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How Women Who Have Recidivated Describe Their Readiness for Employment after Release from Prison

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Abstract

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by

Simba Kathleen Fox

MBA, University of Phoenix, 2010

BS, California State University, 2002

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human and Social Services / Criminal Justice

Walden University

Abstract

Since the 1980s, the population of women prisoners incarcerated in the state of California had significantly increased by 500% more than that of the male prisoners. The United States had more incarcerated women than any other country. Along with this alarming rise in female incarceration, recidivism rates were also higher among female inmates. This problem has negatively affected women in California; whereas 57% of the women released from prison were rearrested within three to seven years. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to investigate how 18 women who had recidivated with the same or a different criminal behavior describe their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center in the State of California. Evidence in the data collected involved semi structured interviews with one-on-one participants. This evidence revealed that women released without the proper employment skill will find obtaining employment difficult. Data analysis used were the Moustakas's modified van Kaam method. The key findings indicated that women offenders that were not prepared for immediate employment return to prison due to societal and personal barriers involving gaining employment. The implications for positive social changes were directed at policymakers, executive decision-makers, administrators, and staff member who work in the criminal justice system, as well as community organization leaders. The information from this study could be instrumental in how specialists, social workers and the justice system can create plans and programs for women's reentry into society and becoming employable once release from prison.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved Mother, Ms. Helen N. Williams, my son, Michael James Fox, Sr., my grandson, Michael James Fox, Jr. (AKA Pepper). Always remembering my sisters, Frances, and Myra. Brothers Irving, Keith, Leroy, Paul, and Charles, and those who supported and encouraged me throughout this educational journey. My thanks to the many Walden students I met during this process.

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Chapter 1:

Introduction to the Study

The United States has the highest female prison population in the world. The population of women re-incarcerated in state and federal prisons after being released reportedly outweighs that of men in state and federal prisons in California (Carson & Anderson, 2016; Fuentes, 2013). The number of women incarcerated has drastically increased over the past 30 years (Fuentes, 2013).

Fuentes (2013) reported that incarcerated women are most often women of color who are more likely than their non-incarcerated peers to have fragmented histories such as not having a consistent caretaker or having absent or incarcerated parents. They were also more likely to be single mothers. Female offenders often lacked vocational training, were undereducated, were not employed or employable, suffered from poor physical and mental health, had substance abuse issues, had high rates of lifetime traumas, and were more likely to test positive for infectious diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), tuberculosis, and hepatitis C (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013; Grills et al., 2015).

Compared to their male counterparts, female offenders' crimes were less violent. Women have specific risk factors that can override prosocial self-preservation. Women occupied societal roles. They are often caretakers for children, while balancing other priorities. Women need different type of services, including, but not limited to counseling from traumas, separation from their children and the frequency, prevalence, and seriousness of their criminal involvement was lower (Flower, 2010; Paulson, 2013).

When women continue to engage in criminal conduct (known as recidivism), it may be a coping or survival mechanism that they viewed as necessary or desirable to meet their numerous

challenges (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013). Like how women differ from men in their pathways in criminal behavior, women's entry into crimes was based on the circumstances they faced. Their circumstances often involved employment, education, family, and children (Flower, 2010; Paulson, 2013).

Women were often the only parent in the home or the only employable person with enough skills to become employed. An employable person is someone who has experience, knowledge, or vocational training in areas that he or she could be employed. Because of the length of time incarcerated, the ex-offender may have lost the ability to function adequately in a job at the skill level he or she did before they entered the prison system. Machinery, job skills, and technology may have changed, making the skills once held by individuals before their incarceration less marketable.

This research explored the experiences of 20 participants with both a history of recidivism and experiences of lack of employment readiness after prison. Further, I explored what sort of challenges those participants had after prison release, and how their experiences may have related to the lack of employable skill training and education before and after prison release. I strived to understand whether women once housed in the state of California prison system were immediately employable upon release without additional employee training.

The intention in conducting this study was to capture the women's voices in describing their experiences of recidivism and its potential relationships to their employment readiness immediately following their prison release. Each participant was qualified for the study by having a history of recidivism and challenges with gaining employment. The fundamental question was to examine, from their experiences, if a lack of employable skills before prison

release was a contributing factor in their recidivism. I found a gap in the literature that directed attention to this question.

Chapter 1 included the background of the study, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, and the theoretical foundation. Additionally, the chapter contains a discussion of the nature of the study, definitions of key terms, an outline of the assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, significance of the study, and concludes with a summary.

Background of the Study

Three Strikes Sentencing Law

On November 6, 2012, California voters approved a new law commonly known as Proposition 36 or the "Three Strikes Reform Act" (Irvine, 2016). The Three Strikes Act, which enacted in 1994, mandated that the judicial system sentence convicted felons with two prior felonies to state prison for a term of at least 25 years to life.

In 2012, Proposition 36, the Three Strikes Reform Act, shortened the sentences of prisoners serving life terms for nonserious and nonviolent crimes, and who no longer pose a threat to public safety, thereby reducing the severity of California's Three Strikes Act (Eaglin, 2015; Stanford Law School Three Strikes Project and NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2013).

The significant difference between the two laws was that the Three Strikes ruling did not allow for any felons to be released until serving his or her sentence of 25 years in prison. The Three Strike Reform Act of 2012 (also known as Proposition 36) amended the Three Strikes Law to be less harsh and added a resentencing procedure for some prisoners who sentenced under the former Three Strikes Law. According to the Stanford Law School and NAACP (2013),

California's Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011 (The Realignment Act), Proposition 36 in 2012, and Proposition 47 in 2014 are California's three reforms.

Reentry Services

However, California state officials had failed to provide post-release job skill services to women who were reentering their communities. As a result, reentry service organizations across the state of California have struggled to find the resources to address the gap and help released individuals gain employment.

According to Stanford Law and NAACP (2013), the Delaney Street Foundation, the Amity Foundation, the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, the Last Mile, and Californians for Safety and Justice provided free temporary housing, mental health services, sobriety maintenance, and job training. While these volunteer efforts were admirable, only a few of those services were easily accessible to offenders leaving prison because many of the organizations lack adequate funding and support, and there were frequently service gaps in critical areas such as housing, employment, and drug treatment and rehabilitation.

Traumatic experiences were common to women offenders (Fuentes, 2013). Fuentes (2013) used anthropological methods to investigate women's pathways to incarceration and associated services needed for reducing recidivism and empowering women to reenter their communities upon their release successfully. Using in-depth, life history interviews and focus groups, Fuentes circulated self-administered questionnaires with a convenience sample of 60 women inmates at a prison facility in North Carolina from fall 2008 to fall 2010. Fuentes noted that this prison system was unique because many programs and services offered to inmates, such as a General Education Diploma (GED) classes, parenting class, substance abuse treatment, domestic violence education, and support, anger management, a health and nutrition classes, and

many spiritually based programs. Fuentes asked participants about their most pressing needs, and most women in the focus groups and life history interviews discussed safe and affordable housing for themselves and their children, a financially secure job, freedom from an abusive partner, and education and vocational training to help them secure a job. Thus, to overcome obstacles that have prevented women from achieving these goals, Fuentes concluded that "incarcerated women's service needs should include, substance abuse treatment, parenting classes, along with long-term counseling, mental health services, physical health services, domestic violence support [and] education, and vocational training" (p. 99).

According to Fuentes (2013), it was not enough for the prison systems to have provided different services and classes. He found that all treatment aspects must address the pivotal role of trauma in women's pathways to incarceration. For example, Fuentes noted that useful substance abuse classes must guide women offenders in their efforts to adopt healthier alternatives for coping with trauma-related depression and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Hence, how services delivered to women inmates may have facilitated or hindered their healing from an experienced trauma. Fuentes found that most women offenders responded with fear and resistance, rather than obedience, to male instructors whom they perceived as less safe or trustworthy than female instructors. That reaction most likely would have been because of a violent experience involving men. Most participants, according to Fuentes, reported interpersonal violence as to how family members and intimate partners-maintained power and control over them. Thus, Fuentes explained that women need structure, but in a supportive environment that empowers healing and healthy relationship formation with other women.

The collective effect of trauma requires long-term healing (Fuentes, 2013). Fuentes (2013) explained that despite most women's desires and plans to change their lifestyles

positively, many would have little choice but to use the same survival strategies that resulted in their incarceration if services and support terminated when they were released. Fuentes as well as Flower (2010) noted that plans to reduce recidivism such as empowering women and their children to thrive in the community must not be overly punitive or dismissive but pointed out that those strategies "had remained invisible for too long" (Fuentes, 2013, p. 101). Fuentes recommended future in-depth examinations of both micros- and macro-level influences on incarceration. Therefore, given the lack of research focused on women offenders and employment barriers, this study was proposed to explore those influences.

Problem Statement

Women's lack of job skills training after incarceration begs the question of their readiness to become employable. Over the past decades, California has had an epidemic of recidivism according to a 2015 report by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR, 2016). The recidivism rate for women has skyrocketed over the past decade, and only recently has it begun to make a turn-around (CDCR, 2016). The devastating effects of the lack of employable skills demonstrated in many lifelong areas. Parents were unable to support their children, looked to the state for financial assistance from the government, community action groups, and nonprofit agencies such as food bank programs and other living assistance organizations, which puts a burden on the already over-budgeted financial systems. Plans were negotiated that resulted in budget cuts to areas such as education and health services, according to the California Department of Corrections Rehabilitation (Frese et al., 2013).

Nature of the Study

Within three years of release, seven out of 10 women inmates were at risk of a return to prison, some, because of the lack of current job training programs available (Urban Institute,

2013). Urban Institute (2013) suggested that provision for job skills before prison release could make a difference in recidivism (Vacca, 2004; van Dinther et al., 2011). The impact of job training and the increase of recidivism were not entirely clear, but without current job skills, ex-inmates were finding it difficult to find employment.

Incarcerated women faced many individual and societal barriers to successful community reentries such as social stigma, lack of basic needs, poverty, community ties, and unrealistic preparedness (Flower, 2012; Paulson, 2013). The high U.S. incarcerated population, along with the elimination of Pell Grants for offenders (due to budget cuts) has resulted in the United States having one of the highest levels of incarceration with the lowest level of postsecondary education provision (Lockard & Rankin-Robertson, 2011). Lockard and Rankins-Robertson (2011) reported that some U.S. prison institutions offer some General Education Development (GED) equivalency classes, vocational training, and workforce reentry courses. However, only a few offenders' families can afford tuition and were able to pay for mailed correspondence academic courses from community colleges. Also, Lockard and Rankins-Robertson noted that where educational programming offered, there were relevant questions concerning inmate's participation rates, participation persistence, and quality of education. Lockard and Rankins-Robertson (2011) explained that by those measures, the situation was dire (e.g., the participation rate for the GED-level was only two percent of the total federal and state prison population).

At that time, despite women becoming one of the fastest-growing population of the United States' prison and jail population, most incarceration population research had been focused on men (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013). There were very few programs in place that address the women's situation (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013). Both Fuentes (2013) and Flower (2010) argued that policy and services recommendations designed for incarcerated males could

not have applied to their female counterparts. Fuentes further noted that researchers had begun to

reveal gendered pathways to crime, which indicate the need for equally unique male as well as

female services provided for the person returning from prison.

In 2015, the Obama Administration initiated a program that awarded federal education

funding to prison inmates in 37 states. At that time, there were more than 2.2 million people

behind bars in the state and federal prisons, according to the Department of Education (2016).

The state of California included in those states for which there would be an investment in

rehabilitation and education services (Korte, 2016). The investment in prison education

addresses the paucity of postsecondary options, driven by a growing number of researchers that

suggest educated inmates were more likely to stay out of prison and become productive members

of their community (Paynter, 2018).

The Second Chance Pell Pilot Program (SCPPP) that produced the Obama

Administration included selections of 67 colleges and universities to receive government

funding. The funds were allocated to the SCPPP in its experimental stage to help prisoners earn

an associate or bachelor's degree while incarcerated. Now with over 2.2 million individuals in

American prisons and jails—a majority of whom will return to their communities—the push is

on to improve education and job opportunities skills to reduce crime and make our communities

safer. On July 14, 2015, the Obama Administration announced a series of education and job

programs along with other supportive measures designed to ensure that people who would be

returning from prison to the community were equipped with the skills and resources to obtain

employable skills to learn how to support their families and become a contributor to society. A

study conducted by the Rand Corporation in 2013, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice,

showed inmates who participated in educational programs were 43% less likely to return to prison within three years than those who did not participate.

Further, the RAND Corporation (2013) studies showed a decrease in recidivism across the board. However, the RAND Corporation did not mention what amount of that population were women, and what amount of that population were men when the study produced its conclusion. There was a lack of clarification regarding women versus men, therefore, leaving a gap in information concerning if there was a decrease in recidivism among the women in California, and if it had any potential connection with lack of job training.

In this phenomenological research study, I investigated how 18 women who had recidivated described their readiness for employment after release from incarceration in the state of California. I chose the phenomenological research design because there was an essence or essences to participants' shared experience. The final product resulted in a description that presents the core of the phenomenon (Worthington, 2013). I used the phenomenological research design to show the essence of the experiences of female ex-offenders who had recidivated after their last release from the state of California prison system.

I collected data for this study through in-depth, face-to-face, telephonic semi-structured interviews with 18 women between the ages of 18 and 65 who have a history of recidivating in the state of California's prisons, jails, or detention centers, and who had difficulties gaining employment due to a lack of current job skills. By exploring through the critical case method, I was able to collect samples that were most likely to have information and experiences that were similar, thereby allowing a smaller or larger participation pool. Another form of recruiting that could have been effective was snowball sampling, which required qualified participants to recommend others to request entry into the study. That method was rejected because it had the

potential to jeopardize the privacy of those recommended candidates that have the potential for being coercive.

The relationships between saturation and the sample size were sufficient in this study because through the critical case sampling, the use of 20 participants (based on the number of released inmates) allowed the researcher to obtain data that were rich in quality and thick in quantity (Palinkas et al., 2015). However, if I had not reached saturation with 20 participants, then I would have continued to recruit and interview participants until saturation reached. I conducted individual interviews in private meeting areas such as a schoolyard park, nearby Starbucks, and other places of participant's suggested convenience and choosing.

I used the critical case strategy to identify potential participants who met the selected criteria based on Appendix B for inclusion in the study and contacted them by e-mail, telephone, or face-to-face conversations. I sent via e-mail, U.S. mail, or gave a consent form to the participant after their initial contact (See Appendix H). I also asked the candidate to take part in the research study by reading and completing with signature the volunteer consent form.

I alone conducted and transcribed the interviews and managed the data with NVivo software. I used Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method of analysis to analyze the data and abided by Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines to ensure the ethical protection of the participants. Further discussion of the nature of the study is included in Chapter 3.

A Gap in Knowledge

I researched literature spanning the years of 2008–2018. Based on that search, I found a gap in information concerning whether the cause of recidivism among women is due to their lack of employable skills, post-prison release. Hall and Killacky (2008) argued that "release from

prison was possible during the life of women inmates." Therefore, correctional education and education after prison release can be critical in the rehabilitation process by helping to reduce recidivism, as demonstrated by Vacca (2004). Vacca (2004) explained that "positive educational experiences leading to gainful employment can discourage deviant behavior and encourage self-reliance" (p. 11). According to the research by Eaglin (2015) and Prison Legal News (2015), the population on prisoners in the United States has reached 2.3 million. This number has increased tenfold since 1970, according to Eaglin, and the reason is simple "Most prisoners released today released into society without job skill and educational levels that are so low they can only qualify for poverty-level incomes" (para. 15).

Faced with such challenges as fulfilling the basic needs of survival, such as food, clothing, and shelter, the burden to become employed and the lack of up-to-date job skills may force some ex-prisoners back to crime to survive. A single solution that may decrease crime levels relieve the financial strain on state and federal budgets and enhance our communities today and in the future is providing job skills education before prison release. Therefore, this proposed study addressed the gap in the literature by investigating the experiences of 20 women's readiness for employment after their release and whether lack of up-to-date employable job skills had an impact on the conduct of the participants or in any way contributed to their recidivism.

Research Questions

Three research questions were used to guide the study:

1. How do women who have recidivated describe their readiness for employment after release from prison?

2. What factors do women with a history of recidivism identify as crucial for reentering into society, especially regarding supporting themselves financially?

3. Do women with a history of recidivism attribute their return to prison to a lack of job skills, outdated employable skills, and replacement in the workforce by modem technology or a disability?

Theoretical Foundation

Person-in-Environment (PIE) Perspective

One of the two theories used in this study was the person-in-environment (PIE) perspective (Daly, 1992, 1994), which is a concept and philosophy in the field of social work. That concept addressed an individual's behavior and suggested that by understanding the individual's beliefs and behavioral patterns, I will gain a clear understanding of why the conduct occurred and can identify its causes. The primary function of the PIE theory was to help the individual and understand individuals' behavior through their explanations of experiences to gain up-to-date information that can help both the person and society. Richmond (1917) was credited with creating the PIE perspective, which in later years was created by Addams Biography.com (2014), and expanded in work by Richmond, as well as refined by Hamilton (1951) and Hollis (1972). PIE is an essential social work concept that is relevant to social work practice, education, and research (Buchbinder et al., 2004; Hare, 2004; Johnson & Yanca, 2001; Kondrat, 2002; Minahan, 1981; Rogge & Cox, 2001; Schneider & Netting, 1999; Weiss-Gal, 2008). Cornell (2006) reported that the PIE perspective was focused on both individual assistance and social reform, while Germain and Gitterman (2008) noted that the focus was on the goodness-of-fit between individuals and their environment. Germain and Gitterman discussed the reciprocal

relationship between individuals and their environments, which shape and influence each other throughout people's life course.

Cornell (2006) claimed that the historical development of the PIE approach is indicative of political, social, and economic concerns, in addition to debates within the social work profession. Kondrat (2015) related that the PIE perspective provided an adequate framework for assessing people and their presenting problems and strengths, which was better than an approach that focused solely on changing their behavior or one that was focused only on environmental conditions. Kondrat (2015) also reported that the PIE perspective increases the number of interventions available to practitioners, with the options to intervene directly with individuals, into aspects of the environment, or both. As a perspective or framework, Kondrat (2015) noted that the PIE approach helps practitioners organize observations, planning, and intervention strategies. The PIE perspective discussed in further detail in Chapter 2.

