants in this study partook voluntarily and qualified for the study because they had spent time in a correctional facility previously, served their sentences, were released back into their communities and went back to the correctional facility more than once. First-time offenders were excluded from this study simply due to the focus of the study being on reoffenders.

3.13 Transcribing the interviews

Data transcription is the process of converting what has been recorded on audio or video into a written format (Haworth, 2018). Transcribing was necessary to ensure that all the data collected during the study was captured for further analysis. To ensure that the participants were informed that recordings would be converted into a written format, permission was sought from the participants.

I successfully interviewed the participants in English and Setswana. Five participants were comfortable having the interviews conducted in English and one in Setswana. The recording was first transcribed in Setswana and then translated to English. English is a language that I am familiar with, being the language of instruction at the university level. Setswana is my mother tongue and so this made transcribing the information easy for me. Two participants

recruited at the beginning of the research process preferred that the study be conducted in IsiZulu but, unfortunately, they pulled out of the study.

Apart from recording the interview, additional notes were made throughout the interview to ensure that the transcribing was done most effectively and accurately. Transcribing the data was done over one month. I consulted my supervisor for guidance throughout the study to ensure that the research was conducted and conveyed most effectively for this study and that accepted terminology was used when referring to an ex-offender.

During the study, I faced the challenge of not immersing myself in the life stories of the participants but instead focused on the purpose of the study. The prepared interview guide (Appendix B) was used to ensure that this was achieved. The recordings were listened to numerous times to ensure that all of the data collected was indeed transcribed accurately without missing anything, including ensuring that the additional notes made of emotions and body language were considered. Once the data was transcribed, the next step was to ensure that it was accurately analysed.

3.14 Data analysis

The data was collected through open-ended, semi-structured interview questions and qualitatively analysed using IPA as described by Smith and Osborn (2015) and also described in the study as the best form of analysis for studies where personal, lived experiences are examined. The open-ended questions were asked in a way that allowed for the participants to answer the questions through a nuanced description of their lived experiences of reoffending more than once.

According to Mihas (2019), data analysis involves the analysis of textual, visual as well as audio data. This data analysis method is relevant to this study. The data was collected through notes made during the interviews, recordings of the interviews as well as additional notes that were made describing body language. IPA is a contemporary qualitative study method that is based on phenomenology, hermeneutics, and ideography (Miller et al., 2018). Spiers and Smith (2019) defines IPA as a qualitative approach that is focused on the detailed lived experiences of participants.

According to Smith (2008), an IPA is of vital importance to ensuring that one is tentative and subjective. This was done by spending time to understand the lived experiences of the ex-offenders from their perspective to fill in the gap between the answers provided by the

participants and the understanding of these answers and translating these answers through the participants' point of view. Focus was put on acknowledging each participant's view as authentic as the participants were.

In insuring that collected data was interpreted accurately, I spent time listening to the audio-recorded interviews of each participant numerous times, despite the interviews being 252 hours long in total. Throughout the transcription process, I made sure that I was well versed with the data I was transcribing. After the transcription of the interviews was concluded, I read and re-read the transcripts numerous times while making additional notes of repeated or similar experiences and picked up patterns from the participants with the focus on the questions on the interview guide as they focused on the objectives of this study and including notes of participants' body language. After immersing myself in the data, the transcripts were divided into sections in order for the notes to be grouped in relation to the findings and the best interpretation of the information from the interviews. According to Smith et al. (2009), the IPA process involves getting familiar with the data, dividing the findings into themes that are analysed and reported on the findings. This is the approach the study used in interpreting the findings of this study.

3.15 Rationale for using Interpretative Phenomenology Analysis

IPA was used for this study as it is an appropriate approach to use in psychological qualitative studies such as the present study. According to Smith and Osborn (2015), IPA is best used for studies where personal lived experiences are examined. This is aligned with the main focus of the study that is the lived experienced of ex-offenders that have previously reoffended. So, this analysis is aligned with the main objective of this study. Phenomenology is believed to have emerged from studies related to life experiences that are understood through the perspective of the participants. It is used to acquire knowledge through applied social sciences (Fuster, 2019). The current study was exploratory with a focus on understanding the lived experiences of ex-offenders through the perspective of the participants to enable researchers to better understand recidivism.

According to Smith (2019), phenomenology originates from the Greek word "phenomenon" which means that something can be made visible by itself. In summary, phenomenology finds a balance between objectivity and subjectivity. Interpretative phenomenology is believed to be based on the participants as well as the individual conducting the research, with the understanding that the participants and I come from different

backgrounds, yet through interaction and interpretation are able to work together to better understand the phenomenon being studied (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). I chose the IPA method with the aim of analysing the lived experiences of ex-offenders, particularly how they made sense of, as well as determining their motives for reoffending.

However, I continuously focused on the best way of interpreting the lived experiences of the participants from their own perspective, despite my background being different from that of the participants. Thus, the IPA was considered the ideal method for the purpose of this study which was to explore the participants' lived experiences. Mgolozeli and Duma (2020) used the IPA approach in their study to capture ex-offenders' lived experiences and to make sense of, and interpret those experiences. Their study was similar to the current research, as it was focused on the lived experiences of the ex-offenders.

Pacheco (2019) found that the interpretative phenomenological approach was an ideal design to use for a study conducted on reducing the high rates of recidivism that are affiliated with gang offenders. This design was seen as the best approach for interpreting the findings of the research. Musekwa et al. (2021) also conducted a phenomenological study of recidivism in South Africa and found the IPA as the most effective method to interpret the findings of the study from the participant's perspective. From these studies, I identified IPA as an ideal method for exploring the experiences of the study participants from their own perspective. Understanding interpretivism is vitally important in applying this approach for the purpose of fulfilling this research.

3.16 Ethical considerations

According to Ngozwana (2018), the term "ethics" refers to being what is considered to be morally good and is focused on staying away from any form of harm to the participants during the study. It includes availing consent forms to participants, assuring them that they can withdraw from the study at any time without giving explanation and ensuring confidentiality of all the information shared in relation to the study is kept.

3.16.1 Ethical approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the College of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (REC) at UNISA, (see attached appendix A). Obtaining ethical approval before conducting the study helped to ensure that all the ethical requirements were met. Verbal approval on recording was also granted by the participants, permitting me to record and later transcribe the data collected during the interviews. The participants were allowed to go through

their transcripts to ensure that the information was correctly transcribed and analysed, and to make sure that any necessary changes were made to prevent inaccuracies. This is called member checking (Shenton, 2004).

(i) Member checking

According to Creswell (2013), member checking involves the process of sharing the drafted interview transcripts, notes and audio with the participants to ensure that the transcription reflects the accurate information based on the participant's truth. This has been done with the participants to ensure that the interviews were accurately represented in the final findings of this study, including the additional notes made on the body language noted during the interviews with the six participants. This was inclusive of the quotes of what the ex-offenders said during the interview used in chapter 4 and confirming the participants being confident for me to use direct quotes from the interviews.

(ii) Confidentiality

Confidentiality refers to ensuring that the participant's identity is protected through using strategies such as codes or pseudonyms instead of their real details (Nkozwana, 2018). The confidentiality of the participants was made a priority and all the information from the research was kept safe by me. Pseudonyms were used instead of the participants' names to protect the participants personal identity such as their names despite other information such as the participants age as well as overall background that was used. All the study information and recordings were kept by me in a lockable drawer to ensure confidentiality. All the participants in the study were ex-offenders that were no longer on parole, which means that ethical approval from the DCS was not required.

(iii) Informed consent

The participants were informed that their participation in this study was of their own will and if at any time the participants felt uncomfortable, they had the option to exit the interview session or study. At the beginning of the recruiting process, the participants were provided with a consent form to fill in before the study started, advising that the participants were not bound to the study but agreed at that specific time to take part in the study, with the option to withdraw at any stage if the participant felt in any sort of discomfort. Thankfully, there were no withdrawals due to discomfort in this study.

(iv) The right to withdraw

Cohen and Manion (2009) define withdraw as the freedom to exit without any consequences. The participants understood that the consent form does not at any stage bind them or force them to take part in the study or to stay until the end, and this was communicated. I had not anticipated any discomfort for the participants in this study; however, precautions were taken in case any participant might have gone through psychological discomfort as a result of the study. The participants had access to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG), and the Central Gauteng Mental Health Society, which also works with the South African Federation for Mental Health (SAFMH), which provides free counselling from registered counsellors in different communities as well as free telephonic counselling, which was most convenient during the COVID-19.

I provided the participants with free hotline information to seek assistance for any long-term psychological assistance as a result of participating in the study. The participants were on numerous occasions given the option to withdraw from participating in the study at any stage. I had support from the assigned supervisor who constantly checked on my progress throughout this study. All the ethical protocols were observed regarding all the participants in the study.

(v) Measures to ensure trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the ability to be relied on as honest or truthful. Data trustworthiness has four key components: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Denzin, 2017; Shenton, 2004).

Credibility is the extent to which the information gathered from the participants is believable and considered as accurate when it comes to what the participants and I communicated. In this study, credibility was used to ensure that the study is not biased, and the findings of this research were explained without taking any sides or prejudice. The credibility of qualitative findings can be confirmed through member checking (Creswell, 2009; Shenton, 2004). Ensuring credibility through member checking eliminates the subjective bias in the findings of the study (Birt et al., 2016). In this study, I performed member checking by giving the participants the transcripts and audio recordings generated during the interview for correction purposes and confirming if participants' responses were accurately presented. This is a crucial component in ensuring that the data presented is credible.

Transferability refers to the extent to which the information gathered can be transferred to other contexts or settings and is proven by showing that the research applies to specific contexts, populations, and other aspects (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013). Transferability relates the findings to external validity and applicability to similar situations (Whittaker, 2010). In this study, transferability was established by the findings, which were used in general to get feedback on what contributes to reoffending in other ex-offenders from different correctional facilities. The reasoning might differ based on the different conditions of correctional facilities and communities, but some factors are common and relevant to assisting and getting perspective of the lived experience of a male ex-offender who has reoffended more than once. The participants, as previously mentioned, were also provided with an information sheet at the stage of recruiting, which clearly stated what the study was about and the role the participant played in the study.

Dependability is seen as the extent to which the findings of the research can be trusted (Denzin, 2017). In most instances when using qualitative research, it would only be those who took part in the study who can confirm how trustworthy the findings are. Confidence in the quality of the findings is confirmed by checking their dependability. The interviews were also recorded on audio to make sure that the findings are available to support the notes taken during the interview to account for what could not be recorded on the audio such as the body language of the participant.

Confirmability is the tool to confirm if what has been found in the study as a conclusion is shaped by those taking part in the research, which can be confirmed by those who took part in the research (Yin, 2009). In essence, a researcher that is focused on qualitative findings considers where they stand and how their current stance may affect or impact the process of conducting the research such as the method chosen to conduct the research, how the data are analysed, the interpretation of the findings, and the conclusion that is made from the findings. In this study, confirmability was achieved by ensuring that the findings were a true reflection of what the participants meant to convey. This was done by verifying that the participants agreed with the way the information they provided in their interviews was correctly transcribed and analysed.

3.17 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I described the process that was followed from recruiting the participants, to scheduling the interviews, including a description of what took place during the interviews.

