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## Former Juvenile Delinquents' Perceptions of Community Resources in Reducing Juvenile Recidivism

Mardochee Terese Casimir  
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# Walden University

College of Psychology and Community Services

This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2023

Abstract

Former Juvenile Delinquents' Perceptions of Community Resources in Reducing  
Juvenile Recidivism

by

Mardochee Casimir

MS, International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2010

BA, Pennsylvania State University, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human and Social Services

Walden University

August 2023

## Abstract

Juvenile recidivism is a concern for human service professionals who are dedicated to developing policies aimed at addressing and reducing such recidivism. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating. Social learning theory was used to frame this study. Data were collected through semistructured interviews with nine former juvenile delinquents who had experience with community institutions and resource use. Saldana's inductive coding process was used for data analysis. Nine themes were identified: (a) behavior modification contributed to prevention of recidivism, (b) specialized programs incorporating family involvement may reduce recidivism, (c) receptivity to program connected to prevention of recidivism, (d) interpersonal perceptions connected to involvement with resources prevented recidivism, (e) perceptions from others impacted behavior and the connection to recidivism, (f) being involved in communities helped prevent recidivism, (g) reliable adults prevented recidivism (h) fear of returning to institutions prevented recidivism, (i) desire to become a better person linked to decrease in recidivistic behavior. Initially hesitant towards treatment, former juvenile delinquents ultimately found favorable outcomes through their engagement with community institutions and resources. The results of this study may lead to positive social change by providing information to human service professionals on the importance of incorporating community resources into the design of new initiatives, leading to a reduction of juvenile delinquency recidivism.

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## Dedication

I would like to express my dedication of this degree to God and my mother, Marie M. Remy. This educational journey has been the most challenging endeavor I have ever undertaken. There were countless moments when I wanted to give up, but my unwavering faith in God propelled me forward, and therefore, I feel compelled to pay homage to Him. Additionally, I want to express my deepest gratitude to my beloved mother. My love for you knows no bounds, and it is through your boundless love and support that I have found the strength and courage to persevere every single day. I am convinced that you are the greatest mother in the world, as every positive aspect of my being is a direct result of your influence. I sincerely thank you for believing in me, for your continuous prayers, and for the unwavering support you have provided. You have always been my biggest cheerleader, offering words of encouragement when I felt defeated. I have always strived to make you proud, and I hope that you are because together, we have achieved a remarkable feat. Marie's daughter now holds a PhD. *Béni soit l'Eternel.*

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## Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study.....	1
Background.....	2
Problem Statement.....	4
Definitions.....	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	13
Literature Search Strategy.....	14
Conceptual Framework.....	14
Seminal Studies.....	19
Literature Review.....	21
Defining Juvenile Delinquency.....	21
Effects of Juvenile Delinquency.....	30
Defining Juvenile Recidivism.....	34
Family Problems and Juvenile Recidivism.....	35
Poor Academic Performance and Juvenile Recidivism.....	40
Environment and Juvenile Recidivism.....	43
Race And Juvenile Recidivism.....	45
Childhood Maltreatment and Juvenile Recidivism.....	47
Antisocial Behaviors and Juvenile Recidivism.....	48
Socioeconomic Status and Juvenile Recidivism.....	50
Community Institutions.....	51
Summary.....	53



Introduction.....	55
Research Design and Rationale .....	55
Role of the Researcher .....	57
Methodology .....	59
Participant Selection Logic .....	59
Instrumentation .....	62
Procedures for Recruitment .....	64
Data Analysis Plan .....	65
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	67
Credibility .....	67
Transferability .....	67
Dependability .....	68
Confirmability .....	68
Ethical Procedures .....	69
Summary .....	70
Chapter 4: Results .....	71
Introduction.....	71
Setting	71
Demographics .....	72
Data Collection .....	72
Data Analysis .....	73
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	77

Credibility .....	77
Transferability .....	77
Dependability .....	78
Confirmability .....	78
Results	78
Behavior Modification Contributed to Prevention of Recidivism .....	79
Specialized Programs Incorporating Family Involvement May Reduce Recidivism .....	80
Receptivity to Program Connected to Prevention of Recidivism .....	81
Interpersonal Perceptions Connected to Involvement with Resources Prevented Recidivism .....	82
Perceptions From Others Impacted Behavior and the Connection to Recidivism .....	84
Being Involved in Communities Helped Prevent Recidivism .....	85
Reliable Adults Prevented Recidivism .....	85
Fear of Returning to Institutions Prevented Recidivism.....	87
Desire to Become a Better Person Linked to Decrease in Recidivistic Behavior .....	87
Summary .....	88
Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations .....	92
Introduction .....	92
Interpretation of the Findings.....	92

Behavior Modification Contributed to Prevention of Recidivism .....	92
Specialized Programs Incorporating Family Involvement May Reduce Recidivism .....	93
Receptivity to Program Connected to Prevention of Recidivism .....	94
Interpersonal Perceptions Connected to Involvement with Resources Prevented Recidivism .....	96
Perceptions From Others Impacted Behavior and the Connection to Recidivism .....	97
Being Involved in Communities Helped Prevent Recidivism .....	98
Reliable Adults Prevented Recidivism .....	99
Fear of Returning to Institutions Prevented Recidivism.....	100
Desire to Become a Better Person Linked to Decrease in Recidivistic Behavior .....	101
Limitations of the Study.....	102
Recommendations.....	105
Implications.....	107
Conclusion .....	108
References.....	110
Appendix A: Interview Protocol.....	148
Interview Protocol.....	148
Interview Questions .....	148
Appendix D: Participant Recruitment Flyer .....	150

Participant Recruitment Flyer .....150

## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Juvenile recidivism is a trending research topic linked to lack of adequate access to reformation, lack of parental involvement, and psychosocial characteristics of juveniles. Adekeye and Paul (2018) focused on the link between juvenile recidivism and early release from prison and other predisposing factors, and they found that there was no link between early release from prison and juvenile recidivism. The identified cause for juvenile recidivism appeared to be a lack of parental involvement and adequate access to reformation (Adekeye & Paul, 2018). Cacho et al. (2020) focused on juvenile recidivism's psychosocial characteristics, and they found that the potential for recidivism was linked to variables such as school performance, problem-solving skills, and history of violent behavior. Craig et al. (2020) focused on the factors that contributed to juvenile recidivism, and they found that recidivism was linked more to the length of incarceration, prior adjudication, and rate of disciplinary conduct than to adverse childhood experiences. Ho and Rocheleau (2020) focused on adjudicated juveniles in special education programs to determine if their education level was linked to recidivism and found that 37% of juveniles with special education recidivated and that education was not a good predictor for the potential to recidivate. Early prison release, psychosocial characteristics, and special education programs are just a few areas that impact juveniles. Researchers exploring these topics and their link to juvenile recidivism is a step towards understanding the impact of recidivism.

Juvenile recidivism continues to be a widely researched social science topic. Although researchers have previously investigated juvenile recidivism, they have not

explored perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources may reduce juvenile recidivism (Intravia et al., 2017). Researchers have investigated juvenile recidivism programs but appear to be overlooking the input of the participants of these programs. Understanding juveniles' perceptions may help in filling a gap in the literature and better inform state programs. As a result, this study explored the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents regarding community institutions and resources as related to juvenile recidivism.

In this chapter, I discuss the background, purpose of the study, problem statement, research questions, conceptual framework for this study, nature of the study, assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study.

### **Background**

Historically juvenile recidivism is a topic that challenges professionals in the social sciences field. These challenges have led to various studies aimed at understanding the causes of recidivism. Campbell et al. (2020) focused on assessments that identified the risk factors that have led to juvenile recidivism such as familial problems, socioeconomic status, and mental health and found that there was no one risk factor that contributed to recidivism. Similarly, Navarro-Perez et al. (2020) focused on risk factors and the ability to predict recidivism and found that juvenile protective factors such as prosocial involvement and commitment to school and work were better predictors of recidivism than risk factors. Protective factors may provide more answers to recidivism causes than risk factors. Although many topics are linked to juvenile recidivism,

socioeconomic status or familial problems may not be the sole cause of juvenile recidivism.

Dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there has been a need to address juvenile recidivism. In that earlier century, juveniles were being housed in the same programs as adults, and the public was not in favor of this type of sentencing (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2021; Paretta, 2019). As a result, local politicians and community members conducted meetings to discuss the development of juvenile programs (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2021; Paretta, 2019). Those meetings resulted in the development of institutions specifically geared towards juveniles. These institutions then opened across the United States (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2021). The programs started off successfully but as time passed, problems such as overcrowding, staffing issues, and unsanitary conditions arose, highlighting the need for a new type of programming (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2021). In the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, educational programs, known as reform schools, were formed to offer juveniles training (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2021). The programs were combined and became known as the juvenile courts system with the goal of addressing juvenile recidivism.

Scholars are currently exploring juvenile recidivism and the effects of not making this public health concern a priority. If left unchecked, as Paretta (2019) claimed, juvenile recidivism symbolizes American society failing to rehabilitate youth to prevent crime. In fact, Logan-Greene et al. (2017) revealed that not addressing juvenile recidivism is linked to familial and mental health problems that affect the juvenile. Juvenile recidivism, left

unaddressed, can impact family, friends, and the community. Not only is the juvenile stuck in the cycle of reoffending, but their mental health and family is also negatively impacted.

In this study on juvenile recidivism, I aimed to understand the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents and how community institutions prevented them from recidivating. More specifically, I focused on former juvenile delinquents ranging in ages 19–25 who had previously been in community institutions in the Northeastern part of the United States. Addressing this gap in the literature by obtaining information from former juvenile delinquents may help human service professionals to develop effective person-centered programs. The information gathered may also help human service professionals to develop strategies that will increase the success rate of participants and help reduce recidivism at the same time. The study results may contribute to positive social change by providing information that can be used to reduce the high rate of juvenile recidivism.

### **Problem Statement**

Juvenile recidivism is a social problem that negatively impacts the individual, family, and community. Some predictors of juvenile recidivism include juvenile mental health problems and familial problems that create challenges for the individual (Logan-Green et al., 2017). Families are affected by juvenile recidivism because of the stigma that comes along with being in the juvenile justice system, losing time from work for court appearances, and spending money to pay court fees and fines (Shapiro, 2020). Most parents and communities have the goal of successful, healthy, well-supported children and teenagers. However, in many communities or households, juvenile delinquency is an



issue that arises. According to Kubik and Boxer (2020), in 2020, over 500,000 juveniles were arrested in the United States. Once the juvenile gets involved with the criminal justice system, the chances of reoffending increase (Kubik & Boxer, 2020). Without a plan for juvenile recidivism in place, the community pays for reoffending juveniles.

There are financial consequences associated with juvenile recidivism. Juvenile recidivism has resulted in taxpayers spending billions of dollars on adjudicated youth (Demeter & Sibanda, 2017). Shapiro (2020) affirmed that families have paid thousands of dollars in court fees and even have had to file bankruptcy because they did not have enough money for legal costs associated with the juvenile offenders' court appearances. The costs of juvenile recidivism are an ongoing concern for people at all levels of a community where recidivism is prevalent.

Ongoing studies have been conducted to find contributing factors to resolving juvenile recidivism. Intravia et al. (2017) focused on the indirect effects of community disadvantage as it relates to juvenile recidivism and found that prosocial relationships and activities partially help resolve the issue of juvenile recidivism. Griffiths and Norris (2020) found a link to change in policymaking as a contributor to resolving juvenile recidivism. Policy changes targeting juvenile delinquents such as formalized risk assessments were found to be helpful in addressing recidivism (Griffiths & Norris, 2020). One type of risk assessment is a self-reporting instrument to assess how the family structure may play a role in juvenile recidivism (Goulter et al., 2018). Goulter et al. (2018) found that juveniles who scored high with this instrument were more likely to reoffend in a nonviolent way. However, more research was required to explore

perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating (Intravia et al., 2017). Conducting this research may better assist human service professionals in identifying services that help prevent recidivism.

### **Definitions**

The following terms were important to this study:

*Juvenile delinquency*: Actions that juveniles engage in that go against societal norms and laws (Zhu & Shek, 2021).

*Juvenile justice*: The system of laws that have been established to address criminal acts committed by juvenile delinquents (Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice, 2021).

*Juvenile recidivism*: When legal actions are taken against juveniles because of recurrent criminal activity (Olsson et al., 2021).

### **Research Question**

What are the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The social learning theory was used as a conceptual framework in this study. The social learning theory was created by Albert Bandura in 1977. Social learning theory states that behaviors are learned by watching and imitating others (Bandura, 1977). The social learning theory has four mediational processes: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Bandura, 1977). These principles help determine if a new behavior is acquired (Bandura, 1977). An individual must be paying attention to a behavior to emulate the behavior (Bandura, 1977). Retention involves the individual's ability to retain the behavior they have observed (Bandura, 1977). Reproduction occurs when the individual has paid attention to the behavior, retained the steps involved, and then reproduces said behavior (Bandura, 1977). Motivation, the most important principle of the four, can be both extrinsic and intrinsic (Bandura, 1977). The result of the action determines the motivation. If the individual identifies a reward for engaging in behavior, the motivation will be high. If no reward for engaging in the behavior can be identified, then motivation will be low.

This theory aligned with my study because juveniles emulate and develop behaviors based upon their environment, community institutions, and resources. I used this theory in my study to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating. I developed interview questions that incorporated the principles of social learning theory. More detailed analysis follows in Chapter 2.

### **Nature of Study**

This study was conducted using a generic qualitative design. Generic qualitative methodology is flexible by design and does not fit into one specific qualitative construct (Liu, 2016). The fluidity of the generic qualitative design enables the researcher to focus on the social reality that stems from the participants' perceptions (Liu, 2016). The main elements of the generic qualitative design include identifying the motivation for the study, identifying the role the researcher will play in data analysis, and providing strategies to establish rigor and a description of research methods (Liu, 2016). The generic qualitative design is useful when conducting research where participants' opinions are being investigated (Percy et al., 2015). I used a generic qualitative study because the design allows more flexibility when asking participants interview questions.

I used semistructured interviews (with a researcher-created interview protocol) with former juvenile delinquents between the ages of 19–25 and living in the United States. I used purposeful sampling to obtain participants for the interviews. The juveniles' interview responses helped to create a better understanding of their perceptions regarding the effectiveness of community institutions and resources. This qualitative study's exploration of their viewpoints may help human service professionals with creating programs to help reduce juvenile recidivism.

### **Significance**

Researchers have previously investigated juvenile recidivism; however, they have not explored former juvenile delinquents' perceptions of how community institutions and resources may reduce juvenile delinquency recidivism. This study is significant in that it sought to identify how community institutions and resources may contribute to reducing

juvenile delinquency recidivism. According to Huntington and Scott (2020), policies that are responsive to adolescent vulnerabilities contribute to the reduction of juvenile recidivism. With policies that are responsive to adolescent vulnerabilities, human service professionals can help juveniles develop healthy prosocial relationships and activity involvement in the community to help reduce recidivism. Human service professionals can improve their practice by using information obtained from former juvenile delinquents to offer relevant services to juveniles. The study results may contribute to positive social change by providing information that can be used to reduce the high rate of juvenile recidivism.

### **Assumptions**

This section, addresses the study assumptions. An assumption in qualitative research is when a researcher accepts research data at face value (Durkin et al., 2020). According to Gioia (2021), there are four fundamental assumptions in qualitative research: (a) how the participant relates phenomena to their reality, (b) how the researcher interacts with the participants, (c) participant values and how they are defined, and (d) the process of the research. In this study, I assumed that the participants would be truthful in their responses to the interview questions. Their truthful responses to the questions were important to be able to effectively identify their perceptions of community institutions. I assumed that the participants would be knowledgeable about juvenile recidivism. The participants' understanding of juvenile recidivism contributed to the appropriateness of their participation in the study. I assumed that the participants would understand the questions that were being asked of them and would not require

clarification. Understanding the questions allowed the participants to answer the questions to the best of their abilities.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

In this section, I address the scope and delimitations of the study. The scope of a study involves defining the boundaries and aspects that are covered in the study (Akanle et al., 2020; Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). The scope of this study was limited to former juvenile delinquents who were between the ages of 19–25 and who were living in the United States. Due to feasibility, not all elements can be covered in a study.