The Pathways Theory

The pathways theory is a perspective of criminology that suggests victimization in the life of women may be a key to women's entry into offensive conduct (Agnew, 1985, 1992, 2001). The pathways theory served as part of the theoretical foundation in this study to understand how women who have recidivated describe her life, her recidivism, and her readiness for employment after her release from incarceration. I also explored whether the lack of employable skills after the release was an issue.

Researchers have found that gender was a significant factor in shaping criminality (Bloom & Owen, 2013; Bloom et al., 2003, 2004; Brennan et al., 2012; Daly, 1992, 1994; Gehring, 2016; Simpson et al., 2008). The pathways approach explained as a theory of change with an underlying cause of poverty. Bloom and Owen (2013) found five unique pathways that

can be readily identified as capacity, household influence, enabling environment, productivity, and access. A brief explanation of each pathway follows:

- Capacity: Women need the knowledge, skills, self-confidence, and conviction to succeed in their roles as individuals.

- Household influence: Women need control in the use of household income and decisions.

- Enabling environment: Cultural as well as polices norms are expectations that have significant effects.

- Productivity: Women need the skills, knowledge, and opportunity to change their situations.

- Access: Women need access to services that will enable them to be financially successful in a productive lifestyle.

Definition of Terms

Detention centers: Refers to "penal institutions designed to incarcerate individuals convicted of and sentenced for crimes" (Broemmel, 2017, para. 1).

Employable: A person who has the experience, knowledge, or vocational training in the area in which he or she is employed or seeking employment (Yorke, 2004).

Ex-offenders: In this study, ex-offenders defined as individuals with a criminal record who have been in a prison, jail, or detention center (Centre for British Teachers [CfBT] Education Trust, 2011).

General strain theory (GST): Refers to Agnew's (1985, 1992, 2001) GST, which is focused on negative emotions or affect that can lead individuals into crime or delinquency if positive adaptations or coping strategies are not present.

Inmate: An individual who is "confined in a state or federal correctional facility" (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 2).

Jail: Refers to a confinement facility meant for adults administered by a local law enforcement agency. The facilities include city or county correctional centers; individual jail facilities, such as medical treatment or release centers; halfway houses; work farms; and temporary holding or lockup facilities that are part of the jail's combined function for prisoners having sentences of one year or less (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 2).

Jurisdiction: Refers to "the legal authority of state or federal correctional officials over a prisoner, regardless of where the prisoner held" (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 2).

Marginalized: Refers to populations that are "excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural, or political life" (Cook, 2008, p. 21).

Offenders: In this study, offenders defined as adults convicted of any criminal offense (Pierson, 2017).

Pathways theory: Refers to gender being a significant factor in shaping criminality (Bloom et al., 2003, 2004; Brennan et al., 2012; Daly, 1992, 1994; Gehring, 2016; Simpson et al., 2008). Five unique women's pathways are as follows: (a) harmed and harming women, (b) street women, (c) drug-connected women, (d) battered women, and (e) other (Daly, 1992, 1994).

Person-In-Environment Perspective (PIE): Focuses on "social workers' knowledge and skills that improve the contextual goodness-of-fit, mutual transactions between, and adaptations of individuals and their environment" (Rogge & Cox, 2001, p. 49).

Prison: Refers to "a long-term confinement facility, run by a state or the federal government, which typically holds felons and offenders with sentences of more than one year (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 2).

Recidivism: Refers to the behavior of a person's relapse (National Institute of Justice, 2014, para. 1).

Reentry: Refers to "the process of prisoners reentering society after a period of incarceration in prison, jail, or detention facility" (Wilkinson, 2001, p. 46).

Reoffend: Refers to recidivism, where an individual commits another criminal offense, the same offense or violation from an offense (Arkowitz & Lilienfeld, 2008).

Assumptions

The first assumption in this research study was that each woman who participated would openly and honestly answer the interview questions by sharing her perceptions about the questions asked. Another assumption was that each participant in the study knew if job training programs offered in the prison, jail, or detention center where she incarcerated. It assumed that the in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews were appropriate to explore how women who have recidivated describe their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center. Race and ethnicity of the studied participants would not be a factor because those of each race or ethnicity living in the southern California area has some population of women incarcerated and now released with a history of recidivism. Finally, it was assumed the results of the study might lead to positive social changes as findings may affect policymakers, executive decision-makers, administrators, and staff members who worked in the criminal justice system as well as community organization leaders and staff members who worked with ex-offenders.

Scope and Delimitations

The studied participants included 20 adult women who had been incarcerated more than once in a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California and had recidivated and been

unemployed since their last release. Women from any race, ethnicity, or with disabilities were eligible to volunteer to participate in the study if they could read, write, and understand the English language. In the study, I focused on how they describe their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California. Also, I focused on the individual and societal barriers that contributed to their recidivism and factors that the participant felt was important for her reentry into society.

Excluded from participating in this study were women under the age of 18 years of age or over the age of 66. Excluded from the study were women never incarcerated, and women who had recidivated, but had not had a challenge with gaining employment once released. Also excluded were incarcerated women in other states, but never in the state of California, and employed since their last release.

I did not include anyone with whom I have personal knowledge, or a relationship with, which included family members, friends, co-workers, or professional and personal associates, as this prevented perceived coercion to participate due to any existing or expected relationship between the participants and myself.

Limitations

Because of the sensitivity and stigmas associated with having been incarcerated, the data collected were limited to what the participant was willing to share with me honestly. The first possible limitation of the study included the results as I used a critical case sample of 20 participants. Therefore, the research questions directed toward the participants' views on their experiences with recidivism and if a lack of employable skills after prison release played a factor in their failure to obtain employment.

Second, I had to consider the participant's thoughts on social desirability, such as bias due to the potential for participants not to answer the interview questions honestly for fear of wanting to be perceived positively. However, I assumed participants would openly and honestly answer the interview questions by sharing their perceptions about the questions asked because they were assured their identity was protected. Third, there were also limitations with self-report data for the interviews as participants may not have accurately or thoroughly self-evaluated themselves. I trusted that participants accurately and thoroughly self-evaluated themselves to the best of their abilities.

Significance of the Study

To further understand and address the recidivism problem among women, it was essential to obtain the perceptions of women who have recidivated about their readiness for employment after release from incarceration, the individual and societal barriers that contribute to their recidivism, and factors that are important for their reentry into society. While there have been drastic decreases in rehabilitation funding, there was a need for effective prerelease strategies (Grills et al., 2015; Lockard & Rankins-Robertson, 2011). There were differences in women's pathways to the criminal justice system, women's behavior while under supervision or in custody, and the realities of women's lives in the community, which have significant bearing on the practices of the criminal justice system (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013).

Women's responses to community supervision, incarceration, treatment, and rehabilitation were different from those of men (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013). Differences between men and women under community supervision and in custody included women having decreased levels of violence and threats to community safety in their offense patterns. They were usually responsible for children and other family members. Their relationships with staff and

other offenders were different; they were vulnerable to staff misconduct and victimization; they have programming and services needs while under supervision and in custody, which included physical and mental health, substance abuse, recovery from trauma, and economic and vocational skills; and there were also differences in reentry and community integration (Bloom et al., 2004; Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013). Thus, correctional system leaders and agency leaders could examine the effect of gender on their operations and policy-level changes (Bloom et al., 2004). Agency leaders should include creating parity such that women offenders receive the equivalent range of services that were available to male offenders, such as opportunities for personal programming and services that aimed at the unique needs of the women population (Bloom et al., 2004). Also, policymakers, executive decision-makers, administrators, and staff members, as well as community organization leaders and staff members, should be knowledgeable about the realities of working with women offenders and ex-offenders, thus, committing to women's services.

Bloom et al. (2004) also noted that other key policy considerations should consist of reviewing standard procedures for their applicability to women offenders, responding to women's pathways in and out of crime; by considering community partnerships to create a model reentry and transitional program that includes housing, training, education, employment, and family support services. Furthermore, Bloom et al. (2004) noted that policy considerations should include children and families as more women than male offenders have primary responsibilities for their children, which were often compromised by criminal justice policy.

Findings from this research have added further knowledge to the human services literature. Along with the human services field, those in a wide array of other areas might be interested in the study's findings, which include the fields of public policy and administration,

criminal justice, and public safety. The conclusions of the study were also applicable to many agencies and organizations, including federal, state, and local organizations under the criminal justice system such as the CDCR.

Summary

In this study, I investigated how women who have recidivated described their readiness for employment after release from incarceration in the state of California. Using critical case sampling, I collected data through in-depth, face-to-face semi-structured interviews with 20 women who met the study selection criteria. I transcribed the interviews and managed the data with NVivo. I analyzed the data using Moustakas's (1994) modified van Kaam method of analysis. The implications for positive social changes directed at policymakers, executive decision-makers, administrators, and staff members who work in the criminal justice system as well as community organization leaders. Staff members who worked with ex-offenders to become stronger women-sensitive policies, programs, and interventions at the state and local levels were needed to reduce the high rate of recidivism. While there had been a drastic decrease in rehabilitation funding, there was still a need for effective prerelease strategies, that should include a model reentry and transitional program with housing, training, education, employment, and family support services (Bloom et al., 2004; Grills et al., 2015; Lockard & Rankins-Robertson, 2011).

Chapter 1 included the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, research questions, theoretical foundation, nature of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, the significance of the study, and a summary. Chapter 2 includes the literature search strategy and theoretical foundation as well as discussion of the history of women's incarceration in the United States, California's Public Safety

Realignment Act, California's Proposition 36, California's Proposition 47, California women's

incarceration and recidivism rates, individual and societal barriers contributing to recidivism,

women's employment readiness and other essential reentry factors, and a summary and

conclusions. Chapter 3 encompasses the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher,

methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and a review.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research study was to investigate how women who have recidivated describe their readiness for employment after release from incarceration in a state or federal institution in California. Women's incarceration rates in the United States were at least three times higher than those of other nations (Carson & Anderson, 2016; Fuentes, 2013; Grills et al., 2015; Thompson, 2008; Weiss et al., 2010).

In California, the correctional system has been through significant changes over the past 40 years (Public Policy Institute of California [PPIC], 2016). In European countries, the prison rate as an indicator of a punitive crime policy (Drenkhahn et al., 2014). In the eastern European countries, including Ukraine and Russia, known as the "Old Soviet Empire," the women outnumber the men at a rate of 51% to 49%. The PPIC (2016) noted that between 1980 and 2006, California legislators' tough-on-crime policies resulted in the prison population increasing more than sevenfold (p. 15). More recently, the Realignment Act, Proposition 36, and Proposition 47 were used to reduce a mass incarceration population without significantly increasing the state's overall crime rate (Eaglin, 2015; Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). Therefore, the PPIC's arguments supported those of the Eglin (2015) and the Stanford and NAACP (2013) report: The Stanford Law School and NAACP (2013) emphasized that based on Proposition 36, no public resources are available to women inmates when they are released.

Women's incarceration rates were more indicative of policies focused on the U.S. war on drugs than on an actual increase in criminality (Fuentes, 2013). Grills et al. (2015) reported 27.1% of women ex-inmates return to state prison within three years. Grills et al. (2015) stated that the unique experiences of California's female offenders should inform post-release

intervention strategies to affect baseline and follow-up well-being, resilience, and a sense of personal control" (p. 759), which will reduce recidivism.

Chapter 2 includes sections on the literature search strategy and the theoretical foundation, followed by discussion related to the incarceration of women in the United States, California's Public Safety Realignment Act, California's Proposition 36, California's Proposition 47, California women's incarceration and recidivism rates, individual and societal barriers contributing to recidivism, and formerly incarcerated women's employment readiness and other essential reentry factors. Chapter 2 ends with a summary, conclusions, and review of the literature to determine what benefits can come from this study and how measuring the causes of recidivism through lack of job skills can bring additional attention to society and allow lawmakers to change and help correct the situation if one exists.

Literature Search Strategy

A comprehensive search was conducted using the Walden University Library data bases that included Thoreau Multi-Database Search, SAGE Premier, ProQuest Central, PsycINFO, and Academic Search Complete. Also, the research was conducted by searches through Google Scholar and the CDCR. Search terms included women and California prison system, recidivism and prison and job training and employment, jail and women, detention centers and women, women and incarceration, education in prisons, and job skill training and women and prison. I found the reference section from each article and dissertation helpful in finding additional relevant resources. I emphasized finding the most recent literature from the past five years (i.e., 2012–2017).

Theoretical Foundation

The Person in Environment (PIE) perspective (Daly, 1992, 1994; Germain & Gitterman, 2008) and Agnew's (1985, 1992, 2001) Pathways theory serve as the theoretical foundation of this study, informing an understanding of how women who have recidivated describe their readiness for employment after their release from incarceration. Applying the PIE perspective and Pathway theory to ex-offenders and the world around them is helpful in understanding and discovering ways of reducing recidivism. In the subsections that follow, I addressed the following topics: the PIE perspective, research applications of the PIE perspective, Pathways theory, and research application of Pathways theory.

Person in Environment Perspective

The PIE perspective (as previously mentioned) on "social work knowledge and skills that improve the contextual goodness-of-fit, mutual transactions between, and adaptations of individuals and their environment" (Rogge & Cox, 2001, p. 49). The PIE perspective has resulted in conceptual adaptations of ecological and biological systems theories (Billups, 1984; Coulton, 1981; Germain, 1973; Rogge & Cox, 2001; Saari, 1992). Within the PIE perspective, individuals and their multiple environments as a dynamic, interactive system in which each component affects and is affected by the other components (Hare, 2004; Weiss-Gal, 2008). Hence, individuals and their environments form an ecosystem that consists "of the individual, all the systems with which the individual has reciprocal relationships, the wider environment in which the individual acts, and all the mutual interrelationships that occur between the individual and the various subsystems" (Weiss-Gal, 2008, p. 65). Aday (2003) reported that an imbalance between individuals and their environments might result in various degrees of adaptive behavior, which often leads to adverse effects on the psychological well-being of aging inmates. Similarly,

Williams and Abraldes (2007) discussed the importance of matching environmental resources with older prisoners' abilities.

Within this ecosystem, individuals' actions influence their environments (Johnson & Yanca, 2001; Kondrat, 2002; Weiss-Gal, 2008). Germain and Gitterman (2008) related that in the PIE approach, there is a good fit when there is a match among the individual's needs, resources, and capacities that serve to "release human potential and growth, health, and satisfaction" (p. 8). Higgins and Severson (2009) reported that when people's personal and environmental stressors exceed the available resources, they may experience decreased ability to cope, as well as poor health and social isolation.

The PIE perspective is demonstrated in the social work profession, wherein the focus is on providing personal care and furthering social justice (Weis-Gal, 2008). According to Hare (2004), the PIE approach is an organizing principle that enables continuity in interventions: It begins with psychotherapy or clinical social work, then proceeds through family therapy, group work, empowerment, case management, mediation, social action, advocacy and policy formation, and ends with social development.

Research Application of the Person in Environment Perspective

Many offenders released into communities that are not well-equipped or prepared for the social and fiscal costs of their reentry (Higgins & Severson, 2009). Higgins and Severson (2009) examined social work roles when older adult offenders reentered or reintegrated back into the community and noted that they used the PIE perspective as the theoretical framework in their study because it was useful in assessing older adults' offenders' reintegration into community settings. According to Higgins and Severson, due to the extent and gravity of challenges that more former adult offenders face, attention should be paid to how different factors influence

their well-being when they are released. Higgins and Severson also presented best practices from the gerontological social work literature and discussed the implications for social work practice.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has focused on developing social work education and practice for older adults and their families (Higgins & Severson, 2009). Higgins and Severson (2009) contended that gerontological social work professionals have a timely and critical opportunity to revisit social work's role in corrections and to serve older adult offenders, who represent a vulnerable segment of the corrections population. Sustaining social work involved with more former adult offenders depends on increased availability of trained gerontological social workers who can assist returning adult offenders in accessing service options in a way that balances the need to respect their dignity and rights as individuals with the public's demand for safety (Higgins & Severson, 2009). While the United States has invested billions of dollars in locking up offenders, policies addressing reentry have become increasingly focused on avoidance of risk, which has resulted in recidivism as individuals return to prison because they fail to adapt in the community (Higgins & Severson, 2009). As Higgins and Severson argued, social workers are obligated to help offenders who are released navigate a path to a better life, and efforts to meet this goal can begin with older offenders.

Seiter and Kadela (2003) noted that while recidivism may be attributed to reentry, policy failures, it is also an opportunity for a redesign of services. With a better understanding of recurrence and the reasons why it is happening at such a high rate, steps can create new ways to increase women offenders' success in community reentry (Paulson, 2013). Paulson (2013) highlighted relevant literature on recidivism, crime, and ex-offenders; and why policies and laws were exacerbating, rather than improving, recidivism. Paulson used the PIE perspective and systems theory as the theoretical framework to understand the role community-based programs

play in reducing recidivism among ex-offenders. Paulson interviewed eight individuals who were

employed by two nonprofit agencies associated with the Minnesota Second Chance Coalition.

Findings indicated that women offenders not prepared for triumphant release return to prison due

to societal and personal barriers. Barriers included social stigma, deficiencies in basic needs,

effects of poverty, community ties, and in Paulson's opinion, unrealistic preparedness. Paulson

contended that with an understanding of what prevents from ex-offenders' successful reentry into

their communities, it should be possible to develop and implement new strategies to increase

their success.

Pathways Theory

Researchers have found that gender matters concerning pathways into crime (Bloom et

al., 2003, 2004; Brennan et al., 2012; Daly, 1992, 1994; Gehring, 2016; Simpson et al., 2008).

Daly (1992) investigated the circumstances that brought accused women to criminal court. From

approximately 400 defendants at the New Haven felony court, Daly (1992) selected 40 women

and 40 men who were matched based on a conviction for the same (or very similar) offenses.