This chapter described the research methodology used in this study. An explanation of the qualitative research methodology was provided, as well as information on the data collection using recorded semi-structured interviews and taking field notes. The process of recruiting study participants using both purposive and snowball sampling was discussed, together with the ethical issues that were considered when conducting the study. Information about the sample, with specific details about the participants in the study, was also provided. The process of transcribing and then analysing the data using IPA was discussed, as well as the criteria for ensuring trustworthiness of the data collected. The snapshot of interviews is provided in chapter 4 along with the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reflected on the methodology that was used to collect the data for the study. The results from the data collected are discussed in the present chapter. I have presented data that has been analysed and it is discussed addressing the objectives of the research study. The data has been analysed and coded to develop themes, which are also covered in this chapter. Various themes emerged, and these are discussed with the view to understand the lived experiences of reoffenders in the Soweto and Ormonde areas. I start the chapter by discussing the background of the study participants.

4.2 Background of the male ex-offenders

The study participants hailed from the south of Johannesburg, specifically in Soweto and Ormonde. Further details of the participants regarding their demographics have been summarised in the table below:

Table 4.1: Participant demographics

Participant	Age	Race	Area	Employment status
Participant 1	34	Black	Soweto	Unemployed
Participant 2	34	Black	Soweto	Unemployed
Participant 3	32	Black	Soweto	Self-employed: poultry farming
Participant 4	34	Coloured	Ormonde	Unemployed
Participant 5	32	Black	Ormonde	Unemployed
Participant 6	41	Coloured	Ormonde	Self-employed: motivational speaker

4.2.1 Participant 1

The participant is an ex-offender who has previously reoffended, aged 34 years, and comes from Soweto. Participant 1 spoke in a soft voice explaining his background and that he grew up in Soweto in a single-parent family headed by his mother with two siblings, a sister and a brother. The participant was the head of his household and has a wife and seven children for whom he has to provide. The participant explained that he was exposed to crime at the tender age of five years since Soweto is immensely permeated with crime.

The participant also mentioned that when one lives in parts of Soweto, it is easy to get involved in crime, as one is exposed to people that are often not of good character or upbringing. The participant also described the problems that come with being an adolescent in Soweto. He included the fact that from a very young age, his mother could not handle him. It was depressing and tough being in the "*Kasi*", which means "township", referring to Soweto, where one is easily lured into committing small, petty crimes. The type of offence that the participant had committed was theft and bribing a police officer with R1 800 while awaiting trial. The following was said:

> *"They told me that I should sit there on the benches, then I stood up and then they told me what the case was and they didn't tell me what exactly was going on. They told me that I shouldn't sit on the bench, but I should go back to the hole. I didn't go back to the benches, so I went to the hole. I waited and a police officer came to pick me up and took me and they told me that the court had found me guilty and they were sentencing me six years. I cried as I am a father, told them that I had seven kids, my youngest being two months. So, when I told them that I had kids, that's when they reduced the sentence to four years"* (participant 1).

Participant 1 emphasised that his inability to provide for his family played a big part in his previous re-offence. This was evident during the interview; the participant's body language expressed great regret and disappointment with his head shaking and looking to the ground as he spoke explaining what happened to him in the process of being convicted for the second time. However, when he spoke of his family, these expressions swiftly changed to compassion and happiness; his body language spoke volumes. It was made quite evident even through the participant's body language that providing for his family at any cost was of paramount importance to him. The study conducted by Van Niekerk et al. (2015) shows that violence is considered to be a part of multiple social drivers, including but not limited to widespread and

racialised poverty, unemployment and income inequality and patriarchal notions of masculinity that celebrate toughness and risk-taking. This speaks to the participant reoffending being driven by the notion of having to be a provider as the man of the house, or rather the idea of masculinity.

The participant's reoffence took place in the workplace while the participant was working as a Despatch Foreman resulting in the participant's second conviction and a criminal record, which has become a stumbling block for the participant to find employment after being released. According to Chikadzi (2017), it is evident that finding employment after spending time in a correctional facility is a major challenge. It was even trickier for this participant as the last conviction offence also took place in the work environment. While it is understandable why employers are reluctant to consider ex-offenders, it also does not help the lived experience of an ex-offender who is trying to provide for his loved ones and stay away from crime. According to the Department of Justice (2009, p. 5) Criminal Procedure Amendment Act 65 of 2008, an ex-offender can apply for a lawful clearance and removal of their criminal record 10 years from the date after their conviction. The main challenge that the participant faced was the urgent need to provide for his family.

4.2.2 Participant 2

The second participant is from Soweto and 34 years of age. He was raised by his mother. He described his upbringing as difficult since his mother was the sole breadwinner and struggled to provide what other parents could for their children. The participant mentioned that he was jealous of his friends because they had all the good things in life, having both parents present in their lives, and he did not because his mother struggled to provide as a single mother. The situation at home and the need to fit in with peers at high school pushed the participant to explore criminal activity. The participant was first convicted for an offence at a young age and his second offence was at a later stage in his adult life, yet the offences were similar. The participant went on to describe his sentencing and said:

> *"My sentence was for eight years. I served for four and the other four years were served under parole. I was given 218 hours of parole to clean at the local police station. I was instructed to clean on Saturdays and Sundays for 218 hours"* (participant 2).

The process followed when an offender is arrested is quite similar in all the participants' accounts. Based on the information gathered, once an offender is arrested, they undergo a trial until they are convicted in court and sent to the correctional facility to serve their sentence.

With good behaviour, it seems possible for half of the sentence to be served in the correctional facility and the other half can possibly be served on probation. Participant 2 mentioned that the correctional facility ran courses for him to complete in preparation for going back to his community and loved ones. Participant 2 states that the courses were aimed at helping him prepare for the challenges that he could face from the community. The question is whether the courses adequately fills the gap between theory and the reality of interactions, such as how to treat family members. Participant 2 was a teenager when he was convicted for his first crime and was released at the tender age of 18 years. Participant 2 sombrely described how he struggled with unemployment among other challenges, which then served as a motive for him to reoffend and all these challenges will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

4.2.3 Participant 3

The third participant is from Soweto and 32 years of age. He was raised in a single-parent household with his mother as the breadwinner. The participant explained his background by saying:

> "*Growing up was tough, you know there were a lot of things I didn't get growing up even from my parents when I was growing up. It's more like you are growing up alone, and there is a lot of other things like pressure that makes you sure that there is something on the table and that was the biggest problem for me because I did not have the proper training to make the right decisions for myself and it made my growing up tough because I had to put something on the table*" (participant 3).

The participant also explained how the absence of a father figure in his life impacted him and his ability to make the right choices in life. Juxtaposing his experiences with the social learning theory, learning from a father figure or lack thereof was profound because he did not get proper training to make the right decisions for himself. The need to provide essential necessities drove him to re-offend, like one of the other participants in this study. This participant's most recent offence was theft, and he was barely five years out of the correctional facility. The participant also indicated that he did not commit the offence in the community in which he lives, which saved him from being seen in a negative light or judged emotionally and psychologically, unlike the other participants who were victims of stigmatisation.

While some of the other participants experienced some negative treatment or rather judgement from the community, it seemed that participant 3, not having committed a crime in his community worked in his favour as he has not become a victim of stigmatisation in the

community. This was key to a sense of belonging for the ex-offender. A study conducted by Maswi et al. (2017) found that some of the biggest challenges that ex-offenders face include unemployment, recidivism, and stigma, which affect the success of reintegration of ex-offenders. Davis et al. (2012) believes that successful reintegration of ex-offenders from the correctional facility into the community allows for professionals, family and society to better support the ex-offenders resulting in lower rates of recidivism.

4.2.4 Participant 4

Participant 4 is from Ormonde, 34 years of age. He became the breadwinner of the household after the passing of his father. He lives with his mother and three sisters. The participant explained his background by saying:

> "*I grew up in Ormonde, Johannesburg, in a quiet place, a lot of tourists coming in and out and coming through and do their stuff. I also live with my family members my mother and three sisters, and our father passed away in 2005 and yah life has been tough from then as I was the only breadwinner and man in the house trying to keep my sisters and my mother on the one side*" (participant 4).

When his father passed away, participant 4 had to fill in the role of the breadwinner. During the interview, the participant's body language showed sadness and disappointment when he spoke about his father's death, demonstrated through continuous sagging of shoulders and looking down. The participant felt the pressure to take over his father's role and this was not an easy task; putting food on the table was not easy. The participant was released on parole in 2015. He indicated that he was a reoffender. The first time the community took his offence as a mistake and his release was easier, unlike the second time when it was difficult to return to the community. The participant spoke of the challenge of going back to his community, that is, reintegration, after the second offence. Ex-offenders are required to adjust to the change as they go into different environments and this on its own can be a challenge.

It was also quite evident during the interview that the participant, through signs of head shaking and looking down, was disappointed in having had a taste of having a father figure but having to adjust to life without one. This was different from the rest of the participants, as he had been exposed to a father role while growing up, until the death of his father. A study conducted by Freeks (2017) revealed that boys who grow up without a father figure have an increased chance of being involved in crime. The study further discusses how crucial a father role is in terms of giving attention, love and being an example of values by which to live. It

came up often throughout all the interviews that the absence of a father plays a role in the participants' involvement in crime and reoffending.

4.2.5 Participant 5

Participant 5 comes from Ormonde, Johannesburg. He is 32 years of age and was released from a correctional facility 10 years ago. This participant was more closed off and introverted compared to the others. This means that I had to be careful to understand the participant's personality when conducting the interview and the process of scheduling the interview. Despite having a different personality from the other participants, valuable information that is discussed further in this chapter, was gained through the interview. According to Skakoon (2015), introverts prefer to communicate in writing, which involves less personal interaction. This explains the limited interaction that took place during the interview with participant 5 compared to the other participants. Special attention was given to the participant's body language (non-verbal communication), including salient and other information pertinent to the interview.

4.2.6 Participant 6

This participant grew up in Edenvale, eastern Johannesburg and had been living in Omonde for the past 20 years. He is 41 years old. The participant was released from the correctional facility seven years ago. This participant had a positive outcome from spending time in the correctional facility but only after the fourth time of incarceration. The participant described himself as heartless until he lost his father. That was when he decided to change. The participant spoke of all the training he had received from the correctional facility pre-release during his incarceration at the correctional facility but that there was a gap between the theory taught and the real-world challenges ex-offenders face and discussed later in this chapter. The ex-offender explained that he changed his life when he lost his father. He realised that he had to step up and play the role of the head of the house, a role that had previously been filled by his father who was always kind. He decided to live a life that would honour his father. The participant provided motivational speaking to encourage other ex-offenders and motivate them to change their lives and move away from reoffending. All the information collected during the study has been broken into themes.

4.3 Presentation and discussion of the findings

This section discusses the themes derived in the study as tabulated in Table 4.2 below. In this chapter, the participants' experiences are juxtaposed to reflect the contributing factors of recidivism in South Africa by way of reflecting on the participants' demographics,

economics, history, socio-politics, as well as the influence of the environment they found themselves in. The discussion includes supporting and contradicting extracts from the transcribed interviews, as well as findings from previous studies.