Delimitations are the aspects that are purposely excluded from the study or boundaries that the researcher sets (Akanle et al., 2020; Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). This study did not cover the perceptions of juvenile delinquents who were receiving services at a community institution at the time of the study. Due to the juvenile's status, they would have been unable to effectively assess if the program helped with recidivism. I did not interview participants under the age of 19 or older than 25. Participants under 19 might still have been involved in the system and might have been unable to assess the role that particular community institutions have played in helping prevent recidivism. Participants over 25 are too far removed from the process thus that they may not have been able to recollect information to answer the interview questions.

The social learning theory was used as the conceptual framework for this study. Social learning theory states that deviant behaviors are learned by watching and imitating others (Bandura, 1977). Another theory that was considered for this study was the general strain theory (GST). GST asserts that being mistreated is linked to delinquent behavior,

which is addressed with punitive consequences (Agnew, 1992). The punitive consequences are in turn linked to recidivism (Agnew, 1992). I chose not to use this theory because it only focused on the negative aspects of the juvenile and limited stressors linked to juvenile recidivism. I also considered the social exchange theory for this study. According to the social exchange theory, interpersonal relationships are formed based on cost and benefits to those involved in the relationship (Homans, 1958). My study focused on how effective programs and institutions had been in preventing recidivism, and this theory focused on costs and benefits analysis in relationships, which made it incompatible with this study.

### **Limitations**

Every study has aspects that hinder the findings. Limitations are defined as a weakness in the study or areas that need improvement (Rasuli & Shahriari, 2021; Theofanidis & Fountouki, 2019). In this study, I identified some limitations. Due to my vested interest in the subject matter, my bias may have skewed the interpretation of the results. To mitigate this limitation, I reviewed the findings with my peers and had the participants review my interpretations for accuracy. Additionally, bracketing is a method used in qualitative research where the researcher refrains from judgment or inserting personal views (McWhorter, 2019). I kept a researcher journal for bracketing to document any preconceived ideas that may have interfered with the study. The use of the qualitative method for research is a limitation. Qualitative research was used in this study to explore the experiences of the participants and, as a result, the study may lack generalizability (Stutterheim & Ratcliffe 2021). Generalizability is the scope to which the

results of a study can apply to other populations (Stutterheim & Ratcliffe 2021). Although generalizability is not a goal of qualitative research, it is a known limitation. To mitigate this limitation, I established credibility. Establishing credibility includes allowing participants to clarify intentions and correct errors, also known as member checking (Stutterheim & Ratcliffe 2021). I also used thick description to add context to the participants' experiences and to enhance credibility.

### **Summary**

Juvenile recidivism remains a problem throughout the United States. Human service professionals indicate that social and family risk factors during childhood lead to recidivism (Ungureanu & Biriş, 2018). As a result, community institutions have been developed to address the concerns of juvenile recidivism. The goal of this study was to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents and how community institutions prevented them from recidivating.

In this chapter, I discussed the background, purpose of the study, problem statement, definition of terms, research questions, theoretical framework for this study, nature of the study, assumptions, scope and delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. Chapter 2 will include an analysis of the recidivism problem explored in this study and identifies the gap in the literature regarding juvenile recidivism.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Many social science researchers are interested in juvenile recidivism because it is a public health issue affecting the well-being of individuals, their families, and their communities. Researchers have investigated juvenile recidivism on a variety of levels to gain a better understanding of the causes of juvenile recidivism (Baglivio et al., 2021). Despite the numerous studies on juvenile recidivism, there is a need to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents (Intravia et al., 2017), more specifically, former juvenile delinquents' perceptions of community institutions and resources that keep them from recidivating. The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to investigate former juvenile delinquents' perceptions of how community institutions and resources kept them from recidivating.

In this section of the study, I discuss my literature search strategies, followed by a discussion of the literature about social learning theory (SLT), the theoretical framework chosen for this study. Then I review and synthesize literature about juvenile recidivism, concentrating on current and relevant literature to learn more about juvenile recidivism and juvenile delinquents. I identify research gaps in how former juveniles have viewed community institutions and resources. I discuss the following themes: juvenile recidivism, risk factors, risk assessments, peer influence, community institutions, family involvement, and conceptual framework.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

I conducted my literature review using scholarly databases provided by Walden University. To find research-related information, I also used the Google Scholar search engine. Peer-reviewed scholarly articles on juvenile recidivism were obtained using terminology related to juvenile recidivism. I used the following keywords: *juvenile delinquent*, *juvenile crime*, *juvenile recidivism*, *juvenile justice*, *juvenile offenders*, and *juvenile offender recidivism*. I used the following databases: SocIndex, Pro Quest, Criminal Justice, APA PsycInfo, and Thoreau: Multi-Database Search.

In SocIndex, I began my research with the keyword *juvenile recidivism*. Using the advanced search feature, I specified a 5-year publication date range using related words and including peer-reviewed scholarly journals only. I chose articles that seemed to be relevant to my topic and then reviewed the subsequent list of related articles. Then I moved on to the next search engine to repeat the process for each keyword. To broaden my search, I also looked at keywords provided in other articles as they related to my topic. I reviewed literature published within the last 5 years of this study. The literature was consulted to gain a better understanding of theories and information concerning former juvenile delinquents and juvenile recidivism.

### **Conceptual Framework**

As a conceptual framework for this research, I used social learning theory (SLT). SLT is a theory proposed by Bandura (1977). Observing and imitating others' actions, according to Bandura, is how people learn their behaviors. In contrast to other theorists who asserted that learning occurs as a result of conditioning and reinforcement as well as

punishment, Bandura maintained that learning occurs as a result of observation and imitation as well as modeling. SLT suggests that it is the environment that has the greatest influence on behavior because people observe and then imitate behaviors in their environment.

SLT encompasses three themes: behavioral, personal, and environmental factors. These factors are critical because they aid in the determination of human behavior, which is the primary construct of SLT (Bandura, 1977). The skills, practice, and self-efficacy that a learner possesses are referred to as behavioral factors in this context (Bandura, 1977). The learner's capabilities will aid in the selection of the subjects that they will study. Learners' ability to demonstrate mastery of a new skill is determined by their level of practice, and their level of self-efficacy is determined by how confident they are in their ability to execute newly learned behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Expectations, knowledge, and attitudes are examples of cognitive factors, which are also known as personal factors (Bandura, 1977). Learners' receptivity is influenced by their expectations of what the behavior they are attempting to learn should look like. The learner's level of receptivity to the new behavior will be influenced by his or her knowledge of and attitude toward the behavior (Bandura, 1977). Both the physical and social environment of the learner are considered environmental factors (Bandura, 1977). A learner's environment is shaped by the people who are present, as well as those who are absent, and this has an impact on the types of social norms to which the learner will be exposed.

According to Bandura (1977), SLT consists of four stages: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. The first step in SLT is to pay attention to the situation.

This requires the learner to be fully engaged with the model of behavior in order for learning to take place. In a learner's environment, there are numerous events that take place, and it is impossible to take in everything that is going on at any given time.

Learning will occur in relation to what the learner is paying attention to at any given moment (Bandura, 1977). Retention is the next step in the SLT process. A learner must retain what he or she has observed after observing a particular behavior. However, while imitation is beneficial, imitation alone will not be sufficient to ensure that the behavior is permanently committed to memory. In order for the learner to be able to draw on knowledge that was acquired while paying attention to the model of the behavior, retention must be developed (Bandura, 1977). Immediately following retention comes reproduction. Now that the learner has remembered the model's behavior, the learner must be able to reproduce that same behavior in a personal context. Because the learner will not be able to reproduce every behavior that they observe and remember, this step is critical in SLT. If they do not have the ability to reproduce the behavior, learning has not occurred, and, in the future, they will forget the behavior that they had witnessed. The ability of a learner to reproduce is highly dependent on their skills (Bandura, 1977).

Motivation is the final step in SLT. In order to successfully reproduce the model's behavior, a learner must first demonstrate the ability to do so, followed by the determination to do so (Bandura, 1977). Because of the incentive associated with a particular behavior, people will frequently imitate it. Typically, the reward is what motivates the learner to imitate the behavior that has been demonstrated. A punishment

associated with a behavior, on the other hand, will demotivate the learner from imitating that behavior (Bandura, 1977).