Based on the findings, Daly (1992) found five pathways to a crime that were unique to women:

(a) harmed and harming women, (b) street women, (c) drug-connected women, (d) battered

women, and (e) other. Daly (1992) described harmed and harming women as those who, during

childhood, had been abused and neglected, had been identified as problem children, and had

acted out. These women, Daly (1992) reported, might become violent when they drank alcohol

or became drug-addicted, might develop psychological problems, and be unable to cope with

current situations. The second category, Daly described as "street women" were those who were

out of their homes. They ran away from abusive households to the streets, where they became

involved in petty hustles, became addicted to drugs engaged in prostitution, theft, or selling

drugs to support a drug habit, and established a record of arrests and time spent incarcerated. Those in Daly's (1992) third category, drug-connected women, had become addicted to drugs through a relationship with a boyfriend or had sold drugs through a relationship with their children or mother. Battered women, who constituted the fourth category, were in relationships with a violent man or had recently ended such a relationship (Daly, 1992). Daly's (1992) fifth category, other, encompassed women who did not fit into the first four categories and had become involved in crime due to immediate economic circumstances or greed.

Daly's (1992) findings indicated some racial and ethnic differences among the women. None of the White/ European women in Daly's (1992) study classified as battered or drug connected. Also, none of the Latina women in the sample qualified as street women. Outside of these differences, Daly (1992) found that African American and White/ European women were proportionately represented in the street and harmed and harming women groups in terms of their ratios in the overall sample. Daly's (1992) findings on racial differences among women in New Haven were consistent with findings in a study by Miller (1986) in Milwaukee.

Miller (1986) found that African American women were more likely than White/ European and Latina women to be recruited to street crime though kin-based networks. However, Miller found that like White/ European and Latina women, many African American women in the study were runaways from abusive households. Daly's (1992) findings indicated that African American women's journey to the street tended to begin in abusive families and in homes where mothers abused drugs, which stood in contrast to White/ European women's journey to the street, in which drug-using mothers did not play a role.

There are profound differences between women's and men's lives that affect their patterns of criminal offending (Bloom et al., 2003). Bloom et al. (2003) adopted a pathways

perspective that involved considering women's whole lives when studying the causes of their crimes, and note for women, the most common pathways to crimes, an attributed to survival of abuse or poverty as well as substance abuse. Bloom et al. (2003) reported that women enter the criminal justice system in ways that are different from their male counterparts. These differences, Bloom et al. (2003) explained, included (a) the roles of violence, trauma, and substance abuse in criminal pathways; (b) offenses and continuous offense patterns; (c) the effect of responsibility for children and other dependent family members, and reduced ability to support themselves and their children; (d) race and ethnicity and the effects of these concerning crime, violent partners, and substance abuse; and (e) connections with passionate and substance-abusing partners. Women are at higher risk than men of experiencing sexual abuse and assault, as well as domestic violence (Bloom et al., 2003). Further, women are more likely than their male counterparts to be responsible for taking care of their children (Bloom et al., 2003).

Bloom et al. (2003) identified some of the main issues producing and sustaining women's criminality as (a) history of personal abuse, (b) mental illness and substance abuse, (c) economic and societal marginality, (d) homelessness, and (e) relationships. They reported that women offenders had histories of sexual and physical abuse that appears to lead to later delinquency, addiction, and criminality (Bloom et al., 2003). Moreover, Covington (2003) explained that eight in 10 women offenders suffer from some form of mental illness or co-occurring disorder (p. 79). Besides, Covington (2003) reported that 80% of women in state prisons have substance abuse problems (p. 79).

As Bloom et al. (2003) noted, many women in the criminal justice system do not have much education or work experience and have experienced significant personal abuse. Homelessness for women in the criminal justice system attributed to severed relationships,

economic vulnerability, addiction, and abuse. Further, Bloom et al. (2003) noted that 23% of African American women are likely to be victims of sexual abuse, as compared to four percent of African American men. Bloom et al. (2003) also noted that women might be given drugs for the first time by partners who continue to be their suppliers.

Research Application of Pathways Theory

Women represent a significant proportion of offenders in the United States criminal justice system (Bloom et al., 2004). Bloom et al. (2004) discussed the importance of understanding and acknowledging differences between men and women offenders and the effect of those differences on the development of gender-responsive, practices, and programs in the criminal justice system. Building on the pathways theoretical perspective, Bloom et al. (2004) found along with the gendered effect of the war on drugs, policy changes with welfare, housing, and other social policy areas combined to create a disparate impact on poor women, and African American women. Bloom et al.'s (2004) findings that policy areas affecting women offenders' lives and the lives of their children included welfare benefits, drug treatment, housing, education, employment, and reunification with children.

Bloom et al. (2004) discussed six guiding principles and their policy implication for gender-responsive policy development, which were as follows: (a) create parity, (b) commit to women's services, (c) review standard procedures for their applicability to women offenders, (d) respond to women's paths, (e) consider community, and (f) include children and families. Creating parity pertains to female offenders receiving opportunities, programs, and services that are equivalent to those that are available to male offenders (Bloom et al., 2004). Bloom et al. (2004) noted that committing to women's services includes establishing mission and vision statements about women's issues and creating an executive-level position that is responsible

within this mission to ensure that women's issues are a priority. A review of policies and procedures includes written policies that reflect an understanding of the misalignment of some methods with the realities of women's lives (Bloom et al., 2004). Bloom et al. (2004) reported that responding to women's pathways includes policies, programs, and services being used to respond to women's paths in and out of crime and to the contexts of their lives that support criminal behavior. The principle of considering community pertains to written policy being used to acknowledge the lower risk of violence and community harm found in women criminal act, which lead to the development of strong community partnerships and receptive community for model reentry and transitional programs that include housing, training, education, employment, and family support services (Bloom et al., 2004). Regarding adding children and families, Bloom et al. (2004) emphasized that more women than men offenders are responsible for the care of their children; thus, criminal justice staff should maintain and strengthen family ties between parents and children.

The many obstacles that women face post-release include reestablishing a home and family life, regaining legal and physical custody of children (if that is the case for them), finding affordable housing, and fulfilling the conditions of a parole plan. Seeking employment and becoming qualified with job skills that meet the employers' requirements are added issues.

Research Studies

Qualitative research has provided a rich foundation for pathways theory development, and some quantitative studies have also emerged (Gehring, 2016). The pathways theoretical perspective, Gehring used inventory for Need Pretrial Screening Tool (ION). The shortened pretrial version of the Women's Risk/Needs Assessment (WRNA). The investigate of whether the pathways includes childhood physical and sexual abuse, mental health, and substance abuse

are women-specific, and determine if these pathways are related to the pretrial outcomes measures of failure to appear and new arrest (p. 6).

Gehring highlighted the study's uniqueness by addressing several limitations found in prior empirical research. Data collected from 266 pretrial defendants, included 163 men and 103 women. Findings indicated that childhood abuse had both a direct and indirect effect on pretrial outcomes for women. Particularly, childhood physical abuse was causally related to new arrests, while both measures of childhood abuse created an indirect pathway to pretrial failure through psychological or mental health and behavioral issues, or substance abuse variables (Gehring, 2016). Findings also indicated that none of these relationships existed for men. Results indicated that a gendered pathway to pretrial failure exists that is relevant for women, but not suitable for men.

The study of women's pathways is being augmented by quantitative studies, which raises new questions about how to conceptualize, identify, and measure women's pathways (Brennan et al., 2012). Using quantitative taxonomic methods, Brennan et al. (2012) identified and described common prototype pathways in a sample of 718 women who were serving a new term for a previous parole violation at the Central California Women's Facility, and the Valley State Prison for Women. Brennan et al. (2012) noted that identified prototypes were related to Daly's (1992, 1994) pathway models and Caspi and Moffitt's (1993) developmental taxonomy. Brennan et al. (2012) focused on reentry challenges and only included women who were eligible for reentry. Participants administered the WRNA and COMPAS Reentry Assessment. Brennan et al. (2012) found eight pathways that nested within four broad superordinate pathways categories, discussed to reflect the seriousness of criminal history and the escalation of risk and need profiles.

Category 1 represented normal functioning, but drug-dependent women, who were less marginalized, had lower criminal histories, moderate victimization, moderate abuse, and no mental health issues. This category included Path 1, which pertained to drug-offending single mothers with above-average functioning, with an average age of 35; and Path 2, which related to older drug-offending women, with an average age of 40, who appeared functional in many areas of their lives and who was not parenting (Brennan et al., 2012).

Category 2 encompassed the victimized, battered woman path and included Path 3, which represented single mothers who were stressed because they experienced lifelong abuse, depression, substance abuse, and an abusive significant-other relationship (Brennan et al., 2012). Category 2 also included Path 4, which represented abused older women with conflicted connections, chronic drug problems, unsafe housing, and chaotic lives. Brennan et al. (2012) noted that Paths 3 and 4 incorporated several of Daly's (1992) pathways themes.

Category 3, socialized-subcultural, included Path 5, which referred to younger, poor, marginalized, and stressed single mothers with low self-efficacy in conflict, but nonviolent relationships with a significant other (Brennan et al., 2012). Category 3 also included Path 6, which pertained to addicted, older, isolated women characterized by extreme marginalization, poverty, and low self-efficacy and of whom most did not parent children younger than 18 years of age.

Category 4, aggressive unfriendly women, included Path 7, which represented abused and dynamic antisocial women with hostile antisocial personalities, mental health or depression issues, marginalization, and homelessness. Category 4 also included Path 8, which pertains to marginalized abused and addicted single mothers with severe mental health, psychosis, and

suicide risks, which caused them to be aggressive, violent, and noncompliant (Brennan et al., 2012).

To further explore women's pathways to crime and the justice system, Simpson et al. (2008) examined the life experiences of 351 jailed women who were mostly African American (94%), unmarried (86%), unmarried women with children (81%), and whose current charge was drug-related (55%; p. 92). Precisely 46% of these women had graduated from high school or earned their GED, and approximately 40% were unemployed for the entire three years before their current incarceration (Simpson et al., 2008). Specifically, Simpson et al. (2008) investigated whether their study could reproduce distinct pathways identified from examinations of similar incarcerated women and whether claims by developmental theorists that pathways into crime are age graded. Feminist theories such as Daly's (1992, 1994) pathways theory and age of onset literature were used to guide the study (Simpson et al., 2008). The 351 participants from the Baltimore City Detention Center (BCDC) participated in interviews.

Based on those findings, Simpson (2008) replicated three of Daly's (1992, 1994) pathways: (a) harmed and harming women, (b) drug-connected women, and (c) battered women that found evidence of Daly's (1994) "street women" and other women categories. Simpson explained that due to the greater size and diversity in samples, the data indicated a two-factor solution for "street women," which is distinguished mainly by one's criminal record, such as arrest and incarcerated history as well as one's friends. Findings also indicated unique pathways among high-risk women based on the age of onset. Child onset offenders were likely to have been sexually abused as children. Later the child onset offenders in the sample in addition to being more heavily involved in drug dealing, property crime, and offensive violence in adulthood.

In contrast, adolescent-onset offenders were no more likely to have been sexually or physically abused as children. Adult-onset offenders were less likely to have used violence offensively, but were more likely to have been violently victimized in adulthood than were earlier onset offenders. Findings indicated that adult-onset offenders made up 54% of women detainees in the study and have a higher exposure to violent victimization such as rapes, robberies, and partner and no partner assaults (Simpson et al., 2008, p. 103). Hence, a romantic partnership with criminally involved men increases the risk of exposure to criminal values, potential criminal opportunities, and victimization (Simpson et al., 2008). Simpson and associates also emphasized that violent relationships, especially in adolescence, maybe more common for African American women than for their counterparts. Based on the findings, Simpson et al. (2008) highlighted that the results of the study provide evidence for pathways or typological approaches to theory development.

Women's Incarceration in the United States

There is an incarceration crisis in the United States, according to Fuentes (2013), who reported that the United States has the highest incarceration rate among all world nations. Carson and Anderson (2016) found that at the end of 2015, there were approximately 1,526,800 prisoners under the jurisdiction of state and federal correctional authorities, which was a two percent decrease from 2014 (p. 1). These researchers noted that the 2015 prison population was the smallest since 2005, with approximately 1,525,900, indicating a drop of 1,000 prisoners (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 1). Carson and Anderson reported that the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) had jurisdiction over 196,500 prisoners in 2015, a decrease of 14,100 prisoners from 2014 (p. 1). Further, Carson and Anderson noted this was the third consecutive year that the federal prison population declined, and 2015 had the lowest number of federal prisoners since

2006 when the rate was 193,000 prisoners (pp. 1-2), indicating the federal prison system decrease attributed to 40% of the total change in the U.S. prison population.

The 2014 to 2015 decrease in the number of U.S. prisoners was like the 2011 to 2012 decrease (Carson & Anderson, 2016). Carson and Anderson (2016) related that the 2011 to 2012 decline occurred with California's Public Safety Realignment policy, which moved "newly sentenced, nonviolent, non-serious, and non-sexual" (p. 10) offenders from state prisons to local jails for inmates (serving sentences of less than 365 days) under community supervision.

California's Public Safety Realignment Act discussed in further detail in the next literature review section. According to Carson and Anderson (2016), the U.S. Department of Justice's commitment in 2015 to decrease the number of nonviolent drug offenders held in federal prison resulted in the BOP releasing more nonviolent drug offenders from prison in 2015. Also, Carson and Anderson noted that states such as California had enacted laws and policies to reduce prison populations. In California, Proposition 47 retroactively reduced some drug and property offenses from felonies to misdemeanors (Carson & Anderson, 2016). California's Proposition 47 is discussed in further detail later in this literature review.

For the past 25 years, there are significant changes in women's involvement in the criminal justice system (Sentencing Project, 2015). The most significant changes attributed to more extensive law enforcement efforts, stricter drug sentencing laws, and post-conviction barriers to reentry that uniquely affect women (Sentencing Project, 2015).

Over 60% of women in California State prisons have a child or children younger than 18 years of age (Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 1). There are 1.2 million women under the supervision of the criminal justice system, and in 2014, women under control of the U.S. corrections system

included 106,232 in prisons, 109,100 in jails, 966,029 on probation, and 102,825 on parole (Carson & Anderson, 2015; Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 1).

In 2014, the African American women's imprisonment population (109 per 100,000) was more than twice that of the White/ European women's imprisonment population (53 per 100,000; Carson & Anderson, 2015; Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2). Hispanic/ Latino women were incarcerated at 1.2 times (64 per 100,000) the rate of White/ European women (53 per 100,000; Carson & Anderson, 2015; Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2). However, the African American women's imprisonment population has been declining since 2000, while the White/ European women's imprisonment population has continued to rise (Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2). Between 2000 and 2014, the rate of African American women's imprisonment in state and federal prisons declined by 47%, while the percentage of White/ European women's incarceration rose by 56% (Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2).

The incarcerated female population varies by state (Sentencing Project, 2015). In 2014, 65 out of every 100,000 women were in prison at the national level (Carson & Anderson, 2015; Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2). Oklahoma had the highest women's imprisonment population (142 per 100,000), and Rhode Island had the lowest women's incarceration population (12 per 100,000; Carson & Anderson, 2015; Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2).

In-state prisons, women are more likely than men to become incarcerated for a drug or property offense, with 24% of female prisoners convicted of a drug offense as compared to 15% of male prisoners, and 28% of female prisoners convicted of a property crime as compared to 19% of male prisoners (Carson & Anderson, 2015, Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2). On the other hand, 37% of female prisoners are convicted of a violent crime as compared to 54% of male prisoners (Carson & Anderson, 2015; Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2).

In 2015, women accounted for more than seven percent of the total prison population nationally, and this percentage has stayed relatively the same since 2005 (Carson & Anderson, 2016). Carson and Anderson (2016) reported that the women's prison population decreased by 1,500 prisoners or more than one percent between 2014 and 2015, after increasing almost four percent between 2012 and 2014 (p. 4). Further, Carson and Anderson noted that women accounted for seven percent of the total decline in the federal prison population, which has decreased by 1,000 prisoners, and two percent of the overall decrease in the state of California's prison population has reduced by 500 prisoners between 2014 and 2015 (p. 4). In 2015, 18 states and the federal prison population had decreased in the female prison population, including California with a reduction of 600 women prisoners, Florida with a reduction of 400 women prisoners, and Indiana with a decrease of 300 women prisoners (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 4). However, Carson and Anderson stated that Ohio, Oklahoma, and Virginia all had increases of more than 200 women prisoners between 2014 and 2015, which represented growth of more than five percent in the three states' female prison populations (p. 4).

In 2015, approximately 11% of all women prisoners sentenced to more than one year in state or federal prison were age 55 or older (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 13). Carson and Anderson (2016) noted that more than 31% of that 11% of prisoners were between 18 and 24 years old, but this differed by race or Hispanic/ Latino origin (p. 13). A specifically smaller percentage of female prisoners in 2015 were 55- to 65-years-old (7%) as compared to their male counterparts.

There was a higher percentage of White/ European women prisoners aged 55 or older (8%) as compared to African American women prisoners (7.3%), Hispanic/ Latino women prisoners (45%), and other women's racial groups (5.5%; Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 13). In

2015, twice as many White/ European women prisoners (52,700) than African American women prisoners (21,700) were in state and federal prison (Carson & Anderson, 2016). However, as Carson and Anderson (2016) explained, the imprisonment rate for African American women (103 per 100,000) was almost double that for White/ European women (52 per 100,000; p. 13). Among any age group, African American women were between 1.5 and 4.0 times more likely to be imprisoned than were White/ European women and between 1.1 and 2.0 times more likely than Hispanic/ Latino women (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 13). Similar to men, women aged 30 to 34 had the highest population of imprisonment of any age group (184 per 100,000 women residents: Carson & Anderson, 2016, pp. 12-13).

In 2015, 18 states and the BOP met or exceeded their maximum prison capacity, and 26 states and the BOP met or exceeded their minimum number of beds (Carson & Anderson, 2016, p. 16). According to Carson and Anderson (2016), in 2015, privately operated facilities were under the jurisdiction of 29 states, and the BOP held 8% of state and federal prisoners (p. 16). Carson and Anderson (2016) indicated that in 2015, prisoners held in private facilities (126,300) decreased by four (5,500) from 2014 (p. 16).

Wagner and Rabuy (2017) reported that more than 2.3 million people are held in 1,719 U.S. state prisons, 102 U.S. federal prisons, 901 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,163 local jails, and 76 Indian Country jails as well as in military prisons, immigration detention facilities, civil commitment centers, and prisons in the U.S. territories (para. 2). Wagner and Rabuy's report proved that Carson and Anderson's (2016) report, which established the decrease in women's population, did not hold into 2017.