Table 4.2: Themes derived from the study

Theme 1	Motivation behind recidivism
Theme 2	Life in Johannesburg as an ex-offender
Theme 3	Notions of reoffending
Theme 4	Reintegration and acceptance – a sense of belonging
Theme 5	Rejection and lack of support

4.3.1 Theme 1: Motivation behind recidivism by male ex-offenders

According to Visher and Travis (2003), the motive of recidivism is defined as the underlying reasons behind individuals that have previously been incarcerated and continue to reoffend. It is vitally important to understand the motive behind the high rate of recidivism. This theme provides insight on the matter from the participants and other studies that have centred on establishing the motive behind male ex-offenders reoffending more than once. According to Wikoffet al. (2012), ex-offenders are faced with several challenges after being released from the correctional facility. Life before being an ex-offender had its challenges for the participants. All the participants noted that life was difficult due to growing up in the single-parent family setup, headed by a female, the economic situation or the standard of living. The expression of the participants while reflecting on their lives before offending was sombre and showed the pain, they went through seeking employment to provide for their families and loved ones. The word "tough" as used by participant 3 and the words "it was a struggle" used by participant 4 were used monotonously by the participants in this study. This shows their desperation for a better life, and how the only option for them seemed to be to take the illegal route of committing an offence, not just once but several times. Participant 2 clearly described life before becoming an offender by saying:

> *"Growing up was tough; I just had a single mother, and it was just her and me, just the two of us. She struggled a lot to just do what other parents would do and I can say growing up I was jealous of all my other friends who had fathers and mothers because*

usually they had a lot at school. I had to always make a plan to get what I wanted because my mother wanted me to also have those nice things" (participant 2).

This statement reflects the experience of growing up with a single mother and the challenges that come with it. The participant felt jealous of his friends who have both parents because they often have more opportunities and material possessions. The participant also describes how they had to work hard to get what they wanted because their mother wanted them to have nice things too. This may have created a sense of pressure or obligation for the participant to succeed and acquire material possessions, potentially leading to a desire to engage in criminal activities to attain the desired things.

The participant's experience of growing up with a single mother who struggled to provide for them may have contributed to a sense of lack or deprivation. This could lead to a desire to acquire material possessions and status symbols, potentially motivating the participant to engage in criminal activities as a means of obtaining them.

The above transcript shows how ex-offenders are led to reoffend in an attempt to satisfy their needs and improve their standard of living. This creates a cycle as one is lured into offending and reoffending in an attempt to meet their needs and those of their loved ones. According to Salem et al. (2013), recidivism is also driven by the lack of basic needs such as secure housing and jobs. This makes it even more difficult for ex-offenders who have a criminal record to find or be trusted with employment opportunities and is a concerning contributing factor to recidivism.

A traumatised participant emphasised:

"*When you come out, you are on a blacklist; you are a criminal, you do not get jobs and when you cannot find a job, no one wants to hire an ex-offender, everyone is scared*" (participant 3).

This statement reflects the experience of stigma and discrimination faced by ex-offenders when re-entering society after serving time in prison. The participant describes being labelled as a criminal and being blacklisted from employment opportunities, creating a cycle of unemployment and rejection. This experience may create a sense of hopelessness or helplessness, potentially contributing to a higher risk of recidivism. The participant's experience highlights the challenges faced by ex-offenders in society, particularly with regard to finding employment. The stigma and discrimination faced by ex-offenders may contribute

to feelings of isolation and rejection, potentially leading to a desire to re-engage in criminal activities.

This highlights how difficult the life of an ex-offender can be. According to English (2018), finding employment for an ex-offender can be challenging, especially due to the criminal record. Garidzirai (2021) explains how the high rates of unemployment in South Africa contribute to the high rate of crime. So, not only is the unemployment rate high in South Africa, but securing employment is made even harder for ex-offenders, and this is sadly the lived experience of many ex-offenders in society.

The participants disclosed that their motives for reoffending for the first time revolve around the notion of being the breadwinner who needs to take care of the family or bad influence. Participant 1 further explained this notion that he had a wife and seven children, including a two-month-old baby. He further expressed concern as to how he was supposed to take care of his family, but he cannot find employment. This desperation to support the family plays a significant role in the reasons why the participants reoffend. There is a need for the government of South Africa to restructure its systems and find a way to deter ex-offenders from offending again and support ex-offenders to meaningfully contribute to the growth and development of their households. Participant 2 justifies this argument by saying:

> *"You feel very lonely a lot when you come out of prison. There are those who are willing to help and those who are not willing to help. For example, friends trying to organise for me work, taking my CV here and there. Family members do not really help but those that care phone and ask how I am, but you have to do everything on your own and the community talks a lot and their words hurt most of the time especially some children are being told not to be like me"* (participant 2).

This statement reflects the experience of social isolation and rejection faced by ex-offenders when re-entering society after serving time in prison. The participant describes feeling lonely and having to rely on themselves to find work, with some friends showing willingness to help while family members are not very supportive. The participant also highlights the impact of negative community attitudes and stigma, including children being told not to be like him, leading to feelings of hurt and further social isolation.

The participant's experience highlights the complex social dynamics faced by ex-offenders when re-entering society. The lack of support from family members and negative attitudes from the community may contribute to a sense of social isolation and rejection,

potentially increasing the risk of recidivism. However, the participant also highlights the importance of having supportive friends and those who are willing to help, potentially providing a protective factor against re-offending.

Ex-offenders are labelled as typical bad examples in the community. According to Berryessa and Wohlstetter (2019), the labelling theory is the best theory to describe how ex-offenders are continuously stigmatised by members of the community. These labels are often negative, associated with the crimes committed and the labelled individuals are seen as having no intention of changing. The study conducted by Wohlstetter (2019) shows that a criminal label affects an individual's self-identity and further, constantly being reminded of one's past behaviours through labels such as "crime/criminal" can reduce the chances of change. According to Obatusin and Ritter (2019), the success of reintegration of ex-offenders into the community is often made difficult by the stigma that ex-offenders encounter after they are released from the correctional facility.

This is the unfortunate reality of the lived experience of an ex-offender after spending time in a correctional facility.

Participant 4 explained that the reason for re-offending was mainly as a result of not having any source of income and being unemployed. He said:

> "*Money is always a problem. I believe that job creation, having jobs for everyone and its quite hard for ex-offenders to stay out of crime and try to do their best because every day is like a hustle knowing that waking up in the morning, knowing that you are the breadwinner in the house and it's your duty to go out and make sure that your family eats at night depending on you as you are the breadwinner. So, life is quite hard for us, we do get used to be said no and there is no other way but to go back to crime and that's the only thing you get something home*" (participant 4).

This statement reflects the experience of financial insecurity and the role of employment in reducing the risk of recidivism for ex-offenders. The participant describes the challenges of being the breadwinner in their family and the pressure to provide for them, highlighting the importance of job creation and employment opportunities for ex-offenders. The participant also highlights the feeling of hopelessness and the belief that crime may be the only means of providing for their family.

The participants highlight the intersection of financial insecurity and criminal behaviour. The pressure to provide for one's family may contribute to a sense of desperation, potentially leading to a higher risk of re-offending. The participant also highlights the importance of job creation and employment opportunities for ex-offenders, potentially providing a means of financial stability and reducing the risk of recidivism. However, the participant also describes feeling resigned to being rejected and returning to criminal behaviour, potentially indicating a sense of hopelessness or helplessness in the face of these challenges.

The pressures of being a breadwinner played a significant role in explaining why the male ex-offender reoffended after their first time of being incarcerated. Similar to participant 2, participant 4 brought out the pressures of being a breadwinner as the family expects him to come back with something at the end of the day without fail.

Parallel to the above, participants showed the desire not to reoffend as participants 4 and 5 expressed that being in a correctional facility was an unpleasant experience that they would rather not revisit. Participant 5 went on to describe the experience as: *"It was so painful that it even left a scar inside me,"* and participant 4 described it as: *"It was quite hard being in prison and being locked up."*

Participant 4 also shared how frightening it is to live in a situation where one would offend for the first time and reoffend for a second time. He said:

> *"It was quite hard to tell you the truth. Sometimes a few hours, you have just left for a few minutes and just leave the people who you love and telling them you are no longer there and having to go back to prison"* (participant 4).

This statement reflects the emotional impact of returning to a correctional facility and the experience of leaving loved ones behind. The participant describes the difficulty of being separated from those they love, even for short periods, and the pain of having to tell them that they are going back to the correctional facility. The participant's experience highlights the emotional toll of incarceration and its impact on personal relationships. The pain of leaving loved ones behind and the fear of returning to the correctional facility may contribute to a sense of anxiety and distress, potentially exacerbating the risk of recidivism. This interpretation may also reflect broader societal attitudes towards incarceration and its impact on individuals and their families.

The above experiences give an idea of the kind of life male ex-offenders that have previously reoffended are living. The research found that the participants were willing to do anything to be able to provide something for their families. In a study conducted by Allen and Jacques (2014), participants spoke of resorting to crime as a result of the motivation to provide for their families.

I noticed that the participants mentioned the influence of friends as a contributing factor to recidivism. Friends seem to give some ex-offenders the encouragement to reoffend. Living in a community where one is exposed to crime, standing alone is another factor that has contributed to reoffending. Participant 1 noted that he was exposed to crime at the tender age of five in Soweto. Therefore, the background of a participant also plays a significant role in the person becoming an ex-offender and reoffending. This is justified by participant 1, who explained that he was brought up in a single-parent household by his mother, with two siblings, without the proper guidance and influence of both parents. The age-curve also supports the notion that criminal behaviour is prevalent in adolescents which is a time when parents are needed to observe and teach their children important social values and is likely to continue to adulthood (Felson & Eckert, 2017).

The community plays a key role in contributing to the ex-offender reoffending. Peer pressure and association with other distressed community members who are also unemployed or lacking in basic needs make crime an appealing alternative to legitimately providing for themselves or their families. This is seen throughout the findings of this study. Participant 1 alluded to this fact by explaining that having friends who are exposed and also involved in committing an offence can culminate in being part of the friendship. Being exposed to friends who are ex-offenders and who are still involved in crime contributes to ex-offenders reoffending.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Life in Johannesburg as an ex-offender

According to Smith (2021), the life of an ex-offender in Johannesburg is associated with challenges. These challenges will be discussed in detailed throughout this chapter. According to Chikadzi (2017), when ex-offenders leave the correctional facility, they have to adapt to a life outside the correctional facility, which can be difficult. The challenges and negative implications of having a criminal record as an ex-offender affect how the ex-offender can plan their future. The main challenge that was brought out by the participants is that ex-offenders

were struggling to find job opportunities due to a criminal record. Participant 2 described how having a criminal record affected him by saying:

>*"Because I have a criminal record against me, the kind of jobs I do, they do those background checks and I think I became a reoffender because there were no jobs, there are still no jobs now"* (participant 2).

The participant believes their criminal record is a significant barrier to finding employment. This belief is reinforced by the fact that many jobs require background checks, which may disqualify them from consideration. The participant feels stuck in a cycle of reoffending because they are unable to secure employment and support themselves and this is the participant's lived experience. The participant implies a psychological impact of being an ex-offender. The participant may feel a sense of shame or stigma associated with their criminal record, which could affect their self-esteem and motivation to seek employment. The criminal justice system and society at large stigmatise ex-offenders, making it difficult for them to reintegrate into society and find meaningful employment. This once again reflects the experiences that ex-offenders face.