Researchers are currently using SLT to better understand how juvenile behavior can be transferred through observational learning. To investigate the perceptions of staff members in juvenile detention centers, Galardi and Settersten (2018) used SLT as a theoretical framework. Using SLT as a framework, Galardi and Settersten discovered that staff perceptions differed depending on the gender of the juvenile. This finding is significant because the genders of the juveniles had an impact on the juveniles' behaviors based on what they had observed from people of a similar gender, which is consistent with SLT (Galardi & Settersten, 2018). Physical maltreatment by parents and its association with juvenile delinquency were investigated by Manzoni and Schwarzenegger (2019) using SLT. Manzoni and Schwarzenegger (2019) discovered that juveniles who had been physically abused by their parents experienced higher rates of delinquency. Delinquency rates were higher because juveniles are modeling violent behaviors that they see in their home. Manzoni and Schwarzenegger (2019) also discovered that parental violence resulted in juveniles forming social bonds with negative peer groups, which was linked to the environmental factor of SLT. Xie et al. (2019) used SLT to investigate whether juvenile phone addictions were caused by their parents' phone addictions. Juveniles who were ignored by their parents because of excessive parental phone use, according to Xie et al., developed an addiction to their phones as well. This finding is consistent with the central tenet of SLT, which is that learning occurs as a result of observing. Comparatively, Niu et al. (2020) investigated observational learning as it

related to phone usage between parent and child and found that juveniles who had parents who used their phones excessively developed a dependence on their phones. SLT and the claim that learning occurs through observation are supported by the findings of these studies.

Researchers have also used SLT to explore juvenile recidivism. An investigation into the relationship between substance abuse problems and juvenile recidivism was carried out by Aebi et al. (2021). As Aebi et al. discovered, juveniles who were exposed to environments where substance use was prevalent were more likely to engage in substance use themselves. It was also discovered by Aebi et al. that substance abuse resulted in negative social bonds, which resulted in delinquent behavior, which ultimately led to recidivism. Walters (2019) examined whether low self-efficacy was associated with recidivism by using the self-efficacy component of SLT. A significant relationship was discovered by Walters between low self-efficacy and recidivism. As a result of the juvenile's low self-efficacy, the likelihood of engaging in recidivistic behavior was significantly increased (Walters, 2019). Winters (2020) used SLT to investigate the influence of the environment on juvenile recidivism as well as the relationship between the two and found that juveniles who grew up in a crime-ridden environment had higher levels of risk factors associated with delinquency and were more likely to reoffend. SLT was used by Baek et al. (2022) to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and juvenile recidivism. According to Baek et al., the lower one's self-efficacy, the greater the likelihood of recidivism. As a result of their low self-esteem and low expectations for the future, juveniles are more likely to engage in risky behaviors. The findings of these

studies should be taken into consideration because they contribute to the understanding of how SLT can be used to better understand juvenile recidivism.

I selected SLT as the foundation of my conceptual framework because it is aligned with the topic of juvenile recidivism. SLT reinforces the notion that behaviors can be learned, which is important in understanding why juveniles recidivate. Specifically, SLT suggests that juvenile delinquents are in the impressionable phase of their development, and that imitating behaviors is one of the factors that contributes to ongoing reoffending behavior. A secondary goal of SLT is to educate people on how to use role models who are positive in order to encourage desired behaviors and to facilitate social change. SLT is an appropriate framework to interpret and address the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents about how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating.

### **Seminal Studies**

Past seminal works on juvenile delinquency have helped to pave the way for the current literature. Seminal works lend credence to the notion that the study of juvenile delinquency has, in fact, been a topic of focus for academics for a considerable amount of time. These works also lend credence to the rationale underlying the themes that were chosen for this literature review. Glueck and Glueck (1950) explored the connections between juvenile delinquency and a variety of factors, including religion, family structure, involvement in school, and community. Glueck and Glueck also investigated juvenile delinquency and concluded that there was not one particular profile that accurately described juvenile offenders. Juvenile offenders came from low-income

neighborhoods as well as high-income neighborhoods, and they came from both single-parent and two-parent households (Glueck & Glueck, 1950). There is not one particular way of life that can accurately predict juvenile delinquency, and any kind of environment has the potential to produce a juvenile offender. Sampson and Laub (1990) investigated life trajectories and juvenile delinquency in a study that was similar to the work of Glueck and Glueck described above. Sampson and Laub concluded that delinquency in adolescents is connected to occurrences in early childhood as well as the environment of the family. Sampson and Laub (1990) noted that family upbringing had a significant impact on the occurrence of antisocial behavior. These seminal studies lay the groundwork for the current topics associated with juvenile delinquency and the angles from which delinquency has been viewed.

Because delinquency in young people can take many different forms, researchers are forced to investigate juvenile delinquency from a variety of perspectives. Patterson and Dishion (1985) investigated juvenile delinquency and discovered that it is connected to the parenting style and delinquent peer association of the offender. If parents are trained on how to operate their homes effectively, there is a lower chance that their children will engage in antisocial behavior (Patterson & Dishion, 1985). In addition, Dishion et al. (1986) investigated juvenile delinquency and discovered that parents and peers were connected to the development of a juvenile, which had an effect on the likelihood of the juvenile engaging in delinquent behavior. Because the juvenile's family did not teach them functional social skills, and because the juvenile's peers did not accept them, the juvenile became involved in delinquent behavior as a form of acting out.



Lundman (1984) investigated the relationship between programming and juvenile delinquency and concluded that programs built to address juvenile delinquency are ineffective at addressing delinquency and cost excessive amounts of money. Lundman (1984) concluded that the programs that were intended to help juvenile offenders were useless due to the fact that they violated the rights of the juveniles as well as the rights of their families and did not address the factors that contributed to the development of juvenile delinquency. The objective of programming should be to improve the situation rather than to make it worse (Lundman, 1984). Research on juvenile delinquency will continue to be conducted from a variety of angles because numerous aspects, such as parental and peer support, have an effect on the phenomenon.

## **Literature Review**

### **Defining Juvenile Delinquency**

Before discussing juvenile recidivism, it is necessary to define what constitutes a juvenile delinquent. In the United States, a juvenile delinquent is a legal term defined as a person under the age of 18 who has committed an act that would have been punishable by law if they had committed it as an adult (Doelman et al., 2021; van der Put et al., 2021). Vandalism, theft, disturbing the peace, criminal trespassing, and loitering are all examples of delinquent behavior (Doelman et al., 2021). There are multiple factors that contribute to the making of a juvenile delinquent (Lee & Kim, 2021). In addition to the juvenile's economic circumstances, their cultural values, interactions with other juvenile offenders, and academic performance all play a role in the development of their delinquent profile (Geerlings et al., 2020). Overall, juvenile delinquents mimic the

behaviors of their peers, exhibit an antisocial behavioral profile, and are motivated to engage in delinquent behavior by factors in their life course.

There has been a significant amount of literature published on juvenile delinquency, and every researcher includes their own interpretation of what the term juvenile delinquency means in their research. Juvenile delinquency, according to Ochoa and Roberts (2021), is defined as rebellious behaviors committed by school-age juveniles. The behaviors differ from one country to the next, but they all fall within the definition of a delinquent act. Baek et al. (2022) defined juvenile delinquency as actions committed by juveniles that contribute to high rates of delinquent activity. Bullying, substance abuse, and academic dishonesty are some of the delinquent behaviors that have been identified. When it comes to defining juvenile delinquency, Young et al. (2018) acknowledged that it can be difficult because policymakers have their own ideas about what constitutes delinquent behavior. However, according to Young et al. (2018), juvenile delinquency is defined as the behavior of juveniles who engage in delinquent acts and become in trouble with the law. Azad and Hau (2018) recognized deviant behavior as an expected part of the adolescent experience. As a result, juvenile delinquency can be defined as the typical delinquent behaviors that juveniles engage in (Azad & Hau, 2018). Delinquent behaviors such as evading parental authority, substance abuse, and truancy are examples of such behaviors. For a juvenile to be classified as a delinquent, there must be an element of deviant behavior present in his or her behavior.