California's Public Safety Realignment Act

California's prisons deal with the highest crime levels in the 1970s and 1980s in the state of California (Eaglin, 2015). Eaglin (2015) reported that between 1975 (20,000 prisoners) and 2006 (163,000 prisoners), the California prison population increased to over eight times higher (para. 2). Eaglin noted that from 1980 (24,000) to 2006 (80,000), the California jail population was approximately three times higher (para. 2). According to Eaglin, while the prison population drastically increased and the prison capacity did not, California prisons were dangerously overcrowded. Eaglin noted that due to the inadequate prison conditions, in 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ordered California to reduce its prison population to 137.5% of capacity or by approximately 40,000 prisoners, over the following two years. Ongoing litigation extended that deadline to February 28, 2016 (para. 3). Eaglin further explained that California's Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011 (the Realignment Act, Proposition 36, and Proposition 47) encompasses California reforms to reduce massive incarceration without significantly increasing the state's overall crime. The Realignment Act, and Propositions 36 and 47 discussed later.

The Realignment Act redirected nonserious, nonviolent, and nonsexual registrant offenders from state to local jurisdictions; thus, using state prison for individuals with more severs or violent charges, sexual offense registrants, and individuals with a few other offense types such as battery against a juror and sale of an individual for immoral purposes (Beard et al., 2013). Beard et al. (2013) reported that on October 1, 2011, the state of California and its counties' correctional leaders and state parole agents implemented the Realignment Act, which made significant changes to the state's criminal justice system. Beard et al. (2013) noted that the Realignment Act's goals include counties developing and implementing evidence-based practices and alternatives to incarceration to decrease future crimes and reduce victimization.

Furthermore, Beard et al. (2013) related that the Realignment Act's premise is that community-based support services provisions will increase offenders' potential to reintegrate into their communities successfully.

The Realignment Act's definition of a felony was revised to include certain crimes that are punishable by more than one year in jail (Beard et al., 2013). Beard et al. (2013) reported that people convicted of specific nonserious, nonviolent, and nonsexual crimes sentenced to county jail or alternative custody programs instead of state prison. However, Beard et al. (2014) pointed out that specific individuals continue to state prisons, such as those previously convicted of a serious or violent crime, sex offense registrants, and people with certain current offenses. The researchers related that the Realignment Act also established post-release community supervision (PRCS), through which offenders released from state custody are placed under a county-directed PRCS program for up to three years, instead of being placed in the state's parole system. Beard et al. (2014) explained that the probation departments in all 58 counties designated as the agency responsible for PRCS and who continue to supervise high-risk sex offenders, those in prison for life, and any other offenders who were released from prison after having been incarcerated for a violent crime. According to Beard et al. (2014), if offenders do not obey the PRCS or state parole supervision terms, severe sanctions may be used by county agents including reprimand, adding new release conditions and reporting requirements, incarceration for up to 90 days, or a revocation for up to 90 days based on the judge's agreement. Beard et al. (2014) noted that only certain offenders are eligible to be revoked to state prison.

Since the Realignment Act implementation, both qualitative and quantitative studies conducted show the effect of the policy at the state and county levels (Beard et al., 2013). Beard et al. (2013) evaluated the Realignment Act's effect by comparing the rates of arrest, conviction,

and returns to a prison of individuals released after completing their state prison term in the first year of the Realignment Act, with individuals released one year earlier. To evaluate the Realignment Act's effects, Beard et al. (2014) created two groups: (a) a pre-realignment parolee release cohort that included all offenders released from the CDCR state prison between October 1, 2010, and September 30, 2011, and (b) a post realignment parolee release, which included all offenders released from a CDCR state prison between October 1, 2011, and September 30, 2012. The pre realignment parolee release cohort included 90,514 offenders and the post realignment parolee release cohort included 58,746 offenders. Beard et al. (2014) noted that there was a 35.1% decrease in releases between the two years because almost all that were released in the post realignment parolee release had offenses that made them ineligible to return to prison on a parole violation and be rereleased. In both groups, most releases were first releases, but the post realignment cohort had more first releases proportionally (76.1%) as compared to the pre realignment cohort (60.2%; Beard et al., 2014, p. 6).

Findings indicated that there is very little difference between offenders and their outcomes following release after completing their state prison terms, pre realignment, and post realignment (Beard et al., 2013). Beard et al. (2013) found that even though the number of offenders processed did decrease, the rates of the different outcomes studied were similar, as well as the demographic characteristics for each cohort. Beard et al. (2013) also noted one exception, which was for returns to prison, in which the Realignment Act changed the types of offenses and offenders that could return to prison. The 1-year arrest and conviction rates in the first year of the Realignment Act were similar to the same year prior to the Realignment Act, but there was a steady decrease in the arrest rates in the months that followed.

Property theft and drug felonies were the most common rearrested types, followed by supervision violations and misdemeanor offenses for the post realignment cohort. Results indicated that based on the 60% of offenders arrested, pre realignment offenders were more likely to be detained once, both cohort offenders almost equally likely to be arrested twice, but a subset of post realignment offenders were more likely to be stopped three or more times (Beard et al., 2013, p. 27).

Findings also indicated that conviction rates steadily declined after October 2011 and remained lower than pre realignment rates (Beard et al., 2013). Beard et al. (2013) found a slight change in convictions types, with a slightly higher proportion of felony convictions occurring post realignment, mainly due to increases in felony property and felony drug and alcohol convictions. Results showed that the majority of offenders reconvicted within a year, offenders from both cohorts were equally likely to be reconvicted once, and a subset of the post realignment cohort was slightly more likely to have two or more new convictions. Finally, Beard et al. (2013) found that only a few offenders released from state prison returned to state prison within the first year of being released. From October 2011 through September 2012, approximately seven percent of offenders returned to state prison within one year of release post realignment, which is about 25% lower than the pre realignment return-to-prison rates (32.4%; Beard et al., 2013, pp. 27-28). Results indicated that in 2010, approximately 25% of the pre realignment group returned to prison for a new term, and the remaining 75% returned for a parole violation. Beard et al. (2013) explained that for the post-realignment group, most offenders who returned did so due to a new conviction.

California's Proposition 36

Enacted in 1994, California's Three Strikes Act was the harshest sentencing law in the United States (Stanford Law School & NAACP, 2013). According to the Stanford Law School and NAACP (2013), thousands of inmates sentenced to life in prison for minor crimes such as petty theft and simple drug possession. In 2012, Proposition 36, the Three Strikes Reform Act, passed with over 69% of citizens' votes, which represented a change in public attitude toward criminal sentencing (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). Proposition 36 shortens the sentences of prisoners who are serving life terms for nonserious and nonviolent crimes, and who no longer pose a threat to public safety, thus reducing the severity of California's Three Strikes law (Eaglin, 2015; Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). Proposition 36 was historic because it became the United States' first voter initiative to shorten people's prison sentences (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013).

For prisoners released under Proposition 36, the recidivism rate is below state and national averages. With less than 2% of prisoners released, and charged with new crimes (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). In comparison, for non-Proposition 36 inmates who left California prisons, the recidivism rate was 16% (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013, p. 1). The national recidivism rate is 30%, as inmates released from state prisons are arrested for a new crime within six months of release (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013, p. 2).

California's Proposition 47

On November 4, 2014, California voters passed Proposition 47, the Reduced Penalties for Some Crimes Initiative, which reduces certain drug possession felonies to misdemeanors (CDCR, 2017). The CDCR (2017) reported that Proposition 47 also requires misdemeanor sentencing for individuals involved in petty theft, receiving stolen property, and forging or

writing bad checks for $950 or less. The CDCR (2017) explained offenders are not automatically released from state prison due to Proposition 47; instead, people serving a felony conviction for these crimes can petition the court for resentencing. Proposition 47 allows individuals who have completed their sentences to apply to the trial court to have the felony conviction reduced to a misdemeanor (CDCR, 2017).

Based on Proposition 47 resentencing guidelines, even if offenders' convictions were felonies and are now considered misdemeanors, not all offenders can request the CDCR for early release. The CDCR (2017) explained that offenders could not petition a court if they have previous convictions for sex offenses, which include rape, child molestation, and other sex offenses. Therefore, inmates who are required to register as sex offenders are not eligible under this law. Offenders cannot petition the court if they have previous convictions for (a) murder, (b) attempted murder, (c) solicitation to commit murder, (d) assault with a machine gun on an officer, or (e) any serious or violent crime punishable by a life sentence or death (CDCR, 2017). The CDCR (2017) related that eligible inmates who petition the court are required to unless the court finds an unreasonable risk to public safety. Eligible inmates must have filed a petition or application to the court that sentenced them by November 4, 2017; thus, within three years of the effective date of the initiative (CDCR, 2017).

California Women's Incarceration and Recidivism Rates

Reforms have been implemented in California to decrease state prison and jail populations such that low-level, nonviolent offenders are among the first considered for release, and most women offenders fall within this category (Eaglin, 2015). In this section, I discuss California women's incarceration and recidivism rates. I organized this section in the following subsections: incarceration rates and recidivism rates.

Incarceration Rates

In 2014, the women's incarceration population in California was 33 per 100,000 (Carson & Anderson, 2015; Sentencing Project, 2015, p. 2). Kernan et al. (2017) reported that the women's inmate population for nonviolent and nonsexual crimes decreased 49.6% between June 30, 2007 (11,888) and June 30, 2013 (5,995), which was a larger decrease than that of the men's population for this time period (21% decrease for males; p. 5). This was due mainly to new conviction and parole violations.

From June 30, 2013 (5,995 inmates) to June 30, 2014 (6,306 inmates), the women's population increased by 5.2% (Kernan et al., 2017). This increase of women's inmates population was similar to the men's inmate population, but the women's population increase (5.2%) was larger than that of the men's population (1.8%; Kernan et al., 2017, p. 5), due to women's financial challenges. Women's incarceration rates declined by 449 inmates (7.1%) immediately following the implementation of Proposition 47 to a June 30, 2015, population of 5,857 inmates, and a June 30,2016 population 5,769 inmates (an 88 inmate or 1.5% decrease; Kernan et al., 2017, p. 5). According to Kernan et al. (2017), the women's prison population is expected to increase slightly. An increase totaling 5,817 female inmates by 30,2017 (a projected increase of 48 inmates or 0.8%), which is similar to the men's population increase projections (3.9% increase in 2021; p. 5) for parole violations or new convictions and returns (Kernan et al., 2017). Kernan et al. (2017) related that the women's incarcerated population is expected to reach 5,833 inmates on June 30, 2021, which is a 1.1% increase in five years (p. 5). Therefore, Kernan et al.'s report would be premature as far as their findings and date predictions for both women's and men's increase and decrease in prison populations.

Recidivism Rates

California's recidivism rates are some of the highest in the United States (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). According to Stanford Law School and NAACP (2013), over 16% of inmates released from California prisons between 2003 and 2004 violated the terms of their parole due to new criminal charges within the first 90 days of their release (p. 8). Within six months from release, the recidivism rate was 27%, and within one year, over 40% were returned to custody (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013, p. 8). Petersilia et al. (2009) reported that these inmates all received post-release support and parole supervision. In contrast, inmates released under Proposition 36 do not receive post-release support (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). Within four months from release after Proposition 36 implementation, less than two percent of prisoners were charged with a new crime (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013, p. 8). Although these released prisoners were out of custody for about 4.4 months, their recidivism rate was well below state and national averages over similar time periods (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). The Stanford Law School and NAACP argued that the low recidivism rate of inmates released under Proposition 36 supported the Department of Corrections' static risk projections that inmates sentenced to life under the Three Strikes law for nonserious and nonviolent crimes were among the safest to release from custody. However, the PPIC (2016) claimed that regarding the 2011 Realignment Act, there is no evidence that indicates this policy had decreased California's high recidivism rates.

Before the Realignment Act implementation, state parole agents supervised all women inmates released from prison and parole violators could be revoked to state prison for up to one year (Beard et al., 2014). Beard et al. (2014) reported that since October 1, 2011, probation departments have used PRCS to complement state parole and noted that state parole agents

continue to supervise high-risk sex offenders, those in prison for life, and any other women offenders released from prison after having been incarcerated for a current or prior serious or violent crime. All other women inmates released from prison are placed on PRCS. Beard et al. (2014) explained that offenders did not receive an early release from prison under the Realignment Act. If offenders violated the terms of PRCS or state parole supervision, a range of sanctions may be used by county officials, such as a revocation term in jail. Additionally, Beard et al. (2014) noted that only some offenders are eligible for revocation to state prison.

In contrast to the Beard et al. (2014) realignment investigation in which they evaluated all offenders, Beard et al. (2014) investigated women offenders' arrests, convictions, and returns to prison pre realignment and post realignment one year after the Realignment Act was implemented. Beard et al. (2014) identified two cohorts of women offenders: (a) the pre realignment cohort of women offenders released between October 1, 2010 and September 30, 2011; and (b) the post realignment cohort of women offenders released between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012. Beard et al. (2014) tracked 1-year post release recidivism rates for both cohorts to assess whether they were rearrested, convicted of a new crime, or returned to state prison. Findings indicated that the Realignment Act had a significant effect since parole violators are no longer returned to state prison and many who commit certain nonserious, nonviolent, and nonsexual crimes remain under county jurisdiction. Beard et al. (2014) shared that parole violators are now sent to county jails instead of prison. Results showed that from October 2011 through September 2012, an average of 2.6% of women offenders returned to state prison within one year of release post realignment, which was significantly lower than the pre realignment return to prison rates (averaged 20.3%; Beard et al., 2014, p. 18). Beard et al. (2014) noted that the main reason that offenders are returned to prison is attributed to a new conviction. Thus, the

lack of parole violators being returned to prison shows that the Realignment Act is working as intended and that a higher percentage of female than male offenders commit nonviolent, property, and substance-related crimes. Beard et al. (2014) also noted that most parole violators are now sent to county jails instead of prison.

Kernan et al. (2016) tracked 95,690 offenders released from a CDCR adult institution between July 1, 2010 and June 30, 2011; 86,571 (90.5%) were men and 9,119 (95%) were women (p. 15). In the first year, findings indicated that male offenders returned to state prison at a higher rate (37.8%) than did female offenders (22.34%; Kernan et al., 2016, p. 15). At Year 2, the male offender return rate was 42.8%, while the female offender return rate was 25.2% (Kernan et al., 2016, p. 15). At Year 3, the male offender return rate was 46.4%, while the female offender return rate was 27.1% (Kernan et al., 2016, p. 15). In addition, findings showed that recidivism among men and women offenders declined in their 3-year return to prison between the year of 2009 to 2010 and 2010 to 2011. The recidivism rate for male offenders decreased by 9.9% between the year of 2009 to 2010 (56.3%) and 2010 to 2011 (46.4%; Kernan et al., 2016, p. 16). For female offenders, the recidivism rate decreased by 10.3% from 2009 to 2010 (37.4%) and by 27.1% between 2010 and 2011 (Kernan et al., 2016, p. 16).

Individual and Societal Barriers Contributing to Recidivism

Individual and societal barriers affect women offenders' successful release (Paulson, 2013). Offenders are not properly prepared for successful release due to individual (personal) as well as societal barriers, such as (a) social stigma, (b) lack of basic needs, (c) effects of poverty, (d) community ties, and (e) unrealistic preparedness (Paulson, 2013). In this section, these societal and personal barriers are discussed in further detail.

Social Stigma

Social stigma is one barrier that prevents ex-offenders from succeeding within their communities (Paulson, 2013). Paulson (2013) referred to social stigma as the umbrella under which all other issues that affect ex-offenders' success are kept. After interviewing eight individuals who were employed by two nonprofit agencies associated with the Minnesota Second Chance Coalition and who had direct client contact, Paulson found that society has built walls around ex-offenders that limit their ability to abide by conditions of release. Findings indicated society's negative views of individuals who have a criminal past sets ex-offenders up for failure once they are released. Results also indicated that social stigma is an important factor in creating and enforcing policies. While people may believe that ex-offenders should be able to get jobs and find places to live when they are released, community members may oppose funded group homes in their neighborhoods and hiring ex-offenders for their businesses. Thus, Paulson's findings indicated a disconnection between what is best for society and what individuals are willing to do to change these issues, which may be attributed to how prisons stay in business. Paulson (2013) also found that some participants in the study believed that state officials create rules they know ex-offenders will not be able to abide by in order to keep employment rules and policies. Rules such as reporting to parole offices or drug testing during employment hours: thus, making it difficult for ex-offenders to maintain a good attendance record and credibility to hold the job.

Lack of Basic Needs

Lack of basic needs, such as clothing, housing, and food are important barriers that inhibit ex-offenders' success (Paulson, 2013). Paulson (2013) related that not meeting these basic needs affects one another, which adds to the cyclical nature of recidivism. Participants in

Paulson's study mentioned that ex-offenders cannot find an apartment because people do not want to rent to them, or they cannot find a job because people will not hire them. Therefore, some ex-offenders may take part in illegal activities to feed their children and themselves, or to find a place to live. Findings indicated that ex-offender's criminal history significantly affects their ability to obtain any basic needs and to survive and succeed in their communities. Findings also indicated that ex-offenders are viewed as not deserving of basic needs or assistance, even though they should be treated as human beings despite their past actions.

The loss of connections to others negatively affects ex-offender's abilities to meet basic needs (Paulson, 2013). Paulson (2013) found that most ex-offenders are on some type of supervised release or intensive supervised release, so they are bound by certain rules and regulations, such as having to find housing and employment within 60 days. The problem that occurs is that when ex-offenders do not have shelter or food, it becomes very challenging for them to search for a job and find a place to live. Paulson found that some participants believed that the Department of Corrections (DOC) should assist ex-offenders by meeting all their basic needs due to their parole status. Paulson noted that some offenders do not have to pay for room and board due to their supervised release. Paulson also found that participants supported ex-offenders getting their needs met through resource connections and help with general assistance applications and food stamps.

Effects of Poverty

Ex-offender's socioeconomic status is another barrier that affects successful community reentry (Paulson, 2013). Paulson (2013) discussed the concept of "county of commit," which pertains to the county where the criminal act occurred (p. 45). Paulson noted that some ex-offenders who require supervision after release are required by law to live in the county where

they committed the crime, which may be a possible negative environment that contributed to them being arrested as well as to reoffend. Therefore, Paulson explained that individuals are being released back to the poor neighborhoods that they came from and may not see a way out. Paulson stated that this practice affects the ex-offender's abilities to obtain good employment, and many of the poor neighborhoods that they came from will not accept them due to certain policies.