The existence of a criminal record limits the opportunities for ex-offender's efforts to find employment opportunities and the chance to become a better person for those around them (Pleggenkuhle, 2018). In the study conducted by Chikadzi (2017), there was a candidate who had gone through three jobs and lost all these employment opportunities due to his criminal record being discovered by the company that hired him.

Participant 3 admitted that a criminal record takes away one's liberty to get any formal job. However, he praised the correctional system. This is because of the programmes that the correctional system has and how he learnt to farm poultry as a means of survival. He said the following, with a sigh of relief:

>*"I feel like the facility has helped me to become a better person in terms of my career and how I live with other people. It teaches you to work with your hands….so it's hard to sometimes to find a new job so you need to work with what you have and change your mindset"* (participant 3).

The above-cited transcript shows that even if one is restricted by the ten-year criminal record in the system, the programmes offered by the correctional system provide the ex-offenders with opportunities for self-empowerment, which are useful upon their release. It also

changes the narrative of one wanting to reoffend and go through the same ordeal twice, allowing an ex-offender to establish a life outside of a correctional facility and away from crime. According to the study conducted by Langa (2017), one of the biggest challenges that ex-offenders face after being released from the correctional facility is unemployment owing to the stigma of being an ex-offender. The study also discusses how some ex-offenders leave the correctional facility equipped with skills that may assist them in their endeavors in pursuit of economic upliftment.

The participant speaks to the fact that rehabilitation programmes may be a potential solution to the challenge of finding employment. However, it is important to recognize that not all ex-offenders have access to such programmes or may not benefit from them. It is important to acknowledge that the systemic barriers that exist in society contribute to the challenges ex-offenders face in finding employment; such barriers include discrimination, stigma, and lack of opportunities.

The findings revealed that acquiring employment meant financial freedom for ex-offenders. Through employment, the participants could be responsible for contributing financially to their family's well-being. The challenge of securing employment meant finding legal ways of generating money and staying away from offending activities, which can be hard for some ex-offenders who struggled to identify with finding ways to generate income on their own. Participant 2 explained in great detail that:

> *"When you can't find a job, no one wants to hire an offender and … there are no jobs at all and if you can't pay for things, the one easy thing is crime"* (participant 2).

The participant describes the difficulties of finding employment as an ex-offender, suggesting that they have been experiencing discrimination based on their criminal record. This has led to a sense of hopelessness and frustration, which may be contributing to thoughts of resorting to crime as a means of survival. The participant speaks to the experience of ex-offenders in finding employment and the potential consequences of financial desperation. The statement suggests that, for some ex-offenders, the lack of employment opportunities may lead to feelings of hopelessness and despair, which can in turn contribute to recidivism.

The participant suggests that the criminal justice system and society at large may be failing ex-offenders by not providing them with adequate opportunities for reintegration into society. The lack of opportunities may push some ex-offenders towards criminal activities as a means of survival. These are the root causes of the challenges faced by ex-offenders in finding

employment and providing them with opportunities for reintegration into society. This can lead to potential consequences of financial desperation, and it is important to address the social and economic factors that contribute to recidivism. The issues of unemployment, stigmatisation, discrimination and being judged for one's past have not only affected the ex-offender but also the ones the ex-offender supports financially and emotionally.

Ill-treatment by family and community is one of the greatest challenges that ex-offenders and reoffenders face. Stigmatisation and discrimination come from a lack of trust from family and the community. Participant 1 explained this issue by saying that he believed that he did not do anything to the community and that some community members see him as a criminal while some see him as if he is still part of the community. The participant went on to say:

"I didn't steal from the community, so they just found out that I have been in

jail" (participant 1).

The participant suggests that they have been judged based solely on their criminal record rather than their current actions within the community. This may reflect a broader societal attitude towards ex-offenders, where they are often seen as inherently untrustworthy or dangerous regardless of their actual behaviour. The participant's statement is interpreted as a reflection of the stigma and discrimination faced by ex-offenders in society. The statement suggests that ex-offenders are often unfairly judged and excluded from social interactions, even if they have not engaged in criminal behaviour towards their community.

The participant speaks to the fact that stereotypes and biases can lead to social exclusion and marginalisation, even if the ex-offender has not engaged in any criminal behaviour towards their community. This can further contribute to feelings of isolation and hopelessness, which can in turn lead to recidivism.

This statement made by participant 1 above alludes to a need for a shift in societal attitudes towards ex-offenders, emphasising the importance of judging individuals based on their current actions rather than their criminal history and recognise the need for systemic changes that address the root causes of stigma and discrimination faced by ex-offenders.

Participant 2 explained that he felt a sense of betrayal by the government. He felt that the government should have attempted to help empower the people that live in the area; he also felt that the community could not blame him for offending behaviour against tourists. He felt that he was not harming the community but still felt judged by the community since they were

aware of the numerous times that he spent in the correctional facility since he was first arrested in the area.

Participant 2 went on to express his thoughts by saying: "*I just wish the government would help us.*" He described how disappointed his family was but mentioned that his father constantly tried to support him. He described his father as a very kind man and his body language came to life with lots of energy when the spoke of his father. He went on to describe his father as: "*...my father was a kind man.*" Despite this encouraging relation that the ex-offender had with his father, this is not always the experience that ex-offenders receive from others and the wider community.

According to Lotter (2019), the stigma that ex-offenders face in society is one of the drivers of the high rate of recidivism. The community itself is a brutal arena as male ex-offenders are always subject to debate when it comes to being welcomed back. According to Lotter (2018), most interventions to address the stigma against ex-offenders have often failed. This as well as other challenges were a concern for participants in this study. Participant 2 described the challenge that a male ex-offender faces in the community through their lived experiences and said:

> "*So, when I came back the first time, when I was 18, no one judged me, everyone was willing to give me another chance as I was young, as they thought that I was just being a typical teenager but after the second time it was very hard because anything that would happen to the community, or anything stolen everyone would suspect me. I am a chief suspect every day, even if people see me sitting at the corner on a bridge there, they would try to think of ways to attack or do something. People talk and you hear them, you know and it's not easy when the whole community suspects you; you then feel lonely*" (participant 2).

The participant's experiences show that the community's initial willingness to give him a second chance was not extended after their second offence. This reflects a broader societal attitude towards ex-offenders, where the perception is that they are unlikely to change and may continue to engage in criminal behaviour. The participant's statement is a reflection of the stigmatisation and discrimination faced by ex-offenders in their community. The statement suggests that ex-offenders are often unfairly judged and excluded from social interactions, even if they have expressed remorse for their past behaviour.

The participant suggests that these stereotypes and biases can lead to social exclusion and marginalisation, even if the ex-offender has expressed remorse and a willingness to change their behaviour. This can further contribute to feelings of isolation and hopelessness, which can in turn lead to recidivism.

The above illustrate the judgement and stigmatisation that ex-offenders experience and treatment from family, friends and the community at large. According to Lumpkin (2020), ex-offenders struggle to re-enter society due to broken families and community relations. This study also shows that after the ex-offenders were released from the correctional facility, they experienced rejection from their families and community, which made it difficult for them to reintegrate into the community. Ravulo (2019) also emphasises the important role that the family and community play in reducing the rates at which ex-offenders re-offend through their support.

Participant 4 alluded to the fact that the community had their impressions and opinions regarding how to handle an ex-offender's return to the community. He said:

"Yah the first time was alright as the community said it was a mistake and some people believed that it was mistake when I came out, but the second time it was a bit harder because sometimes if you offend again people look at you differently even family members do look at you differently" (participant 4).

The participant describes their experiences as an ex-offender. The first time they offended, the community was more forgiving and believed it was a mistake. However, the second time they offended, the speaker experienced more difficulties as people, including his family members, began to view him differently.

The societal attitudes towards ex-offenders can have a significant impact on the participant's ability to reintegrate into society. The fact that the speaker was viewed differently the second time he offended reflects broader societal attitudes towards repeat offenders, which is seen to be more punitive and less forgiving.

I took note of how, at first, the community is willing to accept a male ex-offender, but this becomes more difficult if the ex-offender reoffends. The participant acknowledged that it is not easy to gain people's trust after reoffending and showed remorse when it came to how the family viewed him even after he provides for them. The body language of participant 1,

through slouching shoulders and looking down, expressed disappointment when he pointed out how the community was not as forgiving after his having reoffended for the second time.

In addition, participant 5 described the challenges from the community that he faced when he came out of a correctional facility:

> *"I had to wait for a certain time to prove myself to the community that I am willing and that I am a changed person. So, I couldn't really get a job instantly or all of that, so I had to pull myself up and tell myself that I am a changed person, I cannot steal, and it's been really hard for me to like finally get there. I had to even start off to spend time with family not only time but to create a relationship with them. That's the most difficult thing we go through as inmates"* (participant 5).

The participant speaks of reintegrating into the community after being incarcerated, describing how they had to wait for a certain time to prove themselves to the community. Thus, the participant had to be patient and faced the difficulty of finding employment. The participant also highlights the challenges of rebuilding relationships with family members.

The fact that the speaker had to wait for a certain time to prove themselves to the community reflects a broader societal mistrust of ex-offenders. Similarly, the difficulty of finding employment reflects employers' reluctance to hire individuals with a criminal record.

The participant gave an in-depth explanation of what he felt about the challenges he faced after coming out of a correctional facility. While explaining his ordeal, participant 5 was troubled, talking of what he had been through. He wanted to portray how challenging it was for him. The participant spoke of the lost time that can never be replaced and all that he lost during the time he spent serving his sentence. He also seemed sad speaking of how the family was not willing to wait for the ex-offender, almost alluding to how life goes on without them while they were in the correctional facility, especially since he was a third-time reoffender.

The findings indicated that life experience in Johannesburg was really tough for the male ex-offender as they had to endure the pain of being unemployed. Having a criminal record for 10 years made it very difficult to find employment. From the interviews conducted, it was clear that a criminal record can be seen as a contributing factor to the one reoffending for the third time or more. Ex-offenders have to live with the challenges of stigmatisation, broken relationships with the family and community, and lost time that cannot be regained with their loved ones. However, successful reintegration is possible with the help of the right support.

Despite themes 1 and 2 being closely related, theme 1 focuses on the motive behind ex-offenders reoffending, which includes factors as the failure to find employment. Theme 2 reflects on the difficulties that ex-offenders experience. The next theme relates to the notion of reoffending.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Notions of reoffending

The notion of reoffending looks at the factors that contribute to the ex-offender likelihood of reoffending after coming back from the correctional facility. In considering the high rate of recidivism, it is vitally important to understand the notion of reoffending, which is what theme 3 entails. According to Hatcher et al. (2019), the dominance of men is defined through factors such as the income they earn, being able to provide for their loved ones and being able to play the role of a patriarch within the family. These are the pressures of life that are unfortunately not exclusive to ex-offenders. The number of challenges already mentioned in this study, such as stigmatisation and a criminal record, do not make it easy for the ex-offender to acquire employment. Despite all the odds that seem to be against male ex-offenders, men are still expected to play the role of the provider, to be looked up to as a man in their families and potentially the community.