### *Development of Juvenile Crime Versus Adult Crime in the United States*

In the 1950s, juvenile crime in the United States was becoming a source of concern for families, politicians, and members of the community. It was decided to separate juvenile crime from adult crime as one of the ways to deal with the problem (Moak & Cate, 2022). Adult crimes are defined as criminal acts committed by a person over the age of majority (Desmond et al., 2022). It was discovered that the punitive action used to deal with adult crimes was ineffective when dealing with juvenile crimes, and as a result, the two needed to be separated, leading to the establishment of what is now known as the juvenile justice system (Trépanier, 2018). The reasoning was that if juvenile crime and adult crime were treated separately, it would be easier to ensure that the punishment was appropriate for the crime and that the developmental abilities of juveniles were taken into consideration when issuing sanctions.

Juvenile justice evolved as a result of the development of a system for distinguishing between juvenile and adult criminal activity in the United States. To ensure that juveniles were treated fairly when it came to dealing with their delinquent acts, the juvenile justice system was established (Trépanier, 2018). Furthermore, the goal of the juvenile justice system was to assist in the rehabilitation of juveniles (Harper et al., 2021). Rehabilitation of juveniles is regarded as a therapeutic approach because the juveniles are still in the process of cognitive development. The goal of the juvenile justice system is to be therapeutic and restorative, whereas the goal for the adult criminal justice system is to be punitive (Cauffman et al., 2018). There have been numerous studies (Cauffman et al., 2018; Gagnon & Swank, 2021; León et al., 2020) that have claimed that

the development of the juvenile justice system was primarily concerned with the well-being of juveniles while also considering how to address their delinquent acts. The findings contribute to the understanding of the development of juvenile crime in the United States as compared to adult crime.

### ***The Distinctions between Juvenile Crime and Adult Crime***

There are significant distinctions regarding the types of crimes that juveniles engage in as opposed to adults, as well as the manner in which juvenile delinquents and adult offenders commit crimes. According to Chamberlain et al. (2022), typical juvenile crimes include staying out past curfew, vandalism, loitering, and crimes committed on behalf of gangs. Juveniles also commit status offenses such as running away from home, skipping school, and underage drinking and smoking, according to Jacobsen and Zaatut (2012). Crimes such as being out past curfew, running away from home, and skipping school are crimes specific to juveniles that are not considered adult crimes. Typically, adult crimes are associated with preexisting mental health issues that the adult is experiencing, and as a result are more severe (Holzer et al., 2022). According to Goulette (2020), adults are more likely than juveniles to engage in white collar crimes such as corporate fraud, ponzi schemes, embezzlement, and extortion, among others. White collar crime is specifically committed by adults because they spend the vast majority of their time at their jobs. Whereas, juveniles are mostly at school, home, or hanging around their neighborhoods.

Although the types of juvenile crimes noted above are illegal and might result in incarceration, juvenile delinquents often continue to engage in these behaviors due to

social and environmental factors. Furthermore, when juveniles engage in status offenses such as smoking, drinking, truancy, and group bullying, Lee and Garcia (2019) discovered that they were more likely to commit more serious offenses such as aggravated assault, theft of property, and criminal trespassing. In addition, Lee et al. (2022) investigated juvenile behaviors and discovered that engaging in status offenses was associated with more serious crimes such as theft, criminal trespassing, and aggravated assault. Another factor that can affect juveniles specifically is a lack of adult supervision, which creates windows of opportunity for delinquent behavior because juveniles are then influenced more by their peers and social surroundings (Kim et al., 2022). Juveniles are more apt to engage in risky behaviors than adults despite the risks because they are in the exploration phase of their development (Kim et al., 2022). As such, it is evident that juveniles will engage in delinquent behavior despite the consequences.

Despite these distinctions, there are some similarities between juvenile and adult crime. Baglivio et al. (2021) investigated juvenile crime and discovered that juveniles, like adults, committed crimes against their families and other adults in their lives. Like adults, the adversity that juveniles face during their growing up years often results in them reacting angrily toward their parents or other authority figures. Domestic violence, child abuse, rape, assault and battery, and kidnapping were among the adult crimes explored by Holzer et al. (2022). These adult crimes can affect juvenile victims and their behaviors well into their adult years. Similarly, Newman et al. (2022) discovered that adults were responsible for crimes against juveniles such as child abuse, rape, and

kidnapping. These crimes have long-term consequences because the juveniles went on to commit similar crimes as adults, perpetuating a vicious cycle (Newman et al., 2022).

There are some parallels between juvenile and adult crime.

When it comes to crimes committed, public opinion tends to group juvenile and adult crimes together without distinguishing between them. Judges in the adult criminal justice system treat juveniles like adults by imposing the harshest sanctions on them, as demonstrated by Welch et al. (2019) and Saeed et al. (2020), making it difficult to distinguish between juvenile and adult offenders. When providing information about the crime, often no indication of the age of the perpetrator is provided, which results in there being no distinction made between juvenile and adult crime when imposing sanctions (Sajid et al., 2020). When a juvenile is treated like an adult, the juvenile does not receive the rehabilitation services that they would receive if they were charged as a juvenile (Sajid et al., 2020). Recognizing the distinctions between adult and juvenile crime is important because the distinctions inform how specific juvenile crimes should be addressed in the future.

### ***The Difference Between the Juvenile Justice System and the Adult Criminal Justice System***

There are distinctions between juvenile delinquent and adult offender offenses. The classification of adult offenses is adult crimes, whereas the classification of juvenile offenses is delinquent acts (Harper et al., 2021). In order to support the notion that juvenile offenses are not as serious as adult offenses, the classification of juvenile and adult offenses has been established (Harper et al., 2021). McKinsey et al. (2022)

found that, when dealing with juvenile offenses, a less severe approach is often the preferred course of action. While juvenile offenders are treated with more compassion than adults, adult offenders are treated with less compassion because the general public believes that adults are more knowledgeable about how to conduct themselves than juveniles. As a result, adult offenders tend to receive more punitive sentences (McKinsey et al., 2022). According to Kopf and Mowen (2022), adult offenders are charged with criminal convictions for their crimes, whereas juvenile offenders are adjudicated delinquent for their crimes. Petkus et al. (2022) discovered that adult offenders lose many of their rights as a result of their offense and must work through a number of difficult requirements in order to have their records expunged from the public record. Adults have most of their rights taken away from them, while juveniles retain most of their rights and have their records sealed with guaranteed expungement, also known as record destruction (Petkus et al., 2022). According to Rips (2022), expungement is only available to juvenile delinquents and not to adult offenders. If a juvenile is under the age of majority and complies with all of the court's rules and guidelines, the court will grant them the right to have their criminal record erased. When it comes to understanding the consequences of juvenile delinquency on society, it is helpful to distinguish between juvenile and adult offenses.

The distinction between the juvenile justice system and the criminal justice system for adults should be understood as well. Historically, the goal of juvenile justice is to rehabilitate while the goal of adult criminal justice is to punish those who have violated the laws (Bolin, 2022; Copeland et al., 2022). Because juveniles are still young,

recidivism can be reduced or even eliminated if appropriate rehabilitation is provided (Bolin, 2022). Adults, according to society and the criminal justice system, should have acquired the skill of appropriate societal behavior; as a result, if they commit a crime, they should be punished (Copeland et al., 2022). Juvenile court does not have jurors, according to Carvacho et al. (2022), and instead has a single judge who determines what type of restitution the juvenile will receive as a result of their delinquent behavior. For juvenile delinquents, the judge has complete discretion over their punishment, which is typically determined by risk factors that the judge has identified. According to Mwihomeke and Jally (2022), in adult court, adults are subjected to a jury trial that is open to the public, whereas juvenile delinquents are subjected to closed court hearings because their identities should be protected due to their young age. The approach taken by adult court is more formal, whereas juvenile court is more informal. Understanding the differences between adult and juvenile court helps outline the ways in which each court system achieves its objectives through the use of sanctions.

### ***Juveniles in Adult Court***

While a rehabilitative approach is the foundation upon which the juvenile justice system was built, there have been some claims that a shift to a punitive approach is taking place. A result of societal pressure, more juveniles are being sent to adult court to fulfill the punitive agenda (Jouet, 2021). Some of the general public does not believe that there is a distinction between juvenile and adult crime, and they want to see juveniles punished for the crimes that they have committed. Feld (2018) discovered that the number of juveniles being tried in adult courts has increased. Instead of focusing on the



characteristics of the offender, the focus is now on the severity of the crime and ensuring that punitive approaches are taken so that juveniles are held accountable for their actions (Feld, 2018). Repeat offenders are perceived by society as juveniles who are not committed to rehabilitation, and as a result, punitive measures are supported. Juveniles who recidivate are sent to adult court, where they receive harsher sentences, according to Bryson and Peck (2020) and Liwanga and Ibe (2021). The availability of rehabilitative sentence options for adult court judges is limited when compared to juvenile court judges, and as a result, juveniles who appear before an adult judge receive a more severe sentence (Bryson & Peck, 2020; Liwanga & Ibe 2021). Recidivating juveniles are less likely to be tried in juvenile court and are more likely to be tried in adult court as a result of their behavior.