Participants in Paulson's study explained that ex-offenders cannot afford their own housing and they are not allowed to live with family and friends who need and receive assistance because requirements and restrictions prohibit offenders from living in Section 8 housing with family members and friends. Thus, Paulson's findings indicate that solution is needed to address the poverty crisis which, in turn, may help to reduce recidivism.

Community Ties

Community ties and connections are key to offenders' success; specifically, personal connections, including family, friends, and other supports; and resource connections, which include employment assistance, housing, and access to basic needs (Paulson, 2013). Paulson (2013) found that having personal connections and receiving support while incarcerated increases ex-offender's success after release because it helps them mentally and emotionally as well as connects them to resource when they have someone to pick them up. Participants in Paulson's study discussed a program through their agency that works with community volunteers and offenders, in which people are matched to offenders based on their personalities and commitment to visit offenders once a month for at least a year. According to Paulson through this program, participants noted that they observed major differences in their client's attitudes and preparedness for release. Paulson's study also revealed that in some situations, friendships

between offenders and volunteers can develop, such that volunteers may help offenders after they are released with housing, clothing, and finding a job.

Findings from Paulson's (2013) study also indicated that finding a home and employment are extremely difficult for ex-offenders. Paulson related that participants' agencies worked with landlords and employers for many years and created a list of people who are friendly to felons, but those landlords and employers who will house and employ ex-inmates are difficult to find; and have had bad encounters with ex-offenders that have destroyed their relationships. Paulson found that ex-offenders' successful reintegration into the community is challenging as it requires them to break through many barriers. To ease the process and help offenders, Paulson shared that communication is necessary as well as connecting all areas of offenders' lives and the systems wherein they were involved.

Unrealistic Preparedness

Another barrier is offenders' unrealistic preparedness and professionals' unrealistic ideas of how to prepare (Paulson, 2013). Paulson (2013) shared that there may be transition classes that are offered in prison that help offenders obtain identification (ID) and social security cards, create resumes, and take part in mock interviews; but findings indicated that ex-offenders were not prepared for the harsh reality of limited jobs and earning minimum wage or less. Paulson found that while there may be transition classes, they may not be available to all offenders, which may be partly attributed to the lack of funding and budget cuts. Paulson discussed the importance of more programming and services that may help to address the different needs and types of assistance for each offender. However, Paulson explained that many offenders have plans to open their own businesses once they are released, but those offering programming and services failed to describe the reality of the difficulties they face, which contributes to a

disconnect between expectation and reality. Thus, ex-offenders may be prepared to have an overly optimistic attitude, but this may be a disservice as they are not being properly prepared for their future.

Ex-offenders who lack education, job skills training, and employment experiences are unprepared when reentering the job market community and may encounter communication difficulties such as gaps in employment in their resumes, gaps in credit verification, and gaps in address location (Paulson, 2013). Paulson (2013) reported many individuals that are being released from prison without a high school diploma or GED, which limits them in getting a jobs when they are released. In addition, Paulson related that a significant barrier for ex-offenders is not being able to read or write, which makes it very challenging to get any type of employment. Furthermore, while most businesses use the Internet and other computer programs, many ex-offenders may not be computer savvy. Released ex-offenders who have been incarcerated for a very long time may find it very difficult to gain that knowledge and understanding of the world of technology without training. Many ex-offenders were incarcerated before people used personal computers or lived in areas where the school or community did not have access to this technology. Thus, Paulson (2013) emphasized that ex-offenders may need help and guidance with technologies such as computers, cell phones, and Internet.

Women's Reentry Factors

The best predictor of whether ex-offenders reentering the community will return to a life of crime is whether they have a stable, supportive, sober-living, and drug-free environment upon their release from custody (Flower, 2010; Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). The Stanford Law School and NAACP (2013) explained that in contrast to all other prisoners released from California state custody, no public resources are available to offenders released

under Proposition 36 because they are released from custody without warning or money, many times without adequate clothing, and sometimes they only have a disposable plastic jumpsuit. Mentally and physically disabled offenders released under Proposition 36 are particularly vulnerable and suffer disproportionately from the lack of reentry resources (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013).

California state officials failed to provide services to offenders who are reentering their communities, which has resulted in reentry service organizations across California struggling to find the resources to meet the gap and help maintain the low recidivism rate of inmates released under Proposition 36 (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). According to the Stanford Law School and NAACP (2013), California organizations such as Delaney Street Foundation, Amity Foundation, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, The Last Mile, and Californians for Safety and Justice provide free temporary housing, mental health services, sobriety maintenance, and job training. Further, Stanford Law School and NAACP noted that the Los Angeles Regional Reentry Partnership took the lead in working to secure free housing and employment and rehabilitative services for the over 1,000 offenders who were returned to Southern California under Proposition 36. In addition, over 100 organizations in the counties most affected by the initiative were willing to help provide reentry services to inmates released from custody under Proposition 36. Stanford Law School and NAACP noted that while these volunteer efforts are admirable, only few of these services are easily accessible to offenders leaving prison because many of the organizations lack adequate funding and support, and there are frequently service gaps in critical areas such as housing, employment, and drug treatment and rehabilitation.

In relation to Proposition 36, Stanford Law School and NAACP (2013) argued that more resources need to be directed to processing petitions in county court systems, judges should

ensure that Proposition 36 is applied consistently throughout the state, and more resources must

be devoted to prisoner reentry services. Attorneys should consult with prison and mental health

experts, create risk analysis, and secure robust reentry plans to ensure their clients have

professional housing, drug treatment, and employment support services available when they are

release (Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). Stanford Law School and NAACP

emphasized that offenders who have a comprehensive reentry plan are less risk to public safety

and are more likely to win relief under the initiative. Since most offenders released under

Proposition 36 are not eligible for parole or probation, state and county agencies have refused to

extend Proposition 36 inmates the same resources provided to all other inmates leaving custody

(Stanford Law School and NAACP, 2013). To ensure offenders continued success after release

under this initiative, Stanford Law School and NAACP suggested that these offenders should be

afforded similar resources provided to other offenders who are released under different initiatives

or circumstances. Stanford Law School and NAACP pointed out that Santa Clara and Marin are

two counties to extend the services provided under California's PRCS to Proposition 36

offenders and all other counties should consider using the same model.

Summary and Conclusions

This phenomenological study added new knowledge to the field because additional

research is needed on how women who have recidivated describe their readiness for employment

after release; the individual and societal barriers that contribute to their recidivism; and factors

that are important for their reentry into society. While the California legislature has implemented

reforms such as the Realignment Act and Propositions 36 and 47 to reduce mass incarceration,

the state still has a long way to go in successfully reducing its incarcerated populations in

prisons, jails, and detention centers (Eaglin, 2015). Eaglin (2015) reported that in California,

approximately 9,000 prisoners are sent out of state in order to meet the Supreme Court mandate terms to reduce its prison population (para. 8). Eaglin also discussed California officials' reliance on private and public facilities, which includes sending 2,000 prisoners to a private facility in the state. Eaglin also noted that California state officials spent $12 billion in 2015 to accommodate the Court's federal order (para. 8).

Gender is an important factor in criminality as the circumstances and the effects of imprisonment are different between men and women (Grills et al., 2015). Grills et al. (2015) reported that "women often suffer from triple jeopardy challenges, including gender, race, and class" (p. 758). Grills et al. noted that women's pathways to incarceration include fragmented family histories; domestic violence; childhood and adult sexual abuse; trauma; substance abuse and partners who also abuse substances; challenges meeting family responsibilities; poverty; high risk for HIV, AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); and race. Grills et al. (2015) related that these experiences can result in chronic emotional stress that has lasting effects on women offenders' self-esteem as well as causing depression and a sense of hopelessness. Their inadequate inability to properly "cope with severe stress, deprivation, low self-esteem, and peer pressure, predicts individual criminality" (Grills et al., 2015, p. 758). Grills et al. explained that these interpersonal, and intrapersonal stressors continue during incarceration and many women re-offend once they are released.

Chapter 2 included the literature search strategy and theoretical foundation, as well as discussion of women's incarceration in the United States, California's Public Safety Realignment Act, California's Proposition 36, California's Proposition 47, California women's incarceration and recidivism rates, individual and societal barriers contributing to recidivism, women's employment readiness and other important reentry factors, a summary and conclusions. Chapter

3 includes the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and a summary.

Chapter 3:

Research Method

In this study, I investigated how women who recidivated described their readiness for employment after release from prison, jail, or other detention centers in the state of California. Using critical case sampling, I collected data for this study through in-depth, face-to-face, semi structured interviews with 20 women who had recidivated in the state of California. Those candidates for the study qualified because they had been unemployed since their last release. I transcribed the tape-recorded interviews and managed the data with NVivo, followed by analyzing it by using Moustakas's (1994) modified by van Kaam's method of analysis. I followed Walden University's IRB guidelines throughout the study to ensure the ethical protection of research participants. Chapter 3 includes the research design, rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and a summary.

Research Design and Rationale

In this section, I discussed the research questions for this phenomenological research study and explained the phenomenological research study design rationale.

Research Question

The following research question was used to guide the study:

- How do women who have recidivated describe their readiness for employment after release from prison?

Phenomenological Research Design Rationale

I first considered the mixed methods approach by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The weaknesses that were inherent by using this approach by itself offset, and this approach provided a more meaningful interpretation of the data and phenomenon that examined

(Hughes, 2016; Johnson, 2013). However, I did not select a mixed method approach because it was not needed to answer the central research question and sub-questions in this study.

I also considered a quantitative research method as the research paradigm was empirical in-nature, which "ensures validity by the process of rigorous clarification, definition or use of pilot experiments" (Ochieng, 2009, p. 13). However, I did not select a quantitative method, because in this study, the researcher was interested in "how people make sense of their lives, experiences, and their structures of the world" (Ochieng, 2009, p. 14), which cannot measure with standardized instruments. Therefore, I selected a qualitative research method because it provides an understanding and description of participants' personal experiences of the phenomena (Johnson, 2013).

The focus of phenomenology was on uncovering and interpreting the inner essence of participants' cognitive processing concerning some collective experience (Worthington, 2013). There was an essence or essences to participants' shared experiences, and by using the phenomenological design, the final product was a description that present of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002; Worthington, 2013). Findings from the phenomenological research studies were used to understand an event as "seen through the eyes of those who have experienced it" (Worthington, 2013, p. 4). I used the phenomenological research design to present the essence of women ex-offenders who had recidivated after their last release in the state of California and who were unable to find employment because of a lack of current job skills.

Comparing the work of Moustakas (1994), Sikahala (2014), Patton (2002), and Worthington (2013) provided an overview of how phenomenological methods critiqued for applicability in qualitative data analysis. Moustakas (1994) used human science perspectives and

models. There are five different approaches, but for this study, I focused on the heuristic research model, which begins with personal questions or challenges.

Sikahala (2014) stated that van Kaam used the psycho-phenomenological model (PPM) to use the psycho-phenomenological model (PPM) approach for qualitative data analysis, which has four stages encompassing 12 steps. Sikahala used a modified van Kaam approach to study the entrepreneurship insolvency in emerging markets and noted van Kaam's also used the PPM approach for qualitative research remains applicable.

According to Worthington (2013), the findings from phenomenological research studies used to understand a phenomenon as "seen through the eyes of those who have experienced it" (p. 15) because human experiences not researched through a quantitative approach. Finally, based on Worthington (2013), the use of the phenomenological research design in the current study was best for presenting the essence of the participants' experience with recidivism as well as with employment. I used the methodological approach which was founded in Moustakas' (1994) scientific theory that begins with a personal question of challenge. Moustakas' heuristic model has a social or universal significance that aimed to discover the life experience of the participants.

Role of the Researcher

Qualitative researchers are likely to take an interactive part through which they get to know the participants and the social context in which they live (Lodico et al., 2010). My role included being an observer-participant while conducting in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. I placed flyers with an invitation to take part in the research. When possible, meetings were held at the posted facility: when premised to post the flyer and conduct the interview was granted (See Appendix B and C). The chosen sites were the Altadena Senior

Center, in Altadena CA, and the Moreno Valley Reginal Center. I also posted the flyer to recruit

candidates on Craigslist (See Appendix D).

I contacted responding candidates and invited them to participate in the study. My

contacts were made through e-mail, telephone, text message, or face-to-face conversations. The

candidates that responded, but did not fit the requirements, received a thank you letter for

responding (See Appendix F). I did not recruit friends, family members, or current or past

colleagues to take part in the study. There were also no personal or professional relationships

with potential participants, and I had no power or supervision over anyone. Participants were

able to participate without feeling coerced or obligated to take part in the study.

In this phenomenological research study, I must be objective due to concerns with

researcher bias (Chism et al., 2008). I did not have any preferences, prejudices, or preexisting

attitudes or fears about the answers from potential participants. I responded to and treated

participants respectfully and did not exploit them in any way.

I considered the perceptions of all participants. There were no conflicts of interest created

by my conducting this study. Each participant was given a $5.00 Starbucks gift card before the

initial interview began, so participants would not feel obligated to complete the study to get the

gift card at the end. This incentive seemed reasonable to thank them for their time and effort in

taking part in the study. After the study was completed and approved, I provided each participant

with a summary report of the research findings via e-mail, telephone conversation, or U.S. mail.

Methodology

This section includes a description of the research in sufficient depth so that other

researchers can replicate the study. The methodology was organized in the following

subsections: (a) participant selection logic, (b) instrumentation, (c) procedures for recruitment,

(d) participation, (e) data collection, and (f) data analysis plan. The study was an examination of the experiences of women age 18 to 65, who were incarcerated in California's state prisons, jails, or other forms of detention facilities. To ensure the use of the qualitative method addressed the research questions, I designed the interview questions to help me understand women's experiences related to recidivism, and ultimately, provide information that may suggest support for helping other soon to be released inmates with same or similar challenges (Janesick, 2011; Mentens, 2014).

Participant Selection Logic

Critical case sampling is a purposeful sampling strategy that is a form of exploratory qualitative research appropriate to the situation with limited resources and a valuable number of participants (Palinkas et al., 2015). I attempted to show a phenomenon occurring in one area that shows the occurrence happening in other areas as well. The selection criteria in the study consists of women incarcerated more than once in the state of California. The length of their incarceration was not a factor in the selection.

Further criteria for participation included that after their last incarceration period, the participants found it challenging to secure employment due to a lack of job skills, inability to explain the lack of employment gap in credit and permanent address, or other factors. The participants must have been recently or currently unemployed. The participant's race or ethnicity was not a factor in their candidacy.

In contrast to quantitative studies, the sample size in qualitative studies was small (Mason, 2010). For phenomenological research studies, Chrism et al. (2008) recommended five to 25 participants, Klenke (2008) suggested two to 25 participants, while Morse (1994) recommended at least six participants. Fusch and Ness (2015) explained that "data saturation

reached when there is enough information to replicate the study when the ability to obtain additional new information has attained, and when further coding is no longer feasible" (p. 1408). The study used participants who had recidivism in the judicial systems and lack of employment upon release.

The relationship between saturation and the sample size was sufficient in this study because through critical case sampling, the use of 20 participants allowed me to obtain data that were rich in quality and thick in quantity as both were important to the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

<div align="center">

Instrumentation

</div>

A 45-minute, researcher-developed interview guide to conduct individual, in-depth, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews with participants was used (See Appendix G). The interview guide was structured to obtain data about how women who have recidivated described their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California. Also, the interview guide was structured to elicit participants' perceptions about individual and societal barriers that contribute to their recidivism and factors that are important for their reentry into society.

Face-to-face, semi-structured interviewing was appropriate when the depth of meaning was essential, and the researchers primarily focused on gaining insight and understanding (Newton, 2010). Newton (2010) agreed that researchers choosing to conduct face-to-face interviews should recognize the potential significance of context. Jamshed (2014) reported that semi structured discussions are in-depth interviews in which participants answer preset, open-ended questions. Jamshed also noted that semi structured conversations based on the semi-structured interview guide, which is a schematic presentation of questions or topics that need to

be explored by the interviewer. Jamshed (2014) suggested that to achieve the best use of interview time. Interview guides serve the useful purpose of exploring many participants more systematically and comprehensively and keep the interview focused on the desired line of action.

The questions in the interview guide consist of the central research question and sub-questions so that the interviewer collected the information and captured more effectively what the interviews were recording (Jamshed, 2014). Only handwritten notes during the interviews are unreliable as I might miss some key wording or points of view. Jamshed (2014) explained that the recording of the conversation makes it easier for the researcher to focus on the interview content and verbal prompts, enabling the researcher to generate a verbatim transcript of the interview. I am using Jamshed's suggestion to capture the conversations on recorded tapes eliminated, relying on my memory.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Only women who met the requirement according to the posted flyers and met the selection criteria individually by e-mail, telephone, and face-to-face conversations were contacted. Potential candidates were sent or given an invitation letter to participate in the study. Participants were informed they could ask questions about the research by e-mail, telephone, or face-to-face conversations. I did not include anyone with whom they had a personal or professional relationship in their studies, such as family members, friends, current and past coworkers or associates. This prevented any perceived coercion or obligation to participate due to any existing relationship.

In the invitation letter (See Appendix A) to candidates seeking to take part in the study, potential candidates were instructed to complete the questions on the content form and e-mail them back completed. If potential candidates did not have an e-mail address, I gave them the

invitation letter in person, asked them to complete the questions, and return the completed documents to me, if they were interested in participating in the study. Potential candidates' responses to the questions helped to ensure that they met the selection criteria for participation. I contacted each candidate by telephone, e-mail, or face-to-face to set up an appointment to conduct semi-structured interviews at a time that is convenient for them. Meetings were held in private areas of a Starbucks, a schoolyard park, and other private-public allocation suggested for the convenience of the participant.