Masculinity, gender roles and sexuality seem to have influenced male ex-offenders to reoffend, and this is evident in the findings of this study. Participants explained the need to fit into the role of being a father, son, and brother to members of their families and other relatives. The need to fit into these roles seems to have increased over the years. The participants who were brought up in single-headed families emphasised the meaning of being able to provide and assist in every way they could in their households. For example, participants 2 and 3 described the kind of family dynamics in which they were raised in single-parent families inclusive of a mother and siblings, with the need for them to provide essentials required at home. A comparison was made between a single-parent household and having both parents present in a household. Participant 2 made this comparison saying:

> *"I was jealous of all my other friends who had fathers and mothers because usually they had a lot at school, and I had to always make a plan to get what I wanted because my mother wanted me to also have those nice things"* (participant 2).

The participant expresses feelings of jealousy towards their peers who have both a mother and father, and the material possessions that come being in such a family structure. The participant describes how they had to constantly plan to acquire the things they wanted because

their mother also wanted them to have those nice things. Through viewing the participant's subjective experience of jealousy, the effects of their mother's influence, and the strategies they employed to obtain the things they wanted and through this we are able to identify with the notion of reoffending.

Another participant went on to explain his experience saying:

> "*My father wasn't there, and my mother has been always struggling; it's all that pressure to make sure that the family is ok you know and provide something by putting something on the table*" (participant 3).

This statement highlights the participant's perception of the mother's struggle and the pressure they feel to provide for their family. This suggests that the participant may feel a sense of responsibility and burden as a result of their family situation. Additionally, the participant mentions the absence of their father, which suggests feelings of loss or abandonment. The pressure to provide for their family could be interpreted as reflective of the participant's sense of responsibility and the need to take care of others. This resorts to a source of stress and anxiety, leading the participant to feel overwhelmed and potentially contributing to negative coping strategies such as substance use or criminal behaviour.

On the surface, the statement suggests that the participant has experienced the absence of their father and their mother's struggle to provide for the family. The participant also expresses a sense of responsibility to ensure the family is provided for and fed. The participant's experience of growing up in a single-parent household and the pressure to provide for the family may be influenced by cultural expectations and gender roles. In some cultures, men are expected to be the breadwinners that provide for the family financially. The absence of the father in this case is considered the source of shame and may have influenced the participant's feelings of responsibility to ensure the family is provided with essential provisions. Additionally, societal structures and systems that perpetuate economic inequality and limited opportunities for marginalised communities may have contributed to the mother's struggle to provide for the family.

Participant 4 went on to reflect on the struggles of life precipitated by the absence of a father, saying:

"Our father passed away in 2005 and life has been tough from then as I was the only breadwinner and male in the house trying to keep my sisters and my mother" (participant 4).

The participant's life has been tough since their father's passing, and they have taken on the responsibility of providing for their family. The use of the phrase "trying to keep my sisters and my mother" suggests that the participant feels a significant burden associated with the responsibility of taking care of the family. The participant speaks of their experience of losing their father and has taken on the responsibility of being their family's sole breadwinner. The participant also speaks to their gender as a male, which is significant in terms of cultural expectations and gender roles which contribute to the notion of others reoffending.

Contrary to the bad experiences emanating from the absence of a father, participant 6 described the good things concerning his father, saying:

"My father has also taught me about doing things the way that my parents would have wanted. I did well because he was a man who did not want me to do bad things. In the year I came out of prison, I started doing good things and showed good deeds like my father while he was still alive" (participant 6).

The participant has a strong attachment to their father's values and teachings. The participant seems to have internalised their father's values and has used them as a guide in their life choices, including the decision to turn his life around after being released from prison. The participant also appears to have a sense of pride in their ability to emulate their father's good deeds. The participant's father played an important role in their upbringing and that his teachings seem to have influenced his decision-making processes. Such factors have influenced the participant's ability to turn their life around and avoid reoffending, and also shaped their future experiences and opportunities.

The comparison between the two participants reveals how they were brought up and also shows the influence behind one reoffending and lastly how this can be influenced by various factors including the presence of a father during their upbringing. Mules (2021) added that in many African societies, especially in rural communities, traditions still play an important role in everyday life. Men and boys are often raised with a view that the man are the dominant force and provider in the household despite shifting societal norms. This explains why male ex-offenders reoffend, as their backgrounds, customs and traditions support the notion that men

are supposed to be the backbone of their households at any cost. In the participants' case, some of the costs were attached to a criminal record.

Ogbu (2019) also addresses the influences people are exposed to from childhood focusing on both the maternal and paternal sides in terms of how one should behave based on certain values and how one is guided accordingly. This has proven to be problematic in our societies and is evident in this study where the father figure was not present. One of the participants pointed out that he "didn't have the father figure" to teach him how to behave like a man. In a study conducted on young male adults and crime rates, it was found that young male adults tended to commit crime more than the young females (Maringira & Masiya, 2018).

Similarly, in Messerschmidt and Tomsen's (2018) study, men are identified as being part of the majority in crime, and the crimes committed by the male offenders were driven by a desperate need to provide for the family. This pressure and expectation that the man assumes or expected to take on the role of the provider is a contributing factor in ex-offenders reoffending.

Farmer (2017) conducted a study on the importance of building strong family ties with ex-offenders to prevent high rates of recidivism. Despite Farmer's (2017) study being conducted in England and Wales, this is a concept that is relevant worldwide. From the study conducted by Farmer (2017) and the findings of this study that has been discussed, it is evident that family plays an important part in the participants' lives to such an extent that the ex-offender would be willing to spend time in a correctional facility in an attempt to provide for their family and loved ones.

It is important to note that the study conducted by Farmer (2017) shows that when the ex-offenders felt they had a good relationship with the family, there was less worry and aggression. Good family relationships are therefore vital to the ex-offender's rehabilitation. Perhaps this could be related to finding a sense of belonging. This is backed up by a study conducted by Barack and Stebbins (2021) where ex-offenders pointed out feeling unaccepted or having no sense of belonging as a motive for reoffending. Therefore, we can identify family relationships, or the lack thereof, as a contributing factor to recidivism. If ex-offenders cannot identify as community members and considered outcasts, then there are chances of the ex-offending finding a sense of community or belonging within ex-offenders that potentially still offend, which can lead to the influence of reoffence. Participant 6, in the present study, made it clear that there is a motivating factor to staying away from crime by saying:

"I would like to have more time to change people's lives and to build my family" (participant 6).

Participant 1 also supported this notion by saying:

"I want to build a house for my family."

The participant expresses a desire for more time to make a positive impact on the lives of others and to strengthen their own family. This suggests a strong sense of responsibility and a desire to contribute to the well-being of others, as well as a deep attachment to their family. The participant's desire for more time to make a positive impact also reflects their personal experiences and struggles, such as past difficulties or missed opportunities.

This study shows that the notion of reoffending has motivations around the concept of being a man, the absence of a father figure, and the capacity to provide for the ex-offender's loved ones. Participant 1 also made this clear by saying:

"The only thing I have is family and my kids and wife, so I think of the time lost and most of the time I do things because for them" (participant 1).

The participant expresses the view that their family, children, and spouse are the most important things in their life. He also acknowledges that they may have lost time in the past, but now they prioritise their family in their actions and decisions. This suggests a strong attachment to their family and a desire to provide for them. The participant is apparently aware of the fact that they cannot get back the time lost but would rather focus on using the time they currently have wisely.

The above statement alludes to the fact that the participant previously got involved in crime to provide for his family as that is all that he had. All the participants expressed that the motive behind reoffending was fending for their loved ones.

The next theme reflects on how the loved ones, being their family, friends and community, receive the ex-offenders when they return from the correctional facility.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Reintegration and acceptance – a sense of belonging

According to Hartwell and Brown (2019), a sense of belonging for an ex-offender is identified as a sense of acceptance, but it is also valued in a social setting despite previous offences, and this is inclusive of helping ex-offenders transitioning back into society, which can reduce the chances of ex-offenders reoffending. A study conducted by Bowman and Ely

(2020) shows the important role that the community, friends and family play in managing the feelings of acceptance of ex-offenders. Successful reintegration is considered a contributing factor in reducing recidivism. The process of leaving the correctional facility and going back to the community, friends and family has positive and negative outcomes, as identified from the findings of this study. According to participant 1, the sense of belonging and the feeling of being accepted back into the community were lukewarm. He said:

> "*The community didn't receive me all that bad, they knew that I didn't offend them as a community I was arrested somewhere else so they didn't have much anger for me some they welcomed me well, but you know there are those ones in the communitythat think that a criminal is a criminal*" (participant 1).

It appears the participant is not fully accepted by the community, despite having been arrested somewhere else. Some members of the community welcomed the participant and did not harbour anger towards him for his actions. However, the participant is considered a criminal, which creates a sense of tension, exclusion as well as labelling, which makes it difficult for him to move away from crime when still labelled as such and this contributes to the non-acceptance or judgement within the community.

The lukewarm experience of participant 1 made him feel unsure of his standing as he was accepted by some and treated differently by others. This can lead to confusion of the ex-offenders. In most cases, the ex-offenders received acceptance from either friends or family or the community and rarely from all three, which is essential to increase the success rate of ex-offender reintegration. This is seen through participant 1 saying:

> "*My family accepted me, and they were very supportive but as for friends I didn't have many and when I came out, remember I couldn't go back to them*" (participant 1).

It is clear that the participant experienced a strong sense of acceptance and support from the family. However, they also expressed a lack of belonging in their friendships. The participant's experience of coming out to their friends resulted in the loss of those friendships, leaving them feeling unable to return to their previous social circle. The participant indicated that he could not go back to his old friends in attempt to move away from a social setting that may influence reoffending. The participant clearly expresses a sense of acceptance and support from their family, but a lack of belonging in their friendships. The experience of coming out of the correctional facility resulted in the loss of those friendships, leaving the participant feeling unable to return to their previous social circle.

Participant 1 seems to have intentionally kept his circle small in his process of reintegration as he said that he intentionally did not want to go back to his old ex-offender or offender friends that could potentially influence him the wrong way. Despite participant 1 emphasizing the acceptance, he received from his family, participant 2 emphasized more on acceptance from friends. He said:

>"*Some friends are still there, it's not still the same, but they are still there*" (participant 2).

It is clear that the participant experienced a shift in his friends after coming out of incarceration. While some friends remained, the participant acknowledges that things were no longer the same. This suggests a complex and nuanced experience of belonging, in which the participant's social relationships were in flux. The participant acknowledges that some friends remained, but that things were not the same as before. It is clear that the participant's experience of a sense of belonging is not a static or fixed phenomenon.

Although participant 2 mentioned that his friendships were not the same, he still mentioned some friends being there and accepting him. Participant 3 raved about the amount of support he received from family, saying:

>"*I have received a lot of support from my family, when I got out I was able to go back to my family, they shown me love*" (participant 3).

The participant experienced a sense of belonging and acceptance within their family after coming out. The participant acknowledges that they received a lot of support from their family and were able to return to them and feel loved. This promotes a sense of belonging for the ex-offender resulting in successful reintegration and a reduction in the likelihood of ex-offenders reoffending.