Juveniles who are tried in adult criminal court contribute to the high rate of juvenile recidivism in the United States. Juveniles who are tried in adult court do not receive the rehabilitative services that they require in order to improve their health and well-being (Trulson et al., 2020). Consequently, juveniles learn risky behaviors while in the adult criminal justice system and continue to reoffend after they are released from detention. Sobol II (2022) discovered that juveniles tried and sentenced in adult court make poor decisions and engage in recidivistic behavior after they are released from prison. According to Leiber and Fix (2019), juveniles tried in adult court are not eligible for record sealing, as they would be in juvenile court, and as a result, juveniles are found to be less motivated to improve their behaviors and are more likely to continue with their delinquent behaviors, resulting in ongoing recidivism. Adolescents are impressionable

and have a tendency to model the behaviors of those around them (Capalbo, 2022). As a result of their environment, Capalbo (2022) discovered that when juveniles were tried as adults and sentenced to adult prison, the juveniles continued to recidivate after release. According to Wareham et al. (2021), when juveniles were tried as adults, this caused stress for both the juvenile and their family, and when a juvenile's family cannot afford legal representation, the juvenile engages in recidivistic behavior in the hopes of alleviating the financial burden on their parents' behalf. Juveniles tried in adult court are more likely to reoffend.

## **Effects of Juvenile Delinquency**

### ***Juvenile Delinquency Effects on Family***

When it comes to juvenile delinquency, the juvenile's entire family is affected. Jacobsen and Zaatut (2022) discovered that the delinquent behaviors of juveniles have an impact on not only the juveniles themselves, but also on their family members. Because of age restrictions, there are certain requirements that a juvenile must meet that can only be met with the assistance of their families, which inadvertently turns delinquency into a family issue (Jacobsen & Zaatut, 2022). A rise in family conflict, and even parental separation, has been linked to an increase in juvenile delinquency in the past (Liu et al., 2020). According to Liu et al. (2020), families were having more fights with each other as decisions were being made about how the family would support the juvenile delinquent in their care. The failure of parents to feel that they are each other's support system for their children's legal problems could result in parental separations (Liu et al.,

2020). Following the publication of these findings, researchers have a better understanding of how families have suffered as a result of juvenile delinquency.

Referrals to community institutions for juvenile delinquency can have a negative impact on the families of those who are involved. When juveniles are referred to community institutions, they can expect to spend an extended period of time away from their families, depending on the length of their stay (Kurlychek, 2022). Both the juvenile and the family members are missing out on the opportunity to spend quality time together. Additionally, the family will have to consider new financial obligations because they will most likely have to send the juveniles toiletries and other items to keep them comfortable while they are away from home (Harris et al., 2022). Community institutions may occasionally require action from the family, such as family therapy, in order for the juvenile to complete his or her program successfully, and the availability and willingness of the family play a role in whether or not this requirement is met (Zettler & Craig, 2022). Sariaslan et al. (2022) discovered that some families are burdened with many responsibilities such that investing in just one of their children who continues to get into trouble is not beneficial to the family as a whole. As a result, the juvenile delinquent is left to fend for themselves within the confines of a community institution, making it difficult for them to achieve success in their lives.

Regular court appearances, legal fees, and fines are all consequences of juvenile delinquency that have a negative impact on the family's financial situation. According to Mohammed and Noorani (2021), families who are required to appear in court on a regular basis to support their juvenile delinquent are more likely to experience conflict.

The court appearances necessitate the parents taking time off from work, and at times it can be difficult for both parents to be present at the same time. As a result, there is an unequal distribution of responsibilities, resulting in conflict that has an impact on the family. Gourdie (2021) discovered that legal fees have a negative impact on the family's financial and emotional well-being. Some parents are unwilling to pay the fine, while others are unable to do so due to financial constraints. As a result, the juvenile is placed on probation, and resentment toward family grows as a result of the family's inability to assist with legal expenses. In comparison, Lavoie (2021) discovered that legal fees incurred as a result of multiple court appearances had a negative impact on the family. In low-income families, the legal fees and fines placed a strain on the family's financial situation and ability to pay their bills (Lavoie, 2021). Harris et al. (2022) and Paik and Packard (2019) argued that legal fees and fines incurred as a result of regular court appearances had long-term negative consequences for families. Failure to pay fines in full or on time resulted in the suspension of driver's licenses, repossessions, levies on bank accounts, and the imposition of additional late fees and penalties (Paik & Packard, 2019). In general, regular court appearances, legal fees, and fines incurred as a result of juvenile delinquency have an impact on the juvenile's family.

### ***Juvenile Delinquency Effects on Communities***

Juvenile delinquency has also had an impact on the communities in which it occurs. According to Trinidad et al. (2021), the rise in juvenile delinquency has heightened concerns about the safety of residents in their respective communities. Youth robberies and vandalism are occurring in residents homes, and the surrounding

community is concerned that these criminal acts will not be curtailed unless juveniles are held accountable for their crimes (Trinidad et al., 2021). Moreover, according to Chamberlain et al. (2022), juvenile delinquency has a negative impact on communities because people are afraid of relocating to areas where there is a high prevalence of crime. Crime rates are increasing in many communities across the country as a result of juveniles committing crimes in their own communities because they are familiar with the layout of their surroundings (Trinidad et al., 2022). Children have discovered that they are more successful at committing crimes in places that they are familiar with. The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency can exert an adverse and deleterious impact on the communal fabric, resulting in a range of detrimental consequences for the affected community.

Juvenile delinquency has a negative impact on both rural and urban communities. Most studies concentrate on urban communities, but it has been discovered that juvenile delinquency has an impact on rural communities as well (Avery et al., 2021). Juveniles in rural communities are turning to delinquent behavior, committing crimes such as theft and vandalism because there are few opportunities for them to participate in activities (Avery et al., 2021). According to Lo et al. (2018), some rural juveniles relocated to urban communities in order to engage in delinquent activities. Because of the social bonds that are formed among juveniles in urban areas, delinquent behavior appears to be more easily committed by these juveniles. A similar finding was made by Shen and Zhong (2018) and Qu et al. (2021), who discovered that juvenile delinquency is a problem in both rural and urban communities as a result of the social

bonds that juveniles form. Juvenile delinquents in both urban and rural communities are banding together to commit delinquent acts such as theft, vandalism, and truancy. The delinquent behavior has had an impact on the community because members of the community are concerned that these behaviors will lead to an increase in adult crime.

### **Defining Juvenile Recidivism**

Juvenile recidivism has been extensively studied by researchers. Juvenile recidivism refers to when legal action is taken against juveniles as a result of their repeated criminal activity (Olsson et al., 2021). When a juvenile is arrested for a delinquent act for the second time within 3 years of the first arrest, the second arrest is referred to as recidivism (Caudill & Trulson, 2022). It has also been suggested that juvenile recidivism occurs as a direct result of unresolved juvenile delinquency (Erofeeva, 2019; Yohros, 2022). A juvenile delinquent is considered a juvenile recidivist when they commit two delinquent acts within a 3-year period that results in arrest.

In contrast to adult recidivism, juvenile recidivism is an area where, despite the large amount of research that has been done, there has been an assortment of results reported. Regarding juvenile recidivism, there is no national definition or report on juvenile recidivism rates, and different sources report varying amounts of information on the subject (Fox et al., 2021). Juvenile recidivism was defined by Muir and Viljoen (2022) and Yohros (2022) as the sum of adverse childhood events that a juvenile experiences during his or her life. The greater the number of adverse childhood events that a juvenile reports, the greater the likelihood that the juvenile will engage in

recidivistic behavior (Muir & Viljoen, 2022; Yohros, 2022). In Rodriguez's (2022) definition, juvenile recidivism is an onset that comes as a result of a juvenile's repeated exposure to family dysfunction and issues of abandonment. These life events serve as the impetus for engaging in delinquent behavior that results in recidivating behavior (Rodriguez, 2022). An important point that has emerged from these findings is that, while juvenile recidivism can be defined in a variety of ways, the common factor is that the repetition of delinquent acts results in juvenile recidivism.