Before taking part in the interview, I asked each participant to read and sign a hard copy consent form (See Appendix H). The consent form outlined that a $5.00 Starbucks gift card would be given to each participant before the interview began, so they would not be obligated to take part in the study to get the gift card at the end. I answered any questions that participants had while they reviewed the consent form. Interviews were audio-taped and took approximately 45 minutes (See Appendix G). If the participant chose not to be audio-taped during the interviews, I did not use that audiotape, and noted it in her journal. Before concluding the interviews, the researcher answered the participants' further questions or concerns. After addressing questions or concerns, the interview was completed, and the participant was thanked for her participation.

It was not likely that participation in this study would arouse acute discomfort. To provide participants with protection from distress or psychological harm, each was informed that she could seek counseling by calling the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2017) national helpline should they experience any adverse effects from taking part in this study.

After the transcribing of the interviews, e-mails were sent, and copies provided to each participant of a transcription of her interview. Each participant asked to review the transcript for accuracy. The reason for the review process was to help ensure the accuracy, credibility, and validity of recorded during the interviews (Harper & Cole, 2012). Providing the transcription helped to make the transcription review more accurate and less burdensome on participants as they checked to ensure that their interview was accurately transcribed. The researcher discussed that the participants' feedback would be by telephone, e-mail, or in person. The transcription review process took approximately 25 minutes.

The data are secured in a locked file cabinet and under a password-protected computer in my private home office. I was the only person with access to the data, which will be kept for at least five years based on Walden University guidelines. After the five years, I will properly destroy the data using techniques such as shredding and demagnetizing.

I completed the National Institutes of Health (NIH) human research protection training (See Appendix I). I also abided by all federal and state regulations, such as the ethical guidelines found in California state statutes (Regents of the University of California, 2015).

Data Analysis Plan

I analyzed the research question and three other questions. Interviews were transcribed from verbal tape recording to data input and coding through NVivo, which is a data management and a method of analyzing (Jabbar, 2015). NVivo helps organize data and helps the researcher to make sense of the data coding during the process of analysis (Jabbar, 2015). King (2004) recommended NVivo as a method of data management. Jabbar agreed that NVivo was invaluable in helping the researcher index segments of text to particular themes, link research notes to coding, carry out sophisticated search and retrieve operations, and aid the researcher in

examining possible relationships between the subjects. NVivo was used to collect data and archive almost any data by inputting keywords and phrases that connected the transcribed data, search large data sets, and create codes to identify patterns (Academic Triangle, 2015). Social media now allows the importance of tweets, Facebook posts, and YouTube comments to be imported and coded into the NVivo program as part of its data collections.

To analyze the data, I used Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method of analysis, which includes the following seven steps:

- Listing and preliminary grouping.

- Reducing and eliminating not relevant issues.

- Finalizing the data collection and put into NVivo language.

- Identification of the invariant constituents and themes by the application.

- Using the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes, construct for each textual description of the experience.

- Constructing each structural description of the experience based on the individual textural story and imaginative variation.

- Constructing each research participant, a textural-structural description of the meanings and essences of the experience and from the individual textural-structured stories, developing a composite story of the purposes and realities of the experience, representing the group as a whole.

Discrepant cases refer to "searching for and discussing elements of the data that do not support or appear to contradict patterns or explanations that are emerging from data analysis" (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006, para. 1). In the data analysis, I discussed discrepant case information as all participants' perceptions, which may not be the same. Preliminary themes in this study

include women who recidivated, recidivism, employment readiness, individual barriers, societal barriers, and reentry factors.

Issues of Trustworthiness

This section includes a discussion of four qualitative counterparts to quantitative validity and reliability: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The analysis also included the ethical procedures of this study. I organized this section in the following subsections: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical methods.

Credibility

Credibility paralleled the criteria of internal validity in qualitative studies (Lodico et al., 2010). According to Lodico et al. (2010), credibility pertains to whether the participants' perceptions of the setting or events correspond with the researcher's portrayal of them in the research study and if they "accurately represented what the participants think, feel, and do, and the processes that influence their thoughts, feelings, and actions" (p. 273). Strategies to establish credibility include prolonged and varied field experience. Checking to see if the researcher's interpretation of the processes and interactions in the setting is valid. Sampling, negative case analysis. Reflexivity, triangulation, member checking, peer examination, peer debriefing, interview technique, establishing the authority of researcher, structural coherence, attention voice, and external audit (Anney, 2014; Lodico et al., 2010). Credibility in this study was found by reflexivity, saturation, and transcription reviews. The reflexivity strategy to disclose all and experiences related to women ex-offenders and recidivism was used. I also e-mailed or gave each participant the transcript of her interview and asked that she review the transcript for accuracy. I discussed the feedback by telephone, e-mail, or in person with the participant.

Transferability

Transferability parallels the criteria of external validity in qualitative studies and refers to the degree of similarity between the research site and other sites as judged by the reader (Lodico et al., 2010). Lodico et al. (2010) transferability was assessed by looking at the richness of the descriptions included in the study and the amount of detail provided about the context within which the study occurred. Further, Lodico et al. stated that the readers are the individuals who judge transferability; therefore, richly detailed, or thick descriptions enabled readers to make judgments about the similarity of characteristics of the research site and that of the readers' sites. Hence, transferability made it possible for readers to decide whether similar processes were at work in their communities by understanding in-depth how they occur at the research site (Lodico et al., 2010). Along with full description, Bitsch (2005) highlighted purposeful sampling as a strategy to establish transferability. In this study, I ensure transferability by providing a detailed, thick description of the study's context and participants of the study.

Dependability

Dependability parallels the criteria of reliability but assessed through statistical procedures (Lodico et al., 2010). Lodico et al. (2010) noted that dependability pertained to whether individuals can track the methods and processes used to collect and interpret the data. An excellent qualitative study provides detailed explanations of how the data are collected and analyzed, and many qualitative researchers make their data available for review by other researchers (Lodico et al., 2010). Strategies researchers used to establish dependability included audit trail, triangulation, a code-recode strategy, stepwise replication, and peer examination or iterator comparisons (Ary et al., 2010; Chilisa & Preece, 2005; Krefting, 1991; Schwandt et al., 2007). I established dependability in this study through an audit trail, including interview notes,

tape-recorded interviews, transcriptions of those interviews, and transcription review documents for cross-checking.

Confirmability

Confirmability parallels the criteria of objectivity and pertains to the degree to which the results of the study can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Baxter & Eyles, 1997). Strategies used to establish confirmability includes checking and rechecking the data throughout the study, audit trail, reflexive journals, triangulation, devil's advocate role to the data, and the tactic of searching for and describing negative instances (Bowen, 2009; Koch, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Trochim, 2006). I established confirmability in this study through the use of an audit trail and reflexivity.

Ethical Procedures

I completed the NIH human research protection training (See Appendix I), and I abide by all federal and state regulations, such as the ethical guidelines found in California state statutes (Regents of the University of California, 2015). I began data collection after I received Walden University's IRB approval. The data collection process presented no more significance than minimal risk to participants, and I followed Walden University's IRB guidelines to protect the data that I generated from the interview questions.

Before each interview began, I gave all participants a consent form that has been approved by Walden University IRB for them to review and sign to obtain their permission to participate in the study (See Appendix H). In the consent form, I described in-depth participants' protections and ethical guidelines would follow during the research study, such as the voluntary nature of the study allowing participants to change their minds about participating in the study at any time without fear of punishment or penalty. Participants were not obligated to take part in

any area of the study with which they were not comfortable. In the consent form, I outline any physical or psychological risks that the participants might experience, such as some risk of minor discomforts (e.g., stress and becoming upset) encountered in daily life. While it was not likely that participation in this study would arouse any acute distress, participants were referred to SAMHSA's (2017) national helpline if they experience any adverse effects.

I protected and respected participants' rights during the research process and the data collection stage. After I collected the data, I removed all identifiable data and numbers or coded the interviews to match each participant. In doing this, I protected participants' identities; however, the identity of each participant will be kept confidential. I informed all participants that the interviews will be audio-recorded and that I will make a verbatim transcription of the meetings, which they can review for accuracy. I told participants that the transcriptions would be analyzed later. I kept all audio-recorded data secure as only my supervising committee will have access to the data.

I will keep all data in a locked file cabinet and password-protected computer in my home office for the required period of five years based on Walden University's guidelines. I will destroy all data after that time using methods such as shredding and demagnetizing. In the consent form, participants were provided with my contact information and the contact information of my dissertation committee chair's report in case they have any further questions or concerns about the study. I also provided participants with the contact information of the Walden University representative with whom they can talk privately about their rights as participants.

Summary

In this study, I investigated how 18 women who have recidivated described their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California. Participants took part in in-depth, semi-structured interviews that I transcribed. I used the NVivo software to manage the data and analyze the data using Moustakas' (1994) modified van Kaam method of analysis. The data collection process presented no more significance than minimal risk to the participant (e.g., discomfort, stress, etc.), and I followed Walden University's IRB guidelines as well as federal and state regulations to protect participants and the data.

Chapter 3 included the research design and rationale, the role of the researcher, methodology, issues of trustworthiness, and a summary. Chapter 4 consists of the purpose of the demographics, data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness, results, and a review.

Chapter 4: Result

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine critical issues that could lead to a lack of employment and the possibility of recidivism, from the viewpoint of recently released female ex-offenders. The goal of the study was to enlist 20 voluntary participants with experiences of recidivism and to explore factors that could affect the lives of soon-to-be-released inmates, and to give lawmakers, the judicial system, the department of education, and other interested audiences, a firsthand account of the different experiences ex-offenders encounter once released from prison without proper, current job-skills, training, and counseling. The risk to women returning to prisons is 7 out of 10 within three to nine years (Grills et al., 2015).

Women's incarceration rates were an indication of U.S. policies focused on the war on drugs more so than on an actual increase in criminality (Fuentes, 2013). Grills et al. (2015) reported that 27.1% of women inmates to return to state prison in three years after their release (p. 15). Grills et al. (2015) continued by stating the unique experiences of California's female offenders should be used to inform pre-release intervention strategies to affect baseline and follow-up well-being, resilience, and a sense of personal control (p. 759), which can perhaps reduce recidivism. The research question in this study is: How Women Who Have Recidivated Describe Their Readiness for Employment after Release from Prison.

To get to the core of the question, I addressed three sub-questions to guide the study. How do women who have recidivated describe their readiness for employment after release from prison? What factors do women with a history of recidivism identify as crucial for reentering society, especially regarding supporting themselves financially? My interest was: Do women with a history of recidivism attribute their return to prison to a lack of job skills, outdated

employable skills or replacement in the workforce by modern technology or a disability? Or were there other contributions related to their recidivism: To address these issues, this study was conducted with the use of critical case sampling, which was a small number of participants.

Chapter 4 includes a description of the setting in which data collection took place, the demographics of the participants that were relevant to the study, and an examination of data collection that includes the number of participants as well as the frequency and duration of data collection. The data analysis includes discussion of the categories and themes, along with any discrepant cases. Chapter 4 also includes evidence of trustworthiness in addition to a discussion about the credibility and transferability followed by the results of the study and a summary of the chapter.

Setting

The qualitative study began by pre-qualifying (e.g., by telephone or face-to-face) 20 female participants who answered a posted flyer. I met with each candidate to obtain their signed consent form, set up an appointment date, time, and place for the interview. I confirmed the individual was over the age of 18 and not visibly pregnant. Of the 20 participants, 19 volunteered to sign the consent form. One participant decided she did not want to revisit that period of her life and asked to be excused from participating. Another participant had to continue the interview by telephone due to prior time commitments thereby leaving a total of 18 participants participating in the study. Each interview was held in a location set for privacy and comfort for the participant. Eleven interviews were held at a Starbucks, two were held at a local park, and five were held telephonically at the participant's request. There was no discrimination regarding their qualifications as to race, sex, criminal convictions, or length of time spent in incarceration.

Demographics

I met with a total of 20 qualified participants. One previously qualified participant declined to interview after agreeing to sign the consent form, one participant felt she would not be sure she could give honest responses and did not want to revisit those memories. Therefore, I had a total of 18 participants selected to participate in the research. Each participant in the research reported to have had two or more stays in a California jail, prison (i.e., state or federal, halfway house, or criminal incarceration facility), indicating a history of recidivism and a challenge in gaining or regaining employment since her prison release. All participants in the study reported she was between the ages of 18 and 65. Two participants reported to be unemployable after release because of a disability. Fourteen participants reported that they were recently or currently unemployed and had difficulty finding employment. Two participants were currently not seeking employment. The martial status of the participants included three participants were divorced once released. Three participants were married. Nine participants were single and three were separated from their spouses. The educational levels of the participants ranged from eighth grade and below to college education or they obtained a certificate. At the time of the study, five participants were between the ages of 18 and 29, five were between the ages of 30 and 45, six were between the ages of 46 and 59, and two were between the ages of 60 and 65.

The ethnicity of participants included two White/ European/White, two Mexican/ Hispanic/ Latino, and 14 African American/African American/ Black. From the 18 participants 10 were single, three were currently married, three were separated (with pending divorces) from their spouse, and two were divorced while incarcerated.

The educational background of the participants was three completed eighth grade and below, 10 completed ninth grade and above, four were high school graduates/diplomas, and one had education above high school (e.g., certificate/job-training /additional education). At the time of their interview, the participant's employment status was one returned to school to get her high-school diploma, 12 were looking for jobs, two were currently employed, and one was on total disability, and two were married and now are "stay-home spouses" who were not looking for employment.

At the time of the study five participants were between the ages of 18 and 29, five were between the ages of 30 and 45, six were between the ages of 46 and 59, and two were between the ages of 60 and 65.

Table 1

Demographics of Study Participants

Participant	Age	Ethnicity	Marital Status	Education
1	59	African American/Black	Divorced	8th grade and below
2	37	African American/Black	Married	9th grade and above
3	23	African American/Black	Single	9th grade and above
4	25	Hispanic/Mexican	Single	9th grade and above
5	61	African American/Black	Married	High school
6	32	Caucasian/White	Married	High school
7	30	African American/Black	Single	High school
8	56	African American/Black	Single	9th grade and above
9	29	Caucasian/White	Separated	9th grade and above
10	33	African American/Black	Single	9th grade and above
11	28	African American/Black	Single	High school
12	45	African American/Black	Single	8th grade and below
13	59	Hispanic/Latino	Separated	9th grade and above
14	56	African American/Black	Separated	8th grade and below
15	56	African American/Black	Divorced	9th grade and above
16	47	African American/Black	Single	9th grade and above
17	64	African American/Black	Single	9th grade and above
18	27	African American/Black	Single	College/Certificate

Data Collection

Two to four weeks after posting the flyers, positive candidates began to respond, and soon the respondents became participants. It took a period of five to seven weeks to get 20 positive participants.

My data collection included a detailed examination of the data collected for the study. Also included is a review of the data, themes identified, and themes related to the theoretical framework. I protected the participants' privacy by shielding the identities of the participants, their crimes, criminal records, and the locations of the interview sites.

During the interviews, I kept detailed notes in a journal regarding statements made to me by the participants. The journal contained preconceived notions versus actual findings from the study. The journal started with each initial contact and ended with my comments and observations of the participants during the interview. One question I thought worth mentioning came from a participant outside of interview time. Her question was: "is recidivism necessary to draw the attention to the criminal justice system that before the release of inmate help is needed in the state of California"? My response to her was: "that is good question, but it is not part of this research study."

As this study focused on telling the stories of the individuals in the research, it became easy to see how many questions many viewpoints with different experiences and opinions on could have how to reach an amicable conclusion. Each participant viewed her situation as complicated and perhaps unnecessary to have her incarcerated.

One participant declined to be recorded because she was uncomfortable with me tape-recording the personal interview. I assured her that all her personal information would be kept private and no form of her identity would reveal her name or identity. She preferred not to be tape-recorded, and I did not record her.

My goal was to explore the perceptions of 20 female ex-inmates on three major sub-questions. The sub-questions were: How would you describe your finances when you first

arrested? How would you describe your readiness for employment after release from incarceration? What was your experience(s) in finding work when you were first released?

Of the 18 participants interviewed, 13 interviews held in person, which allowed for an in-depth face-to-face question and answer exchange. Eleven of those 13 were held at a Starbucks, which was convenient for the participant. Two interviews were held at a park located near the school in which a recruitment flyer was posted. Five were held telephonically. Each interview included the exchange introductions and an explanation for the cause of this research study, confirmation of the qualifications to participate in the study, and signed consent form, which was submitted.

A $5.00 Starbucks' gift card was given to each participant upon receipt of the signed consent form. I thanked each participant and explained the gift card was from me, not as payment but a thank you for their time and participation in the study. At the candidate's request, five interviews were held via telephone and signed consent form was initialed and returned before the first meeting. The date and time for the formal interview were confirmed. Each telephonic candidate agreed to their available date and time to continue with the conversation via telephonically after signing the consent form, which I noted in the journal. One telephonic interview participant received a gift card by U.S. mail. One participant refused the gift card by saying, "no thank you."

Five participants initiated their telephone interviews by calling me at the appointed date and time previously agreed upon. There were only two delays in-time communications and there was a loss of 2 hours 20 minutes between those calls. In all but one case, the participants agreed to be tape-recorded. Data collection began after approval was obtained from the Walden University IRB (03-13-19-0259568).

I transcribed all data and the data collected were the responses of each participant who volunteered in answering the research questions: How would you describe your finances when you were first arrested? How would you describe your finances when you were first arrested? What was your experience(s) in finding a job when you were first released? I used hand-coding for my data analysis along with the NVivo software. NVivo software allowed me to develop emerging themes such as finances, employment, experiences, education, and family reunification.

I used a phenomenology qualitative approach with the research that focusses on the commonality of the lives and experiences within a particular group of people. All the data collected was transcribed by audiotape recording, handwritten journal notes, and observation of the participants. I created and transcribed the qualitative data transcripts using Microsoft Word, allowing for the first printed transcript review. I hand-coded the transcripts to become familiar with the language in the transcripts, then I separately analyzed each transcript using NVivo software. I created a codebook by using the software Word Cruncher. The codebook included words, themes, quotes, and phrases. By using the sort function in NVivo, I was able to narrow down the theme words and create a list of code words for each transcript. I narrowed down words, phrases, and clustered of terms whereby categories and quotes began to emerge from the transcript. I used NVivo software in the transcripts as I started to identify quotes, phrases, and patterns from the codebook. Researcher bias was reduced as NVivo software served to organize the data analysis and reduce quotations that were not relevant to support my data. I used full description to keep the breadth and depth of the meaning of what the participants' said about the recidivism and readiness for employment after prison release. There were no differences in the

data collection plan as presented in Chapter 3 and there were no unanticipated circumstances encountered during data collection.