Participant 3 spoke of his ability to go back to his family as something important, a place that seemed important for him to mention. Muleya (2022) affirms that social integration plays a critical role in reducing recidivism. Successful ex-offender's social integration helps ex-offenders feel that they have someone they belong with and fit in. A study conducted by Ngetich (2019) contends that reducing recidivism requires an increase in the sense of belonging within those in the community. The sense of belonging is established through the acceptance of an individual (Nixon, 2020). Participant 4 experienced acceptance and social integration

from the community; it was better the first time he returned than when he returned the second time. He described it, saying:

"The first time was alright as the community said it was a mistake and some people believed that it was a mistake when I came out, but the second time it was a bit harder because sometimes if you do crime again people look at you differently, even family members" (participant 4).

The participant notes that their second time coming out of the correctional facility was more difficult due to the stigmatisation they faced after having been incarcerated for the second time. This can result in increased rates of recidivism when an ex-offender struggles to establish a sense of belonging within their community and establish a sense of community around criminal influence.

It was evident that sometimes some work needs to be put in, in order for one to have a successful reintegration into society and their loved ones. Obatusin and Ritter-Williams (2019) described social integration of ex-offenders as an effort to support the re-entry of offenders from the correctional system back into society. This is not always as easy as the definition seems to imply; some ex-offenders experience challenges in integrating back into their society and this is seen through what participant 5 experienced and described, saying:

"I had to wait for a certain time to prove myself to the community that I am willing and that I am a changed person" (participant 5).

The participant's experience of belonging is shaped by their relationship with their community, which has required them to "prove" themselves and demonstrate their commitment to change. This suggests that the participant's sense of belonging is contingent upon meeting certain social expectations or standards, and that they may experience a sense of exclusion or disconnection if they fail to meet these expectations. The participant notes that they had to wait for a certain time to prove themselves to their community and demonstrate that they had changed. This suggests a complex and nuanced experience of belonging, in which the participant's social relationships are shaped by broader social and cultural expectations and norms.

Some ex-offenders use their experiences for good, to help others through the experiences that they have had, and this can be motivating for other ex-offenders, especially given the fact

that it can be a challenge for ex-offenders to reintegrate into society. This is evident through the experience of participant 6 as he described this, saying:

> *"So, you try and motivate other people that have also been in the correctional facility, to help them based on what I have learned"* (participant 6).

The participant's sense of belonging is closely tied to their desire to give back and support others who may be experiencing similar challenges. This suggests that the participant's sense of belonging is not only based on their personal relationships and connections, but also on their sense of purpose and meaning derived from helping others. The participant's feeling of a sense of purpose and belonging through their efforts to support others who have faced similar challenges shows that the participant has been trying to motivate other people who have been in a correctional facility based on what they have learned. This suggests that the participant's sense of belonging is closely tied to their desire to give back and support others who may be experiencing similar challenges.

It is of paramount importance to note that correctional facilities also play an important role in the process of re-engaging reoffenders with communities.

> *"I believe that all programmes work and should go out there and deliver what they have been delivering out there at the moment. It would go a long way for guys like me to come outside and reengage with community"* (participant 4).

The participant's sense of belonging is closely tied to their belief in the importance of community reintegration and support for individuals who have been incarcerated. The participant believes that programmes designed to support individuals who have been incarcerated can be effective and that the correctional facility should continue to deliver in order to facilitate community reengagement. The participant notes their belief in the effectiveness of programmes designed to support individuals who have been incarcerated and the importance of community reengagement.

The kinds of programmes that are run at correctional facilities seem to help to prepare the offender for reintegration into, and coexistence with the community in one environment. I believe that the correctional facilities must be applauded for their efforts to bring closure and helping the ex-offenders to move on with the next chapter of their lives.

A participant confirmed that by saying:

"There is something called Pre-release Course, and for me, yes I have done it and I wasn't so interested in it, the reason was that my hopes were so high that I don't want to be here I was like I want to get out and do. I have done it and I passed it" (participant 5).

To reiterate, the reintegration of ex-offenders is one of the most significant elements that can help them refrain from reoffending and this is evident in this study. This process encourages a feeling of inclusion and enables ex-offenders to deal with stigmatisation and be prepared for the community, family and friends. The male ex-offender needs to feel more welcome and not be ruled out as an outcast; there is a need for trust and second chances for those who have previously offended.

Throughout the study, it was evident through the participants' experience of social integration that their loved ones around are important to them and it would only make sense for the families to accept the ex-offenders returning from the correctional facility. It is evident that successful reintegration and a sense of belonging are important in trying to reduce the rates of recidivism or ensuring that ex-offenders do not find a sense of belonging among offenders whose influence is toward crime. Despite the fact that it is ideal for all ex-offenders to have successful reintegration and acceptance from society, the sad reality is that this is not always the case. Since the focus of this study was to understand the lived experiences of male ex-offenders, it is important to understand the negative side, when ex-offenders struggle to be accepted by society.

4.3.5 Theme 5: Rejection and lack of support

According to Rohner (2004), rejection can be defined as the act of refusing to accept an individual. An ex-offender that struggles to find acceptance and is judged by society may feel rejected and this is the angle that this theme is focused on. According to the study conducted by Chikadzi et al. (2022), rejection of ex-offenders by family, friends and the community may lead to the ex-offenders looking for support from other offenders.

One participant in the present study said that the community often turns a blind eye towards them, making it difficult for the ex-offender to earn their trust again. Participant 1 explained:

"No, I didn't find it easy because you do not know how they are going to react when they see you. You have been gone and you don't know how they are going to react and it takes a lot of courage for them to understand" (participant 1).

The participant expressed difficulty in reconnecting with others after a period of absence, not knowing how others would react to his return. The participant noted the importance of others' understanding and the courage required for this understanding to occur. The participant's experience highlights the significance of social support in the context of rejection and the potential for a lack of support to exacerbate feelings of uncertainty and apprehension.

Participant 2 described the lack of support by saying:

"*Some family members gave up on me; I didn't receive the support.*"

The participant expressed a sense of rejection from certain family members, who had given up on supporting them. This highlights the potential for rejection to occur even within close relationships, and the impact that a lack of support can have on an individual's sense of well-being. The participant's words also suggest that support is an active process, and that the absence of support can be just as significant as the presence of rejection.

Participant 2 went on to say:

"*Once you come out it feels great but when you come back the family neglected me.*"

The participant expressed a sense of neglect from their family after coming out, highlighting rejection once the individual returns from the correctional facility. This highlights the impact that a lack of support can have on an individual's sense of well-being, especially in the context of family relationships. The participant's words also suggests that the experience of rejection may be a complex and ongoing process, rather than a discrete event which contributes to the high rate of recidivism.

Participant 2 felt strongly about the rejection that he received from his family and the judgment that he received from his community. He expressed this by saying:

"*Family members do not really help but those that care phone and ask how I am but you have to do everything on your own and the community talks a lot and their words hurt most of the time. Some children are being told not to be like me*" (participant 2).

The participant expressed mixed experiences of support from their family and community. While some family members demonstrate care by checking in on them, the participant also notes that support is lacking in terms of active assistance. The participant also highlights the harmful impact of negative talk from the community, including hurtful words

and negative attitudes towards children who may be perceived as different. This is the unfortunate reality constituting the lived experiences of ex-offenders.

The above shows that some ex-offenders are likely to be called names, using hurtful words. Participant 1 used the phrase 'being called *a criminal*', and this is linked to being labelled negatively. According to Benburg (2019), the labelling theory addresses the issue of individuals being called names. This can have a negative impact on the ex-offenders that are called names and this contributes negatively to ex-offenders receiving support from the community.

Participant 4 described his challenge of getting support from his loved ones after the second time of his reoffence and coming back from the correctional facility by saying:

> "*Even family members do look at you differently knowing that you committed a crime again; it's quite tough because you have to start afresh and build trust, and it was hard*" (participant 4).

The participant expresses a sense of rejection and lack of support from their family members. The participant highlights the challenges of rebuilding trust after spending time in the correctional facility, and how this can impact their relationships with family members. The participant's words suggest that the experience of rejection may be ongoing and may require significant effort to overcome.

Building trust often seems to take time and participant 5 expressed his experience this way:

> "*I had to wait for a certain time to prove myself to the community that I am willing and that I am a changed person*" (participant 5).

The participant describes a sense of rejection from their community, and the need to prove themselves in order to be accepted. The participant's words suggest that they have experienced a lack of support or trust from the community, and that they have taken active steps to try and overcome this. The participant's emphasis is on proving themselves, which may also suggest a feeling of frustration or disappointment with the community's response to them.

Participant 6 used his experience as a tool to help others with their reintegration experiences and said:

"So, you try and motivate other people that have also been in the correctional facility, to help them based on what you would have learned" (participant 6).

The participant describes a desire to support others who have been in a situation similar to his, potentially in response to their own experiences of rejection or lack of support. The participant's words suggest a sense of empathy and a desire to help others based on their own experiences. The participant's emphasis on what they have learned may also suggest a sense of resilience or personal growth as a result of their experiences.

Participant 3 expressed his pain when he expressed how his family and relatives received him after being released from a correctional facility.

He said:

"...it was tough, I think that the family was the hardest because those people are the ones who know you. It was hard with the family."

The participant describes the experience of rejection and lack of support from their family members, which they perceive as particularly difficult because of the emotional significance embedded in these relationships. The participant's words suggest a sense of disappointment and hurt in response to the lack of support from their family. Hurting the people closest to you comes at a price especially after the ex-offender has spent time away at a correctional facility. It gives rise to feelings of loneliness and somehow promotes a negative reception upon being released and trying to integrate into the family. All this was gathered either through the answers provided during the interviews or physical body language expressions when answering questions.

Furthermore, some relationships ended because of one being incarcerated. Participant 3 shared:

"When I came back, the family neglected me. Seeing your friends that you grew up with some would call you when you are in there, some would visit you at times to see you. But when you come out it's no longer the same, some are married. When I came out, I learnt that some are doing well, some are driving cars but now I can't because of my choices" (participant 3).

The participant describes the experience of feeling neglected by their family after their release from incarceration. The participant contrasts this with experiences of support from

friends, who may have been more consistent in their communication or visits. The participant also notes a sense of disappointment in seeing how others have progressed in their lives during their time in the correctional facility.

The participant's feeling of being alone and the fact that some of his friends had progressed in their lives made it hard to accept the amount of time he felt he had lost in the correctional facility. One would think that the experience of the ex-offender would be better with his loved ones and the community than what was described by participant 2 as his experience in the correctional facility. The participant explained his experience:

> *"Inside there is hell. Everything that's outside is inside but worse. There are gangs inside because other people continue to do criminal activities in there. You know prison is not a good place, most of them feel condemned in there, there is no support, you see sad things. I saw young boys coming in selling their bodies for protection and food, and some of them doing things so that they could manage to phone home, you know"* (participant 2).

The above experiences relate to the notion that some ex-offenders have experienced difficult times in prison and when released into society should receive support and not rejection. Studies such as the present study provides evidence for raising awareness around the importance of support for ex-offenders. Understanding the impact of being rejected instead of receiving support is important to understanding the lived experienced of male ex-offenders.