### **Family Problems and Juvenile Recidivism**

#### ***Single Parent Households***

An increasing amount of attention has been paid to the relationship between family structure and juvenile recidivism. The structure of a family is related to whether or not a juvenile delinquent will recidivate (Haskins & Turney, 2018; Kroese et al., 2021). Growing up in a single parent household, for example, was discovered by Kroese et al. (2021) to be associated with delinquent behavior, which was later linked to juvenile recidivism. Juveniles' delinquent behavior is caused by their parents' divorce and their perception that the family unit has been disrupted (Kroese et al., 2021). When Haskins and Turney (2018) investigated single parent households, they discovered that juveniles with one absent parent were more likely to recidivate than juveniles with two involved parents. Because of the patterns established by the absent parent and the unconscious desire to continue the cycle, the juvenile is at greater risk of recidivism than the general population (Haskins & Turney, 2018). Single parent homes are linked to juvenile recidivism because, with one parent missing, there are challenges presented with child

rearing (Haskins & Turney, 2018). The single parent may work more hours, which equates to less child supervision and increased idle time to engage in ongoing delinquent acts that lead to juvenile recidivism.

When it comes to juvenile recidivism, the parenting style of a single parent is also a factor. In their study, Miranda and Sitney (2020) discovered that single parent households had strained parent-child relationships. Because the juvenile was unresponsive to their guardian's parenting style, the strained relationship between parent and child resulted in the juvenile's continued involvement in criminal activity (Miranda & Sitney, 2020). Single parent households are most likely to have an uninvolved or permissive parenting style, according to the data (Liu et al., 2022). Because of the hands-off nature of both of these parenting styles, juvenile recidivism is more likely to occur. Juveniles engage in increased delinquent behavior when they are not under the supervision of an adult (Liu et al., 2022). Comparatively, Mwangangi (2019) discovered that juveniles who are raised in an uninvolved parenting environment receive less supervision, have no emotional attachment to their parents, and are under the impression that their parents do not care about them, according to the research. Because they are confident that there will be no consequences, the juvenile engages in recidivistic behavior (Mwangangi, 2019). Yusuf (2021) discovered that parental style was a predictor of recidivism among juvenile offenders and that, as a result of their volatile nature, children raised by abusive parents are more likely to recidivate. Delinquent behavior is more common among abused children, and they tend to express their frustrations by engaging



in delinquent behaviors. A link has been established between single parent households and recidivism.

Some researchers have argued that single parent households are not associated with juvenile recidivism, despite the fact that some studies have found the opposite to be true. Shannon and Amarat (2022) contended that juveniles who grew up in single parent households are not more likely to recidivate than other juveniles. In the absence of one parent, the juvenile having increased responsibilities in the home means that there is less opportunity for free time to engage in delinquent behavior that could lead to recidivism. Childs et al. (2022), who contended that single parent households are not associated with juvenile recidivism, supported this point of view. Instead, Childs et al. (2022) found a link between parenting style and juvenile recidivism as more of a factor rather than the structure of the family. There appears to be a mixed response to the question of whether there is a link between juvenile recidivism and family structure.

### ***Modeling Behaviors and Juvenile Recidivism***

When it comes to family violence and juvenile recidivism, one of the most prevalent themes is that of modeling behaviors. According to Kennedy et al. (2019), having a family member who has committed a crime is associated with a higher risk of recidivism, and the recidivism is due to modeling behaviors. Because the offending family member is more accepting of the juvenile's delinquent behavior, the juvenile is more likely to openly express a desire to model the negative behaviors they have witnessed, resulting in an increased risk of recidivism (Kennedy et al., 2019). Ruiz and Pareda (2021) discovered that juvenile recidivism was associated with family violence.

Juveniles growing up in violent families emulate the behaviors they see because they want to feel a sense of belonging and to make their families proud, which increases their chances of being accepted in the family (Ruiz & Pareda, 2021). Wolff et al. (2020) discovered a link between family violence and juvenile recidivism because juveniles are impressionable and imitate the behaviors that they witness as they grow older. According to Steketee et al. (2021), juveniles imitate the behaviors that they are exposed to, so the family of origin is the starting point when it comes to modeling behaviors. If a juvenile witnesses violence, it is likely that the juvenile emulated the behavior, resulting in juvenile recidivism (Steketee et al., 2021). According to these findings, juvenile recidivism is associated with the modeling of behaviors by family members who are present.

Family violence and juvenile recidivism are linked, which raises an important question about the relationship between family violence, modeling behavior, and juvenile recidivism. According to Stansfield et al. (2022), family violence is associated with juvenile recidivism. The juvenile uses his or her family's history of violence to model delinquent behavior that leads to recidivism. Myers et al. (2018) and Fix et al. (2018) also found that the juvenile's family history was a source of modeling behaviors that ultimately resulted in juvenile recidivism. Juveniles who witnessed domestic violence are more likely to engage in recidivistic behavior (Fix et al., 2018). To summarize, juveniles imitate the violent behavior they witness in their families, and this is linked to the progression of juvenile recidivism over time.

### ***Exposure to Violence in the Family and Juvenile Recidivism***

Juvenile recidivism has been linked to exposure to family violence. Weir et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between juvenile recidivism and family violence and discovered that exposure to family violence may result in juvenile recidivism. Juveniles who were exposed to violence at a young age appeared to engage in delinquent behaviors at a higher rate than their peers who had not been exposed to violence, which is associated with juvenile recidivism (Weir et al., 2021). Mowen and Fisher (2020) have also discovered a link between family violence and juvenile recidivism. Recidivism among juveniles has been linked to family violence in the form of arguments, physical assaults, and expulsion from the home (Mowen & Fisher, 2021). Family violence causes the breakdown of family relationships, which Mowen and Boman (2019) discovered to be the cause of the juvenile's recidivistic behavior. Exposure to family violence has a significant impact on juvenile recidivism.

Not only is exposure to family violence associated with juvenile recidivism, but it is also associated with intimate partner violence (IPV). IPV is defined as physical, verbal, and mental violence that occurs between two people who are intimately involved with each other (Williams & Adams Rueda, 2022). It is also considered a form of family violence because it occurs in the home (Williams & Adams Rueda, 2022). Exposure to family violence was investigated by Izaguirre and Calvet (2018), who discovered that when IPV was present, the likelihood of juvenile recidivism increased. In families where IPV was prevalent, children internalized the conflict as if it were their fault, and as a result, they engaged in delinquent behavior as a means of releasing their anger. In

addition, Hietamäki et al. (2021) investigated IPV and discovered a link between it and juvenile recidivism. As a result of being exposed to family violence, some individuals engage in negative behavior as a means of releasing the anger that has been generated by witnessing the violence. In contrast, IPV was defined by Rydström et al. (2019) as any type of family violence, such as sibling abuse or child abuse. Even when using a different definition, Rydström et al. discovered that juveniles who have been exposed to IPV are more likely to recidivate. The juveniles in this study were exposed to a variety of forms of IPV and internalized their feelings about the violence while outwardly misbehaving (Rydström et al., 2019). It has been demonstrated that, regardless of the definition, exposure to family violence causes juveniles to participate in delinquent acts, which ultimately results in juvenile recidivism.

### **Poor Academic Performance and Juvenile Recidivism**

#### ***Dropping Out and Juvenile Recidivism***

Juveniles who drop out of school are more likely than other youth to engage in recidivistic behavior. Juvenile delinquents who were suspended from school on a consistent basis, according to Novak and Fagan (2022), were at an increased risk of reoffending. The more times a juvenile was suspended, the less invested they became in school, which eventually resulted in them dropping out of high school (Novak & Fagan, 2022). Dropping out of school resulted in less structured time, which provided an opportunity for recidivistic behavior to flourish in the absence of supervision. Mallet et al. (2022) discovered that juveniles with learning disabilities were dropping out of school as a result of their inability to make academic progress. Making the decision to drop out

of school provided the opportunity to form bonds with delinquent peers and engage in criminal activity such as trespassing and vandalism (Mallet et al., 2022). Mendoza et al. (2020) and Guan et al. (2022) investigated juvenile dropout rates and discovered that those who dropped out were those who had been suspended from school on a regular basis. Because of the suspensions, they were more likely to fail their classes, and failing their classes increased their likelihood of engaging in recidivistic behavior.