Data Analysis

I transcribed all data and the data collected were the responses of each participant who volunteered in answering the following research question: (a) how would you describe your finances when you were first arrested, (b) how would you describe your readiness for employment after release from incarceration, (c) what was your experience(s) in finding a job when you were first released?

I used hand-coding for data analysis along with the software, NVivo, which allowed me to see emerging themes such as finances, employment, experiences, education, and family reunification. First, I transcribed each interview and compared the transcript with the audio recording of the interview. Thereafter, I compared the transcripts to the audio recording and any notes I made to verify the accuracy of the transcript. Next, I analyzed again the audio recordings, but this time, I listened for any cues that reflected a change in tone or mood or extended pauses in answering the questions. I highlighted and color-coded relevant codes that occurred in the interviews such as voice changes or discomfort from the participant.

Several themes and secondary themes emerged after review. I highlighted and organized them using the NVivo quotation manager systems. The NVivo system gave understanding to the context of the quotes. I reanalyzed three themes identified (as noted in Table 2) with the research questions. I then analyzed and placed three identified themes in categories.

Table 2

Themes, Subthemes from the Transcripts

Primary theme	Secondary Theme
Finances	Job Skills before Prison
Employment Readiness	Available Resources
Experience(s) with job seeking.	Relationships with others
Skills/ Training	Relationships with Family
Housing	

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study and to confirm the quality of this research, I used saturation, member checking, and data triangulation. Saturation was reached at the completion of 10 interviews. After 18 interviews I stopped seeking participants as the participant responses had become redundant and any further data collection was not necessary. I conducted member checks which allowed the participants to correct any misinterpretation of their statements I may have made member checks also allowed the participants to elaborate on topics that needed clarification. Member checking helped establish credibility of data collected and member checking is a common technique used in qualitative research. Member checking allowed me to ensure that bias was not a part of the collected data.

Transferability

The findings of this study are not meant to be generalized to the public or other populations, as the findings are specific to a certain population. To better understand and interpret the data, I used thick description. The use of thick description allowed me to highlight

beliefs, emotions, relationships, and other details about the participants. By providing sufficient

detail and description of these life situations allowed for individuals to find meaning in the study

findings. I used critical case sampling to recruit multiple participants with differing viewpoints.

Dependability/Confirmability

Data triangulation helped ensure dependability of the findings as participants were

interviewed on different days of the week, and at different times of day. Participants were also in

different locations during interviews. Participants served time at different facilities and served

different amounts of time. Different days of the week, times and locations helped to ensure that

the views expressed were accurate, and static across participants. The challenges and factors

needed for success after incarceration expressed by participants can be considered trustworthy

since they were similar across various participants. All records related to this study to provide an

audit trail, establishing dependability and credibility has been securely stored. I was responsible

for analysis and interpretation of this data and I am aware that researcher bias may have

impacted study outcomes. Keeping a journal allowed me to document my role as researcher as

well as observations of the participants.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

The results of conducting the study were to give 20 qualified participants an opportunity

to voice their personal experiences and elaborate in her own words her opinion concerning their

recidivism history and how they viewed their readiness for employment after prison release.

Such a focused research might allow the development of usable knowledge and programs, which

could help to reduce the recidivism of women in the state of California if the cause of recidivism

was due to lack of job skills after prison release, or any exportable means to solve the problems.

This knowledge may have a significant impact on the legal system as well as its judicial financial budget in the state of California.

To understand the participant's experiences, I asked three interview questions. These questions encompassed (a) how would you describe your financial situation before you were arrested the last time, (b) how would you describe your readiness for employment after your last release from incarceration, (c) what were your experience(s) in seeking and finding a job when you were last released?

Demographical Information

All the participants gave descriptions of their educational level, marital status, living arrangement and whether they had children. Ex female inmates between the ages of 18 and 65 years old made up 100% of the participant pool and none of the participants were on parole or probation. Participants were from California and resided in Riverside, San Bernardino, and Los Angeles counties. All the participants were housed and released from California's prison systems.

Themes 1: Finances

There were several themes that emerged from the interviews that were interesting. Three themes that I selected to address were finances, employment readiness and experiences in job seeking. Each participant addressed these questions and the themes emerged according to Beard et al. (2013).

I asked the participants how you would describe your financial situation before you were arrested the last time. The financial situations of each participant depended upon their personal life styes. Participant that was criminally sophisticated looked forward to criminal active to support their lack of finances. Participants 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, and 18: were all unemployed and not

financially stabled at the time of their arrest. Participants 1, 2, 7, 8, 10, 15: said they had some means of income and had some form of support. When asked participant 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17: each one responded differently.

P11: When I was arrested the last time, I had been financially stable. I was able to pay my house whole bills. I was employed as a clerk in a law firm and I was trying to get a car, but I wasn't making enough for any additional payment. I became stressed about my financial situation and not having a car. I felt that I was not making enough and began selling drugs again. I started stealing things to support my drug habit.

P13: I had a job, cleaning houses before I was incarcerated the last time. I moved in with my boyfriend just before getting arrested. He was selling drugs and asked me to make a delivery for him. I wanted to help him out, so I did. The money we made was in the hundreds per day. That lifestyle continued until we both were picked up with drugs for sale on our person. Financially I was doing okay without the selling of drugs, but I felt I needed to help him.

P14: I had been married with two children. I was a housewife and did not work outside of the home. My finances were good. My husband supported the house, and I took care of the bills on his income. Financially we were able to pay the house whole bills.

P16: My finances were through help from other family members. It was difficult for me because I was disable and needed help getting around. Because I was unable to drive due to not having a license my family members had to take me around. That situation was hard for me because there was not always someone available when I needed transportation. I started asking men for favors and that when it all started. I got arrested for being in the car when a crime was committed by one of them.

P17: Before I got arrested, I was living with my boyfriend. My own finance income was none. I did not have a job at that time and had to depend on him for everything financially. It was hard because his rent had increased, and the cost of living was increasing in California. We began to argue about money issues, so I started stealing clothes and other things to sell. That is when I was arrested.

Theme 2: Employment Readiness

One aspect associated with a successful transition is to become employed after prison release. I asked each participant; how would you describe your readiness for employment after your last release from incarceration? Most of the participant described their experience as difficult becoming employed because they were unprepared for job seeking. Their lack of cash and transportation to go job seeking was the number one causes of the difficulties. Ninety percent of the participant found that the lack current job skills was their main problem. Eighty percent lacked current job skills; cash to travel to and from employment sights; and the lack of dress attire for job interviews (Hamilton, 1951).

P1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18: responded, they were unskilled or not employment-ready when she was release from prison. She had no instruction or training for employment readiness before released. There was no preparation for job seeking. Without proper instructions before prison release the ex-inmate was at risk for difficult challenges seeking employment. By not having the basic tools to success around gaining employment the ex-inmate will face additional challenges that other employment seeker face.

P3: Reported that she was offered a job that she was qualified for, but when she reported for the second interview, the management looked at her resume. The employer asked

about the gap in her employment. She told him that she was in prison for 8 years. He said

they will call her; but she never got a call from them.

P7: Reported she was going back to school full time and did not seek employment. She

was living with her mother again.

P12: I was employed by my son's father's family. Although, it was difficult because the

family had not established a trusting relationship with me. I felt it would take time for me

to develop a trusting relationship with them again.

P16: Stated that she had no training in preparedness for getting a job. She had no current

job skills or computer experiences. It is different then what she'd remembered job

seeking to be before she went back to prison. She felt that if she was better prepared, she

could be employed by now. She is frustrated with the employment system and have not

experienced any positive success.

Themes 3: Experience(s) with job seeking

Most participants attributed their experiences in job seeking as negative, because of their

criminal background histories. Without a consistent history of employment on her resume; or the

ability to explain the gap in employment on their application it becomes suspect and an

explanation was request for the time of absent of employment. Beside the fact the participants

had no current job skills or training, participants experienced many challenges in what types of

jobs were available for people without training.

P1: Finding employment was harder than before due to the background even when you

know the management would be extremely interested in me, but they do a background

check and then, you know, they are no longer as interested. I was able to find jobs that

were good for me, ah you know, I was able to talk to management about it, just having

that sit down like that was what it is, this is what I am willing to do you know that is not

me, this is me and it came from a real genuine place so management you know felt like it

came from a real genuine place and hired me any ways.

P2: My family and friends seemed to be happy once I got home. It seemed that no one

judged me. I used community resources to get a job, but it was unsucessful when they

realized the 12 year gap. When I told them I was in prison for that time, I was let go.

P3: States she had difficulties understanding the computer and how to complete a

computerized application.

P4: I was denied access to community services because I did not have an address. I had to

ask my brother if I could use his address as a stationary address. His wife did not want

me to do that. Without help from my sister I was unable to qualify for any assistance

from a county or state facility.

Six participants stated they did not experience any type of job seeking experience.

Participant 5, 7, 10, 11, 12, 18: did not go outside of the home to seek employment after prison

release.

P5: became disable in prison. P7: went back to school. P10: was a housewife and did not

look for employment outside the home. P11: Had developed a health problem while

incarcerated. She is seeking state disability. P12: was offered employment by a friend's

family. She accepted it because she had worked for the family before going to prison.

P 6, 8, 14: were offered jobs without seeking employment through employment services.

P6: I realized I did not have current employable skills. Without current training, I was not

looking for employment. My friend who worked at the department store Ross was able to

get me a night job as a stocking clerk. I worked five nights a week and was getting a decent wage.

P8: It was difficult. It took three months to find a job. I looked every day for a job but was unsuccessful for three months. It was my friend who worked as a supervisor with a janitorial service. She supervised the evening and night crew. She gave me a job on one of those crews she supervised. I was grateful because I was having no luck finding a job without current job skills.

P9: When I got out of prison my husband told me to rest and he would take care of me. Well, resting is not for me, so I started looking for a job. I wanted a desk job, so I got a job as a receptionist. It took me about a month or two before I got the job. It was a joy to know that someone had confidence in me. After two months employed, I was let go because someone told the manager I was smoking in the restroom which was not allowed in that building. I go out again job seeking, but for now I am looking for computer training classes.

P14: Oh my God. It was the grace of God. I knew people that knew people. I went to an employment agency, but it was challenging. I was unable to understand the application process or the filing out applications. I had a job offered to me by someone I knew inside the prison system that actually lined me up with a job once I got out. I accepted that job offer.

P18: lives with her sister.

Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to indemnify 18 participants and examine their responses to the topic of how women who recidivated describe their readiness

for employment after release from Prison. Throughout the responses of 18 female study participants, I identified emergent themes regarding finances before incarceration, readiness for employment after prison release, and what their experiences were in looking for employment. I found there was a gap in research information about employment after prison release and the cause of recidivism from the ex-inmate's point of view. By examining the testimonies of 18 California residents released from a correctional institution on this subject, I found from these participants repeating facts of lack of up-to-date employable skills once they were released no matter the length of time spent incarcerated. The research themes questions that emerged in chapter 4 revealed that only one out of 18 participants were able to find employment using the skills she previously had.

After the completion of 18 participant interviews in which 17 were voice recorded, the conversations were immediately transferred from the voice recorder to a USB stick for my review as outlined in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5 is a presentation of the findings which were presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 also includes an explanation regarding the limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, and the chapter concludes with the potential effect for positive social change.

Chapter 5:

Conclusion

In this qualitative narrative research study, my attempt was to investigate the experiences of how 18 former female inmates describe their experiences of recidivism, challenges in reentry into the job market, and readiness of employment in California. Women being released from incarcerations face individual and societal barriers to successfully re-entry society was discussed in Chapter 4. Barriers include social stigma, lack of basic needs, poverty, community ties, and unrealistic preparedness (Flower, 2012; Paulson, 2013). Women ex-inmate is becoming one of the fastest-growing populations in the United States. The prison and jail population are more focused on the male population until recently (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013).

There are very few programs in place that address women's situations (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013). Flower's (2010) policy and service recommendations are design for incarcerated males would not apply to female counterparts. Fuentes (2013) further noted that researchers have begun to reveal gendered pathways to crime, which indicates the need for unique equity male as well as female services provided for a person returning from prison.

Interpretation of the Findings

The purpose and nature of the study as described in chapter 2 was to give a voice to some challenge's women perception of life after prison release. Within three years of their release, seven out of 10 women inmates will be at risk of a return to prison because of unresolved issues such as the lack of current job training or lack of experiences in the current job market. Drug users or drug-related problems are likely to become clinically depressed and have low self-esteem (LaVigne et al., 2009). The provision of job skills before prison release could make a difference in recidivism (Vacca, 2004; van Dinther et al., 2011). The impact of job training and

the increase of recidivism are not entirely clear, but without current job skills, ex-inmates are experiencing difficulties finding employment.

A review of the literature identified a multitude of studies that related to education before prison release, including the education and training of inmates before prison release (Beard et al., 2014; Chilisa & Preece, 2005). The fundamental questions I was seeking from these interviews is reflexed in the sub-questions, which examines participants' experiences caused by a lack of employable skills before prison release. What difficulties (if any) were their experiences gaining employment? Was finance or anything else a contributing factor to her recidivism?

A study done by Flower, 2013, Paulson 2013 revealed there were many obstacles which can prevent an ex-inmate from gaining employment. Obstacles such as loss employment skills or lack of up-to-date computer skills being among the highest. A lack of skills due to advancement in technology, time away from the work market, or replacement of machinery (i.e., computers or up-dated information) a cause in fact to their not obtaining employment after prison release?

The reality of becoming successful in gaining stable employment, is not possible if there is a lack of education and job skills Flower, 2013, The study participants expressed frustration with their inability to become gainfully employed once released from prison. The participants felt that employment would lead to self-sufficiency such that they would not be dependent on family and friends for survival. The participants believed that there should be a transitional program that helped them once they were released. Johnson's (2014) participants discussed the difficulty of obtaining employment whether they were college graduates, and how employers viewed them once the employers learned of the participants' incarceration. One participant in the study discussed an incident in which she believed that she had the job until she disclosed her past and the employer, changed his mind and she did not get the position: without an explanation. The

disclosure of incarceration by ex-offenders to potential employers does have some effect on whether an employer will hire them. Employers that required background checks, according to some of participants in this study were able to secure employment once they revealed their prison history.

In the community where I conducted my study, there were not many communities helps services such as transitional housing or housing programs that allow women without finances or jobs to live while she reestablishes her life. Some participants in this study had children who needed the support of their parents and some participants no longer had custody of their children.

Johnson's (2014) found that for women to be successful when they establish independent living quarters, they would have to have transitional help. The participants in this study also that having a place of their own would equate to success. Harding et al. (2013) stated there were common places where ex-offenders stay once, they are released from prison: motels, transitional housing facilities, with family members or friends, and homeless shelters. The women in this present study did not report staying in motels or shelters as they initially stayed with family and friends when they were released. Although the ex-offenders initially had somewhere to stay, they knew this was only temporary and they needed to find their own housing. Those who do not have a support system may experience institutional cycling. Institutional cycling, as described by Harding et al (2013), occurs when prisons release ex-offenders to shelters and the women that are released cycle between prisons and shelters to survive.

Pre-release planning, which includes employment planning for women reentering the community, should start before being released from prisons so communities that have reentry programs can coordinate employment services for women that are released. The general findings of this study revealed that ex female women face economic challenges, and they face significant

barriers, such as obtaining stable employment and housing. The participants in the study are only asking to be better prepared before they are released from prison and, once released, to have a transitional program available for them. This study should provide further insight to the needs of this population.

Limitations of the Study

In Chapter 1, I discussed the limitations of the study and what I did to establish trustworthiness. I used a second communicate process which allowed participants to correct any errors and interpretations they perceived as being incorrect. In addition, I asked each participant if there was anything she wish to add, delete, or further explain according to (Lincoln & Guba 1985). All participants were given an opportunity to review the transcripts with me by telephone or in person.

Due to the sensitivity and stigmas associated with having been incarcerated, data collected was limited to what the participant was willing to share. I used a critical case sampling of 18 participants between the ages of 18 and 65. Critical case sampling is an excellent method to use when funds are limited, and research may not yield broadly generalizable findings. The range in age did not discriminate in any way to race or sexual preference, although each participant identified herself as female. Also, I did not distinguish between the lengths of time served or the nature of the participants' crimes, such as violent versus nonviolent. Therefore, the research questions were directed toward the participants' views of their personal experiences. Experiences with finances, recidivism, job search after prison release, and education before and after prison. The search revealed whether a lack of employable skills after prison release was a factor in their failure to obtain employment. How do findings relate to the literature?

Secondly, I had to consider social desirability bias due to the potential for participants to not answer the interview questions honestly, as participants may have wanted to be perceived more positively. However, I had to assume each participant was open and honest when answering the interview questions, and she shared her perceptions about the subject they were asked to address.

Recommendations for Future Studies

The findings in this study point to several suggested future studies that will allow society to understand the needs of ex-offenders better. Bias attitudes perceived by ex-offenders as individuals that have been incarcerated are an endless punishment. I recommend that future researchers explore why the current educational needs for job training before prison release are not being addressed. One question in this area to be investigated would be where the state will find the resources to training for up-to-date job skill training for inmates before prison release, thereby giving the opportunity to reducing, if not eliminating, recidivism due to financial issues after release. This was one of the many topics that were not covered in-depth in this interview.

Another recommendation is for researchers to explore methods to effectively identify those challenges female inmates will have after prison release (Brennan et al., 2012), such as up-to-date employment counseling of inmates. I also recommend that the public receive literature on the positive aspects of changes in the ex-offenders when they are employable such as: certificates in areas of training. Employment can help to eliminate biases and negativity toward ex-offenders only by addressing positive issues concerning those who have made positive changes in their life.

Incarceration in the correctional institution should be just that. Incarceration should become the place to correct the harmful conduct and give healing to the person, and not merely

to punish the wrongdoer. Researchers must study how to educate the public on the ex-offender's current conditions and their positive contributions they can make in society after prison release. I have provided initial information regarding the testimonies of 18 participants who participated in this study. Additional organizational resources can aid counselors in effectively researching ways that warrant social changes and bring about the ultimate solution. The foundation regarding women, recidivism, and their readiness for employment are recommended for further research in coping with these issues. Not every situation will end with a lack of employment skills. But the question should be: What is a cause for recidivism and how can society reduce it? This type of study could provide information in the areas of recidivism that needs the most attention and strategies could be developed to overcome those challenges and be implemented a final recommendation.