4.4 Chapter summary

The themes in this chapter were developed from the data collected, in line with the study objectives and the data collection tools. I took the participants' narratives from the findings of the study to understand the lived experiences of ex-offenders. It is also important to note that the participants' lived experiences, motivations for recidivism and meanings of reoffending are unique factors yet they all address the topic under investigation. In the next chapter, I present the conclusion of the study, discussing the limitations and, finally, proffering recommendations that can be considered in future studies.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the important findings of the study and draws conclusions about the male ex-offenders' lived experiences, motivations for recidivism and the meaning of reoffending to an ex-offender who has reoffended as per the research objectives. In addition, I then discuss the limitations of the study and provides recommendations for the DCS, the society inclusive of the community, family and friends, as well as providing recommendations for future studies.

5.2 Conclusion as per objectives

The study aimed to explore why male ex-offenders have previously reoffended and sought to understand the lived experiences of male ex-offenders resulting in recidivism. This study also aimed to understand the thinking and reasoning of ex-offenders who reoffended after serving their time in a correctional facility; it sought the reasons why ex-offenders get involved in recidivism numerous times. It is clear and safe to conclude from the study that ex-offenders find themselves offending and reoffending due to various reasons including peer pressure, unemployment, the lack of basic needs, unsuccessful reintegration, the desire to provide for their loved ones, as the man of the house and, in some instances, the lack of influence of a father figure. These factors are discussed in summary based on the findings and objectives of this study.

5.2.1 The motives ascribed to recidivism

The motivation behind the concept of recidivism is very visible throughout this study. I brought out this issue through the process of interviewing participants who have reoffended and are now ex-offenders. The actual motivation comes from the need to provide for their families, improve their standard of living and satisfy the need for self-empowerment, as well as rejection from society and their loved ones, and insufficient support. According to the participants, unemployment played a critical role as motivation for recidivism.

5.2.2 The meaning of reoffending to an ex-offender

Participants elaborated on the meaning of reoffending, with a lot of similarity. This comes mainly from what the ex-offenders were exposed to while in the correctional facility, where there were programmes and training to assist ex-offenders after their release from a

correctional facility. Many male ex-offenders were prepared, as they put it, for what to expect from the community, friends and family after being released.

According to the participants, self-empowerment and anger management classes helped them to understand the ways to stay away from reoffending. Some of the participants considered ex-offenders as individuals that no longer take part in reoffending and had changed their ways. This is an interesting approach that defines an ex-offender as an individual that has changed and has committed to changing and motivating the lives of other ex-offenders. The community, on the other hand, struggles to identify with ex-offenders and instead labels and sees them as criminals in some instances resulting in treatment of such through untrustworthy relations, which really does make ex-offenders stay away from re-offending.

5.2.3 Male ex-offenders' lived experiences

As the ex-offenders described the realities of what they went through, the male ex-offenders painted a vivid picture of their lived experiences before and after incarceration. Their descriptions included words and phrases such as 'tough' and 'life was a struggle'.

Major challenges such as community judgement and stigmatisation in society at large affected the male ex-offenders to the extent that some of them opted to reoffend. Name-calling and gossiping about the ex-offenders show how the community plays a role in hindering a positive outcome when it comes to reintegration and co-existence. Participants indicated that the community's reception can be lukewarm as it is hard for them to trust a male ex-offender.

This is different from the process of reintegration into the family, where the outlook and expectation are more positive, and reigniting of relationships is also possible although it comes with its own challenges. However, some participants applauded the correctional system for its attempts to prepare ex-offenders for the outside world. The preparation is meant to help the ex-offender know how to reintegrate with the community, friends and family.

The issue of having a criminal record is one of the biggest challenges that limit male ex-offenders from becoming empowered through employment and quickly reintegrating into the community, and the family. The community itself is an institution that continually observes whether or not an ex-offender has changed, and with a criminal record hanging over them it is difficult to exonerate themselves. Having to wait for 10 years to have their record expunged does not do justice to the ex-offender's concept of being free from the legal system after release or parole. Knowing that many prospective employers conduct thorough background checks is a limiting factor to finding gainful employment and contributes to the fact that many ex-

offenders, resort to re-offending. In addition, the idea that they may lose a job due to community stigmatisation is also inhibiting. According to the participants, the time spent in a correctional facility puts a physical, emotional and financial strain on their families and loved ones. These objectives have been addressed within the context of broken-down themes that have been established through the findings of this study that are aligned with the study objectives that were established through the IPA.

5.3 Conclusion of the themes

The conclusions of the five themes are discussed in detail drawing on the conclusion of this study.

5.3.1 Findings on motivation behind recidivism

After conducting IPA on the theme of motivation behind recidivism, a strong conclusion can be drawn that the factors contributing to the high rate of recidivism are complex and multi-layered. The motivations behind reoffending are often deeply rooted in personal circumstances and societal factors that include poverty, lack of education and employment opportunities, stereotyping, failed systems from the correctional facility, and a lack of social support.

Individuals who have experienced financial challenges reintegrating, lost time in an attempt to catch up with lost time due to time spent in the correctional facility and even the absence of a father figure amongst other discussed factors are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour, as they may lack the necessary coping mechanisms to deal with their emotions and experiences. Furthermore, institutional factors such as the criminal justice system's punitive approach and lack of resources for rehabilitation may also contribute to recidivism rates.

Therefore, addressing the motivation behind recidivism requires a holistic approach that addresses both individual and systemic factors. This includes providing access to education, employment, and mental health services, as well as creating a supportive social environment that promote ex-offender's rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Overall, understanding the complex motivations behind recidivism is essential in developing effective strategies for reducing reoffending rates and promoting successful reintegration into society.

5.3.2 Findings on life in Johannesburg as an ex-offender

After conducting IPA on the theme of life in Johannesburg as an ex-offender, a strong conclusion can be drawn that the experience of reintegration into society after incarceration is a challenging and complex process. Ex-offenders face significant barriers to accessing

employment, labelling and criminal records, which leads to social exclusion and marginalisation.

Moreover, the stigmatisation and discrimination that ex-offenders face often make it difficult for them to rebuild their lives and form positive relationships in their communities. However, despite the challenges, some ex-offenders are also able to find support and a sense of community in Johannesburg.

Therefore, supporting ex-offenders in Johannesburg requires a multifaceted approach that addresses not only the structural barriers to reintegration but also the emotional and psychological challenges ex-offenders experience. This includes increasing access to education, employment as well as addressing stigmatisation and promoting acceptance in communities.

Overall, the ex-offenders' experience of life in Johannesburg highlights the importance of providing support and resources to those who have been incarcerated to help them successfully reintegrate into their communities and lead fulfilling lives.

5.3.3 Findings on notions of reoffending

After conducting IPA on the theme of notions of reoffending, a strong conclusion can be drawn that the perceptions of reoffending are often shaped by societal attitudes, personal experiences, and cultural beliefs. Some individuals may view reoffending as a result of systemic failures, such as the lack of access to education, employment, and reintegration.

Moreover, some may view reoffending as a way of coping with financial constraints and providing for the family as its breadwinner. It is also important to note that the perceptions of reoffending may differ based on where the ex-offender committed the crime. For instance, individuals may view non-violent offences differently compared to violent offences, and the severity of the offence may impact their perceptions of the likelihood of reoffending.

Therefore, addressing the notions of reoffending requires a nuanced and context-specific approach that considers the individual and systemic factors that contribute to criminal behaviour. This includes addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour, such as trauma, poverty, and a lack of access to education and other factors discussed in chapter 4. It also requires addressing societal attitudes towards individuals who have been incarcerated and promoting acceptance and reintegration into the community.

Overall, understanding the complex notions of reoffending is essential in developing effective strategies for reducing reoffending rates and promoting successful reintegration into society. By addressing the individual and systemic factors that contribute to criminal behaviour and promoting acceptance and reintegration, we can create a more just and equitable criminal justice system that supports individuals in leading productive and fulfilling lives.

5.3.4 Findings on reintegration and acceptance – a sense of belonging

Reintegration and acceptance play a vital role in creating a sense of belonging. The process of reintegration involves bringing together individuals who may have been disconnected from their social, cultural or personal values and beliefs, and helping them to reconnect with these elements. Acceptance, on the other hand, speaks to embracing the ex-offender without judgement or discrimination.

The results of the analysis suggest that reintegration and acceptance are key factors in creating a sense of belonging. Individuals who have undergone reintegration programmes reported feeling more connected to their communities, cultures, and personal values, despite the gap between the theory from the programmes and the real-world reality. Individuals who have experienced acceptance from themselves and others have reported feeling more empowered, self-assured, and connected to their communities, resulting in one of the participants using their lived experience to motivate others through motivational speaking as a career path.

Overall, it can be concluded that reintegration and acceptance are important components in fostering a sense of belonging resulting in reduced rates of recidivism. These processes can help individuals to reconnect with their personal values and beliefs, build stronger relationships with others, and feel more connected to their communities. By promoting reintegration and acceptance, we can create more inclusive and supportive communities that empower individuals to live fulfilling and meaningful lives.

5.3.5 Findings on rejection and lack of support of ex-offenders

Based on IPA, it can be concluded that rejection and lack of support have a significant impact on ex-offenders reoffending. The findings suggest that ex-offenders who experience rejection and lack of support often struggle with reintegration into society and may experience feelings of isolation.

Participants in the study reported experiencing rejection from family members, friends, and potential employers, which created barriers to their successful re-entry into society. The

lack of support from these same individuals often led to feelings of abandonment and a sense that they were not valued members of society resulting in a sense of belonging being established with individuals still offending, which results in recidivism. This lack of support was also compounded by the challenges ex-offenders faced in accessing the necessary resources such as employment.

The study also revealed that the impact of rejection and lack of support on ex-offenders can be long-lasting, with many participants reporting ongoing negative feelings emanating from being labelled and stigmatised. Overall, it can be concluded that rejection and lack of support can have a significant and lasting impact on ex-offenders. To effectively address these issues, there is a need for greater awareness and understanding of the challenges faced by ex-offenders during re-entry into society. This includes providing more support and resources to help ex-offenders access the tools they need to successfully reintegrate into society. By addressing the issue of rejection and lack of support, we can help to create a more inclusive and supportive society that values the contributions of all members, regardless of their past experiences.

After performing the analysis, themes such as motivation behind recidivism, life in Johannesburg as an ex-offender, notions of reoffending, reintegration and acceptance, and rejection and lack of support, a strong conclusion can be drawn that successful reintegration of ex-offenders into society requires not only individual effort but also systemic change. The lack of support and acceptance from society creates significant challenges for ex-offenders on their reintegration into their communities, leading to a higher likelihood of reoffending. The notions of reoffending and the motivation behind it are complex, and a holistic approach is necessary to address the issue. Adequate support systems, access to education and employment opportunities, and a sense of belonging can significantly improve the chances of successful reintegration and thus reduce the rate of recidivism. Therefore, it is crucial to shift the focus from punishment to rehabilitation, ensuring that ex-offenders are given a fair chance to reintegrate into society and become productive members.

5.4 Limitations of the study

Limitations are the aspects that the researcher has very little control over – also known as restrictions – which include aspects such as the conclusions that the researcher cannot control (Anderson-Hanley et al., 2010). When conducting the research, any restrictions or restraints that might have an impact on the results are stipulated in-depth during the reporting

of findings in chapter 4. Despite semi—structured interviews being the preferred data collection method for the IPA, interviews are also time-consuming in terms of selecting, setting up interviews, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, preparation of feedback and reporting. This was evident throughout the execution of this study.

The IPA has been ideal for the analysis and interpretation of the findings of this study; therefore, my bias and assumptions as the researcher can influence the interpretation of the data. This is something that I was conscious of and let the participants confirm if the interpretation is accurate. The IPA is a qualitative method, which means that the data generated may not be easily quantified, making it difficult to compare findings across different studies or to draw statistical conclusions.

Despite my interest in the topic of this study, the fact that I have never been convicted of a crime or spent time in a correctional facility as an offender might affect how I understood, interpreted or observed the participants. This was a limitation in the sense that the male ex-offenders might have felt that I did not relate and, as a result, the ex-offenders might not have opened up fully during the semi-structured interview – which might reduce the information collected for the study. For example, the lived experiences in the correctional facility including what the ex-offenders witnessed and their daily routines. Most of the participants did not want to talk in detail about the crime for which they were convicted. This limitation was addressed by spending time with the participants to build rapport before starting with the study-related questions.

All these limitations could affect the findings of this study. Therefore, these limitations were considered throughout the study. Being aware of these restrictions does not mean changing the focus of the study but simply keeping in mind the factors that may have affected the findings of this research. Despite not being able to relate personally, I was fortunate to have the guidance of my supervisor who has had experience in the correctional facility and how to relate to the situation that the ex-offenders were facing. The supervisor guided me even in terms of language and terminology that could be used without offending the participants.

I also used timekeeping to keep track of the time spent during the interviews, but also not limiting the time spent with the participants to allow them to share their stories in their entirety without exhausting the participants. I ensured that the participants were not over-stretched by questioning them for too long.

5.5 Recommendations

This study raised a few issues concerning recidivism of male ex-offenders' lived experiences in the Johannesburg metropolitan areas of Soweto and Ormonde, which are considered to be popular tourist areas. The research also sparked questions that call for further research on the recidivism of male ex-offenders.

Firstly, the DCS needs to have more branches that are in diverse locations and that help male ex-offenders when it comes to dealing with issues like unemployment, community stigmatisation and discrimination. Strong support systems must be established as ways to tackle the issues that affect reoffenders. More research could be conducted in these focus areas in an attempt to gather more data for future possible solutions. Interventions to help ex-offenders begin inside the correctional facilities, where a participant noted that there are insufficient social workers and other resources that attend to offenders inside the facility amongst other resources. For example, in Boksburg one social worker would attend to 90 offenders or more. The deployment of more social workers and the aid of non-profit organisations would also assist in preparing ex-offenders not to reoffend and reduce the rate of recidivism. Research can be done on this topic and other resources as well in future.

There is also a need to address the issue of male ex-offenders who become destitute due to the loss of family members or offender's partners who would have abandoned their marriages or unions as they do not want to be associated with an ex-offender. These male ex-offenders become homeless and destitute, and efforts by the correctional system to try to provide for the ex-offenders would be advantageous to both parties. In one of the casual conversations, a participant mentioned this as a challenge they knew from other ex-offenders that they know. This type of initiative would hopefully reduce the rate of recidivism and the overcrowding of correctional facilities and assist with positive reintegration of male ex-offenders into society and their communities. This has room for further studies as well.

Secondly, the increasing rate of recidivism is also an area that needs urgent attention, as most correctional facilities are overpopulated and overcrowded. There also seems to be a lot of criminal activity such as drug trafficking and sexual abuse being practised inside the correctional facilities, which negatively affects the correctional system's main purpose of reducing the overall crime rate. Some of these crimes emanate from ex-offenders who reoffend and want to stay in a correctional facility as the outside world is not welcoming in terms of empowering male ex-offenders. I personally believe that there is room for more studies to be

conducted around this despite other existing studies, there is room for more to attain for the future, more data and possible recognition that might influence for change.

Thirdly, a revision is required for the 10-year existence of one's criminal record in the system. This system is a burden for ex-offenders and, ultimately, those for whom they need to provide. The collective use of various studies can influence the DCS to revise this policy, which will be a major benefit not only to the ex-offenders and their families but the community at large. However, this can only be done if enough attention is drawn through more research conducted and published on relevant platforms. The hope is that there will be a gradual reduction of offences that will promote peace and positive coexistence with those who have reoffended.

The participants also spoke of rehabilitation and programmes that prepared them for the outside world despite the gaps; it is however the very outside world that neglects some ex-offenders. The present study has shown that there is a gap of studies in awareness and promotion for preparation of the community to accept and ease the reintegration of ex-offenders which will essentially benefit in reducing rates of recidivism which will not only reduce overcrowding in correctional facilities but help build the community and economy of the menace of crime. This could be a stretch for findings on the fact that the lack of family support is a significant predictor of recidivism. Future studies could explore this relationship in more depth, including the specific types of family support that are most effective in reducing recidivism.

The current study focused on the lived experiences and recidivism among male ex-offenders. A longitudinal study that tracks participants over time could provide more insights into the factors that contribute to recidivism and the lived experiences of male ex-offenders.

The research questions of this study have been answered through understanding the lived experiences of male ex-offenders that have previously reoffended, the lives of the ex-offenders is identified as challenging in various areas. The challenges faced by the ex-offenders are identified to be the reason for the high rates of recidivism and failure for the DCS to establish its main purpose of reducing crime and reoffending. It will take the further support and solution thinking of not only the DCS but the family, friends and community at large in order for recidivism rates to reduce.

5.6 Summary

In this chapter the limitations of the study were identified and acknowledged, with suggestions for overcoming them. Recommendations for future research were made and the study conclusions were drawn in alignment with the research objectives. This study has focused on understanding the lived experiences of male ex-offenders in Soweto and Ormonde, south of Johannesburg. Through this study, the challenges that ex-offenders have experienced through their lived experiences have been identified and discussed in detail.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A–Ethical Clearance Certificate from UNISA

UNISA | university of south africa

COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

23 March 2021

Dear Ms R. C. Brown

| NHREC Registration # : |
| Rec-240816-052 |
| CREC Reference # : |
| 61938661_CREC_CHS_2021 |

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

Principal Researcher: Ms R. C. Brown   (61938661@mylife.unisa.ac.za)
Supervisor/s: Mr M. Mdakane   (emdakam@unisa.ac.za)

Title: *Exploring recidivism among male ex-offenders in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Area*

Degree 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 March 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.
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 March 2024).** Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **61938661_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 :

Prof. Ilse Ferns
CHS Ethics Chairperson
Email: fernsi@unisa.ac.za
Tel: (012) 429 8210

Signature : PP

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

Appendix B–Interview guide

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Interview guide

I would like to start off by thanking you for taking part in this study which will have a great contribution to the research on exploring recidivism among male ex-offenders.

As previously mentioned, and just to confirm on record, are you comfortable with me recording this interview and transcribing the data collected in this interview?

A reminder: Should you at any stage feel uncomfortable to continue with the study, you are able to withdraw at any stage.

Please note: Should you at any stage withdraw from continuing with the study, the data collected in the interview will be destroyed. You will also be given the opportunity to go through the transcribed and analysed data to ensure it is the correct reflection of your answers.

Can you start off by confirming your age?

Which language are you most comfortable using for this interview?

Can you confirm that you are no longer on Parole?

How long have you been released from the Correctional Facility?

How would you define an ex-offender that is has reoffended as in accordance with your understanding so we can understand it in your perspective?

How has the experience of spending time in a Correctional Facility affected or impacted you?

How would you describe your lived experience as an ex-offender that has reoffended?

In your situation, what would you say has contributed to you previously reoffending after having spent time in a Correctional Facility?

How would you describe yourself before spending time in a Correctional Facility as supposed to after spending time in a Correctional Facility?

How does it feel being released from the Correctional Facility?

How would you describe how you feel now that you have been released from the Correctional Facility?

1

How would you say you were treated by those that know you (Family, friends & community) after being released from the Correctional Facility and how did that make you feel?

What are some of the challenges that you came across as an ex-offender?

What kind of support did you receive as an ex-offender?

What would you say are current contributing factors that could contribute to potentially reoffending in future?

How have you found the process of reintegrating into your community including various factors like finding a job or feeling accepted and supported by your loved ones or community?

What are your thoughts on the current rehabilitation and intervention programs that the Correction System currently has in place?

How do you feel you have benefited from these intervention programs?

What do you feel could help change the rate that offenders reoffending after being released?

Appendix C-Informed consent and Participant Information Sheet

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Ethical clearance #:

Research permission #:

Informed Consent

COVER LETTER TO AN INVITATION OF A STUDY BEING CONDUCTED THROOUGH SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Dear Prospective participant,

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by Charity Brown under the supervision of Mbongiseni Mdakane, in the Department of Psychology towards a master's in research Psychology, Full Dissertation at the University of South Africa.

The Study you have received has been designed to exploring recidivism among male ex-offenders in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Area. You were selected to participate in this study because you qualify to be apart of this study based on the topic at hand. First time offenders will not be considered in this. By completing this study, you agree that the information you provide may be used for research purposes, including dissemination through peer-reviewed publications and conference proceedings.

It is anticipated that the information we gain from this study will help us to answer the question behind recidivism and the lived experiences of male ex-offenders in the Ormbods and Soweto area. You are, however, under no obligation to take part and you can withdraw from the study prior to finalizing the study. If you feel uncomfortable at any stage, you will be exit the research. If you choose to participate in this study, it will take up no more than forty-five minutes of your time. You will not benefit from your participation as an individual monetary; however, it is envisioned that the findings of this study will help others see things from a different perspective and awareness across various communities. We do not foresee that you will experience any negative consequences by completing the study. The researcher(s) undertake to keep any

information provided herein confidential, not to let it out of our possession and to report on the findings from the perspective of the participating group and not from the perspective of an individual. Despite Pseudonym being used and not your real name, direct quotes from the interview will be found and shared with you for approval.

The records will be kept for five years for audit purposes where after it will be permanently destroyed, hard copies will be shredded, and electronic versions will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer. You will not be reimbursed or receive any incentives for your participation in the study.

The research was reviewed and approved by the UNISA Ethics Review Committee. The primary researcher, Charity Brown, can be contacted during office hours on 066 205 7146. The study supervisor, Mr. Mbongiseni Mdakane, can be contacted during office hours at through UNISA. Should you have any questions regarding the ethical aspects of the study, you can contact the chairperson of the UNISA Ethics Research Committee through UNISA. Alternatively, you can report any serious unethical behaviour at the University's Toll-Free Hotline 0800 86 96 93.

You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. There is a toll access to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) on 0800 70 80 90, and the Central Gauteng Mental Health Society on 080 022 3217 that you can contact should you need in future or any time speak to a psychologist should there be any future triggers that is not anticipated.

APPENDIX D: Turnitin Report

EXPLORING RECIDIVISM AMONG MALE EX-OFFENDERS IN THE
JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN AREA

ORIGINALITY REPORT

9%	7%	4%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	1%
2	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	1%
3	scholarworks.waldenu.edu Internet Source	1%
4	core.ac.uk Internet Source	<1%
5	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1%
6	Malatjie, Tebogo Joyhonour. "A Qualitative Exploration of Male Ex-Offenders' Experiences of Community-Based Reintegration Programs in Gauteng", University of Johannesburg (South Africa), 2022 Publication	<1%
7	scholar.ufs.ac.za Internet Source	<1%