Implications

Positive Social Change

The findings of this qualitative study may encourage positive social changes and direct a need to professional workers in the criminal justice system to occur on several levels. First, prisons and detention centers facilities which hold inmates for one year and longer need to provide quality education and employable current job training skills so that released ex-offenders have a chance of success after prison release. Those with remaining sentences of two years or less should have the opportunity to attend up to date-employment job skill training classes. The results of this research study may create awareness for positive social change in the criminal justice system between ex-female inmates and their chances to become employable once released.

An increasing number of women entering prisons often are heads of their families (Byers, 2010). A social change can come when inmates leaving prisons are equipped with education and job training to find obtainable employment and can contribute to society as a respectful, tax-paying citizen (Vacca, 2004).

Benefits of Social Change

The participants in this study expressed a need to be prepared for employment before prison released. One participant recalled upon her release and job search, she did not have the proper dress attire to look for employment and was told by an agent at one employment office to dress properly for the next day's interview.

The benefits of social change can release a positive attitude toward ex-offender's self-worth, their families, their communities, and environment. The social changes that can take place in families, communities, and our society must first come by an attitude adjustment toward the ex-inmate.

Once society adapts to the fact that ex-inmates are people who can or have become skilled and employment-ready upon their release from incarcerations, willing to take their proper place in their community as tax-paying citizens, whose only need is a helpful hand up and not a laminated hand out. Participants need an opportunity to make a change, to become someone who can make a difference in the world and take her proper place in society and are able to become financially supportive of herself and her family.

Those situations are accomplished by eliminating the fears and biases that come with negative thinking that once a criminal always a criminal and adapting the attitude that "I'm going to be a positive resource in someone's life and create an opportunity for them to have a better future."

By giving a person a tool such as a job or job training in their place of business, this can enable that person to become successful in the future. If you are willing to allow a person an opportunity to become a successful employee and stabled person, then an employer can become helpful in society to make a change. Changes come one person at a time.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings in this study point to several other suggested future studies that will allow society to understand the needs for ex-offenders better. Bias attitudes perceived by ex-offenders as individuals that have been incarcerated are an endless punishment. I recommend that future researchers explore why the current educational needs are not being addressed with ongoing, up-to-date job-skill training before each inmate is released. A question for reach may be: where can the state find the resources to correct this situation, thereby reducing, if not eliminating, recidivism due to financial issues?

By categorizing my findings based on the responses to the emerging three themes questions posed to the participants, the first recommendation would be to implement a job training program or educational program that will train soon-to-be released inmates with employable skills to become employed upon prison release. This type of training can be helpful for those inmates released within their next three to six months. Those ex-inmates can become equipped with qualifications and training for immediate employment status after prison release.

By obtaining employment immediately after prison release could potentially reduce the recidivism rate for those returning to crime because of a lack of employable skills and be able to provide financial support for themselves and their families.

A second recommendation would be to implement a government program that allows would-be employers to hire those ex-offenders, giving the would-be employer some incentive to

participate in such a program. For example, the (would be) employers could rely on the fact they will be hiring an employee that is qualified with the skills and training to do the job with little or no assistance. The employers will have knowledge of some history of the ex-offender's job skills. The ex-offender will be able to relax in their employment environment without the feelings of shame or bias and have a productive day with working job training skills.

Next, the media/ community could highlight the achievements of employers and ex-offenders (not personally identifying any names or likeness) in the program. The public can recognize those employers who have achieved positive work relationships with those who have been giving a second chance to someone's life. Also, at special community events, the employer can be recognized (e.g., highlighting such individuals and their companies on a flash billboard). It could be perceived as giving good community relationship. According to the results of my findings in this research, over half the participants were having difficulties gaining employment due to their lack of employment skills for today's job market.

Pre-release planning, which includes employment planning for women reentering the community, should start prior to being released from prisons so communities that have reentry programs can coordinate employment services for women that are released. The general findings of this study revealed women older than 50 years face economic challenges and significant barriers, such as obtaining stable employment and housing. The participants in the study are only asking to be better prepared before they are released from prison and, once released, to have a transitional program available for them. This study should provide further insight to the needs of this population.

Conclusion

Using a qualitative narrative method, I explored the personal testimonies of 18 out of 20 volunteer participants for this research study regarding how women who have recidivated describe their readiness for employment after release from prison. In my conclusion women are being released from incarceration face individual and societal barriers to successfully re-entry society. Obstacles include social stigma, lack of basic needs, poverty, community ties, and unrealistic preparedness (Flower, 2012; Paulson, 2013). Women ex-inmate are becoming one of the fastest-growing populations in the United States. The prison and jail population is more focused on the male population until recently (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013). There are very few programs in place that address women's situations (Flower, 2010; Fuentes, 2013). Flower's (2010) policy and service recommendation design for incarcerated males would not apply to female counterparts. Fuentes (2013) further noted that researchers have begun to reveal gendered pathways to crime, which indicates the need for unique equity men's as well as women's services provided for a person returning from prison.

My findings revealed that it is possible. Further research information will be needed to determine what additional information could be helpful to yield a favorable recovery for this solution.

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Appendix A: Invitation to Participate Request

Dear (Name Will Be Inserted Here)

My name is Simba Fox and I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University. I am investigating how women who have recidivated or reoffended describe their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California.

I would greatly appreciate an opportunity to interview you as a participant in my research study.

Your participation would involve participating in a face-to-face interview which would take about 45-60 minutes in a private meeting room at a library, Starbucks or a quite private place convenient to you. Interviews will be conducted at a time that is convenient for you. You will be given a consent form to review and sign before the interview begins.

The information from the interviews will be kept strictly confidential and no one who participates will be identified in any part of the study report that I prepare.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to e-mail me at simba.fox@waldenu.edu or give me a call at (626)-773-XXXX.

If you are interested in participating in the study and recently been or have been unemployed since your last release, please complete the questions below in a reply e-mail to me or you can give the letter to me in person after you have completed the answers.

You will be given a $5.00 Starbucks gift card before the initial interview begins.

Thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance with my research project.

Sincerely,
Simba Fox
Simba Fox
(626)-773-XXXX
simba.fox@waldenu.edu

If you are interested in participating in the study and been incarcerated more than once in a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California and you are having or had difficulty becoming employed since your last release, please review the questions below in a reply by personal interview, e-mail or telephone call to me.
Email: simba.fox@waldenu.edu or telephone number (626) 773-XXXX. You can elect to give the letter to me in person, at the time of the interview or after you have completed the answers:

Appendix B: Interview Questions

- What is your name? _____

- How would you like me to address you? _____

- What is your race? (Please select by circling your answer /Optional)

    - African American or African American/ Black

    - White/ European or White

    - Hispanic/ Latino, Latino, or Spanish

    - Asian

    - Bi Racial

    - Other _____

    - I rather not say_____

- Are you between the ages of 18 and 65? (Please select by circling your answer)

Yes	No

If No, are you:

Older	

_____

- What is your contact information?

Email address:	
Phone number:	
U.S. mail address:	

- Are you a woman who has been incarcerated more than once in a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California? Yes_____ No_____

- How many times have you been incarcerated? _____

- Since your last release have you been employed? Yes_____ No_____ employable? Yes_____ No_____

- Would you be willing to describe your readiness for employment after release, which will take approximately 45-60 minutes in a face-to-face interview? Yes_____ No_____ Only by phone_____

- If you participate in the study, would you want to verify the accuracy on your interview transcript that could be e-mailed or U.S. mailed to you at a later date? Yes_____ No, thank you_____

- After the interview has been completed, how would you like the transcribed interview given to you? In person _____/ e-mail them to me_____/ U.S. mail,_____/ no thank you, I rather not have transcription_____.

Date: _____

Researcher: _____

Appendix C: Recruitment Flyer

Seeking Women Participants for Research Study

This study is regarding:

"How Women Who Have Recidivated Describe Their Readiness for Employment After Released

from Prison"

- Eligibility Requirements

    Women between 18 and 65 years old.

    Served time in the Southern California's prison(s) systems.

    Must have a history of recidivism (two or more convictions).

    Must NOT presently be on parole, probation, or in a drug treatment facility.

    Must NOT currently be pregnant.

    Signed voluntary consent form required.

    THIS STUDY IS BEING CONDUCTED FOR MY DISSERTATION AT WALDEN

    UNIVERSITY

Receive a gift for confidential interview

Contact: Simba Fox (626) 773-XXXX or simba.fox@waldenu.edu

Appendix D: Permission to Post Flyers for a Research Study

Attention:

Dear

I am requesting permission to post flyers for my research study on the facility of the Altadena Senior Center facility located XXX E. Mariposa Ave., Pasadena, CA. I am currently enrolled in the Doctoral program/Human Research at Walden University and am in the process of writing my dissertation. My study is entitled: How Women Who Have Recidivated Describe Their Readiness for Employment after Release from Prison.

I hope that the center's administration will allow me to post a flyer at your facility because the target age group is what I need for the study; for them to be anonymous and voluntarily complete a face-to-face interview. Due to the nature of the study, your facility has the required age population I am seeking. Interested individuals, who volunteer to participate will be given a consent form to sign and return to the primary researcher at the beginning of the interview.

If approval is granted, participants will complete the initial interview in a private location, Starbucks, or a private place of their choosing. The initial interview process should take approximately 45-60 minutes. The results of the study will be pooled for my dissertation and the participants of this study will remain confidential and anonymous. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented; not using any form of identification to the participant, your staff or the facility. No costs will be incurred by you, your facility, your staff members or the induvial participant.

Your approval to place a flyer on your lobby board will be greatly appreciated. I will follow-up with a telephone call within 5 business days from above date and would be happy to answer any question or concerns you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: simba.fox@waldenu.edu or telephone number: (626) 773-XXXX.

If you agree kindly, contact me at the above email or telephone number.

Simba Fox / Ph.D. Researcher candidate, Walden University

Dr. Tina Jaeckle, Walden University, Research Advisor
Dr. Barbara Benoliel, Walden University, Committee member

THIS STUDY IS BEING CONDUCTED FOR MY DISSERTATION AT WALDEN

UNIVERSITY

Appendix E: Permission to Post Flyer for a Research Study

Ms. Carli Wheat
XXX West A Street
Moreno Valley, CA 92553

Dear Ms. Wheat:

I am requesting permission to post flyers concerning my research study at the facility for At Risk Teens. I am currently enrolled in the Doctoral program/Human Research at Walden University and am in the process of writing my dissertation. My study is entitled: How Women Who Have Recidivated Describe Their Readiness for Employment after Release from Prison.

I hope that the administration will allow me to post flyers in a public area of the facility. My target age group of 18 and the above is an appropriate site to post flyers and seek candidates. All participants will be anonymous and voluntaries and will complete a face-to-face interview with me. Due to the nature of the study, that facility has the required population I am seeking. Interested individuals, who volunteer to participate will be given a consent form to sign and return to the primary researcher at the beginning of the interview.

If approval is granted, participants will complete the interview at location such as Starbucks, a library, or a quit private place of their choosing. The initial interview process should take approximately 45-60 minutes. The results will be pooled for the dissertation and results of this study will remain and anonymous. Should this study be published, only pooled results will be documented; not using any form of identification to the participant, your staff or the facility. No costs will be incurred by you, your facility, your staff members or the induvial participant.

Your approval to place a flyer at that facility will be greatly appreciated. I will follow up with a telephone call within 5 business days and would be happy to answer any question or concerns you may have at that time. You may contact me at my email address: simba.fox@waldenu.edu or telephone number: (626) 773-XXXX.

If you agree kindly, contact me at the above email or telephone number.
Simba Fox
Researcher / PhD candidate / Walden University

Dr. Tina Jaeckle, Walden University, Research Advisor
Dr. Barbara Benoliel, Walden University, Committee Member
Attention: Simba Fox / Doctoral Candidate of Walden University

THIS STUDY IS BEING CONDUCTED FOR MY DISSERTATION AT WALDEN

UNIVERSITY

Appendix F: Craigslist Recruitment Flyer

Seeking Women Participants for Research Study

This study is regarding:

"How Women Who Have Recidivated Describe their Readiness for Employment After Released

from Prison"

- Eligibility Requirements

  Women 18 and 65 years old.

  Served time in the Southern California's prison(s) systems.

  Must have a history of recidivism (two or more convictions).

  Must NOT presently be on parole, probation or in a drug facility.

  Must NOT currently be pregnant.

  Signed voluntary consent form.

THIS STUDY IS BEING CONDUCTED FOR MY DISSERTATION AT WALDEN

UNIVERSITY

Appendix G: Thank You for Responding to the Invitation

Dear Ms.

Thank you, for responding to the invitation to take part in my doctorial research. The outstanding responses were greatly appreciated and you volunteering to take part in the research that hopefully will change the lives for many.

Fortunately, I have reached my quote of participants and at this time your services will not be required. I want to extend my sincerest gratitude to you; and wish you the best in your future.

Sincerely,

Simba Fox

Doctoral candidate

Walden University

Appendix H: Interview Guide

Introduction

- Introduce myself and welcome participant.

- For taking the time to meet with me, I would like to offer you a Starbucks gift card. This card comes with no obligation on your part. It is just a gift from me, to say thank you for your time today.

- Give participant the $5.00 Starbucks gift card.

- Explain the general purpose of the interview and why the participant was chosen.

- I will give you a copy of the "Consent Form" letter to keep.

  Yes, please provide me with a copy_____ No thank you, a copy is not necessary_____.

- Discuss the purpose and process of interview.

- Explain the presence and purpose of the recording equipment.

- Outline general ground rules and interview guidelines such as being prepared for the interviewer to interrupt to assure that all the topics can be covered.

- Address the assurance of confidentiality.

- Inform the participant that information discussed is going to be analyzed in aggregate form and participant's name will not be used in any analysis of the interview.

Discussion Purpose

The purpose of study is to investigate how women who have recidivated or reoffended describe their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California.

Discussion Guidelines

Interviewer will explain:

Please respond directly to the questions and if you don't understand the question, please let me know. I am here to ask questions, listen to you, and answer any questions you might have. If we seem to get stuck on a topic, I may interrupt you. I will keep your identity, participation, and remarks private. Please speak openly and honestly. This session will be tape recorded because I do not want to miss any concerns or comments you may have addressed. Do I have your permission to continue?

General Instructions

When responding to questions that will be asked of you in the interview, please exclude all identifying information, such as your name and names of other parties. Your identity and the identity of any other party will be kept confidential and any information that will permit identification will be removed from the analysis.

Interview Questions

How would you describe your personal finances when you were first arrested?

How would you describe your readiness for employment after release from incarceration?

What was your experience(s) in finding a job when you were first released?

Possible Probes

- Could you elaborate more on that?

- That was helpful, but could you provide more detail?

- Your example was helpful, but can you give me another example to help me understand further?

Conclusion

- Discuss the transcription review process with participant, ask and answer any questions, and thank the participant for her time.

Appendix I: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about "how women who have recidivated or reoffended describe their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California." The researcher is inviting women who have been incarcerated more than once in a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California and who have been unemployed to be in the study. This form letter is part of a process called "informed consent" to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by a researcher name Simba Fox, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Background Information:
The purpose of this study is to investigate how women who have recidivated or reoffended describe their readiness for employment after release from a prison, jail, or detention center in the state of California.

Procedures:
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:
• Review and sign a consent form before the interview begin.
• Take part in an in-depth, face-to-face or telephonic interview, which may/will be recorded and will take approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will take place in a private meeting area. A public library, Starbucks or at a public location suggested for the convenience of the participant. Interviews if held at the public library will be conducted at a time that is convenient for participant and library conference room availability.
• The interview will have been transcribed in English.

Here are some sample questions:
• How do you describe your readiness for employment after release from incarceration?
• Do you have a cash flow issue in your personal lifestyle? Do you need to work or are you financially supported by someone other than yourself?
• What has been your experience in finding a job when you were first released?
• What has been your experience with job skill training?
• What do you attribute to your lack of employment?
• Do you have current employable job skills?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether to or not to choose to be in the study. No one will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this type of study involves some risk of the minor discomforts that can be encountered in daily life, such as stress and becoming upset. Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. It is unlikely that participation will arouse any acute discomfort; however, participants will be referred the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's

(SAMHSA's) national helpline at 1-800-662-4357 should they experience any negative effects from taking part in this research endeavor.

If you are, or it's possible that you are pregnant, please declaim from participating in this study.

Anticipated benefits include bringing further attention to the effect that policies at the societal level have on many women's economic and social position as stronger women-sensitive policy, programs, and interventions at the state and local levels are needed to reduce the high rate of recidivism.

Gift:
Participants will receive a $5.00 Starbucks gift card prior to data collection.

Privacy:
Any information you provide will be kept confidential. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept secure in a locked file cabinet and a password-protected computer where only the researcher will have access to the records. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by Walden University.

However: If there is any disclosure of a future attempted criminal act; an intension to commit a criminal act or harm to yourself or others, **I am mandated to report such act/conversations to the proper authorities.**

Contacts and Questions:
If you have questions about the research, you may contact the researcher, Simba Fox, via (626)-773-XXXX or simba.fox@waldenu.edu. After the study is completed, a summary report of the research findings will be delivered to you via your service provider (i.e., e-mail, U.S. mail, etc.), if requested. The researcher's dissertation chair is Dr. Tina Jaeckle, who can be reached at (904)-237-2008 or by e-mail at tina.jaeckle@waldenu.edu. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is (612)-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is # **IRB Approval #, 03-13-19-0259568** and it expires on **IRB Expiration Date, March 12, 2020.**

The researcher has given you a copy of this consent form letter to keep.
Yes, please provide me with a copy_____ No thank you, a copy is not necessary_____.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study well enough to make a decision to participate in it, please indicate your consent by signing below.

Printed Name of Participant	

Date of consent	
Participant's Signature	
Researcher's Signature	*Simba Fox*

Appendix J: NIH Certificate

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Simba Fox** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."

Date of completion: 03/31/2017.

Certification Number: 699251.