Some studies have produced findings that do not support the existence of a link between dropping out of school and juvenile recidivism in juvenile court. Hirsch et al. (2018) investigated the relationship between juvenile recidivism and school dropouts and discovered that there was no connection. Dropouts from school were associated with a lack of services being provided to juveniles, and they were not associated with recidivism in any way (Hirsch et al., 2018). According to Coker (2021), juveniles require individualized education plans in order to feel supported enough to avoid dropping out of school. Coker also discovered no risk factors associated with juvenile recidivism. Morgan (2020) discovered that a lack of resources was a contributing factor to school dropouts. Additionally, Dierkhising et al. (2019) discovered that factors other than recidivism were associated with dropouts from high school. Instead, Dierkising et al. contended that dropouts from school are the result of shifts in mental health and substance abuse treatment facilities and placements. In light of these findings, it is possible that there is no significant link between school dropouts and juvenile recidivism in the United States.

### ***Juvenile Detention Education and Juvenile Recidivism***

Youth detained in juvenile detention must attend alternative education while in detention, according to the law. In the case of a juvenile who has been referred to some form of juvenile detention, alternative schooling is education provided outside of the traditional school setting (Gagnon et al., 2022). It is necessary for juvenile detention centers to provide ongoing educational opportunities for the juveniles in their care to ensure compliance with educational requirements (Jolivette, 2022). However, the manner in which the educational curriculum is delivered varies depending on the type of facility, but the overall goal is to minimize any disruptions to their education while they are away from their traditional schools (Ho & Rocheleau, 2020). In order to meet requirements, emphasis is placed on juvenile education.

Juvenile recidivism has been linked to the delivery of education while in detention. According to Fine et al. (2018), juveniles who attend alternative schools are more likely to associate with delinquent peers and to engage in recidivistic behavior than their nonalternative school peers. Because they share delinquent profiles, juveniles form social bonds and engage in delinquent acts as a result of their common delinquency profiles while at school in detention centers. Jäggi and Kliewer (2020) discovered that academic achievement is associated with juvenile recidivism. Youth who are educated in juvenile detention are more likely to recidivate than those who are educated in the community (Jäggi & Kliewer, 2020). Walton et al. (2021) supported this point of view, stating that juveniles who receive education in juvenile detention have difficulty adjusting to education in the community. When students return to school, adjustment is

difficult because they do not feel welcomed by their peers and teachers; as a result, there is a higher likelihood of recidivism (Walton et al., 2021). Those who receive schooling while in juvenile detention are more likely to recidivate.

### **Environment and Juvenile Recidivism**

Unstable neighborhoods and delinquent peer groups are examples of environmental factors that contribute to juvenile recidivism. Unstable neighborhoods are those that suffer from a scarcity of economic and social resources and are racially disparate in population (Chamberlain et al., 2022). Juveniles who recidivate are more likely to come from unstable neighborhoods and to hang out with delinquent peers, according to Chamberlain et al. (2022). Adversity that juveniles face as a result of an unstable neighborhood leads them to engage in delinquent behavior in order to provide for themselves and their families (Chamberlain et al., 2022). Chamberlain et al. further asserted that because of limitations imposed by age, curfew, and family restrictions, juveniles committed delinquent acts in their own neighborhoods because access is more convenient in these settings. Trinidad et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between residence to crime and juvenile recidivism and discovered that residence is associated with juvenile recidivism. The juveniles' familiarity with the neighborhood and the presence of delinquent peers who were already committing crimes provided them with a sense of security, which made it simple for them to commit crimes in the vicinity of their residence (Trinidad et al., 2021). Hatten and Piza (2022) discovered that the routine of walking to school or constantly being in a particular neighborhood provided juveniles with the comfort they required to engage in delinquent behavior. Juveniles were more

likely to recidivate in neighborhoods where they lived because of a scarcity of resources and limited mobility (Hatten & Piza, 2022). Powell et al. (2021) discovered that living in an unstable neighborhood contributed to high recidivism rates. When there was a high concentration of juvenile delinquents in a neighborhood, it provided juveniles with access to a negative peer group with which to recidivate (Powell et al., 2021). Therefore, juveniles will form social bonds with delinquent peer groups in their neighborhood and will engage in delinquent behavior that will result in continued recidivism as the result of their actions.

Apart from unsafe neighborhoods and delinquent peer groups, other environmental factors that have been linked to juvenile recidivism include the time of day and the weather conditions. Trinidad et al. (2022) discovered that the weather and time of day had an impact on the behavior of juvenile delinquents when they committed crimes. When it was dark and warm outside, juveniles had more opportunities to commit crimes without being caught, which led to a pattern of continuous reoffending (Trinidad et al., 2022). Several other studies (Cruz et al., 2020; Haberman et al., 2018; Trujillo & Howley, 2021) confirmed the existence of a link between weather and juvenile recidivism in their findings. The pleasant weather increased irritability in juveniles, which increased the likelihood that juveniles would engage in criminal activity (Trujillo & Howley, 2021). Juveniles continued to commit crimes as the day gave way to night, and as the weather grew warmer, according to Lynch et al. (2022) and Potgieter et al. (2022). Juveniles also participate in fewer structured activities in the evenings, which increases their availability to commit crimes. As such, the cycle of juvenile recidivism is perpetuated in this manner.



## **Race And Juvenile Recidivism**

In juvenile court interventions, minority juveniles are more likely to receive punitive sentences, and this practice has been linked to increased juvenile recidivism. According to Lehmann et al. (2020), minority youth received harsher sentences than their European American counterparts in juvenile detention. The imposition of harsher sentences on minority youth has resulted in their reoffending because they are unable to complete the requirements of the harsher sentence (Lehmann et al., 2020). According to Holloway et al. (2022), minority youth are more likely than non-minority youth to become involved in the juvenile justice system and receive harsher sentences. Holloway et al. confirmed that harsher sentencing necessitates more steps to be completed before they are released from detention, which is typically more difficult for the juvenile who is receiving the sentence, resulting in them failing to meet requirements and reoffending. Zane (2022) discovered that race has had an impact on the way juvenile delinquents are sentenced to juvenile detention. When compared to European American juvenile delinquents, African American juvenile delinquents were more likely to face disciplinary action and be placed in detention centers, whereas their European American counterparts received little to no detention (Zane, 2022). This difference in treatment resulted in the minority juveniles reoffending. Strassfeld and Cherng (2021) discovered that there were differences in the referrals made to treatment for juveniles who were ordered to treatment based on race. The intake process revealed that African American juveniles were referred to more restrictive programs in comparison to their European American counterparts, which was found to be the result of racial bias during the intake process (Strassfeld &

Cherng, 2021). Teens who were referred to these more restrictive programs were more likely to reoffend than those who were not (Strassfeld & Cherng, 2021). These findings demonstrate a link between the use of race in harsh sentencing and juvenile recidivism.

One of the most significant factors contributing to juvenile recidivism is the disproportionate rate of incarceration experienced by different races. Donnelly (2021) discovered that African American juveniles are more likely than other races to come from economically challenged communities, and the economic adversity associated with their living conditions contributed to their increased likelihood of incarceration. When a minority juvenile is released from prison, he or she is more likely to reoffend because of the racism and stigma that they have experienced (Donnelly, 2021). Turner et al. (2021) discovered that incarceration rates among minority youth were high and that they were associated with juvenile recidivism. The negative stigma associated with being involved with the juvenile justice system has a negative impact on youth, leading to them reoffending (Turner et al., 2021). In addition, Appel et al. (2020) and Campbell and Vogel (2019) discovered that minority youth had a higher rate of incarceration, which resulted in a higher rate of juvenile recidivism. Because the juveniles were being held in places where there were negative attitudes toward minorities, the difficulties that arose as a result of their detention resulted in the juveniles reoffending. There is a connection between incarceration and race, as well as the way in which this leads to juvenile recidivism.

## **Childhood Maltreatment and Juvenile Recidivism**

Different risk factors contribute to child maltreatment, which later results in juvenile recidivism. Child maltreatment is defined as abuse of a child under the age of 18 that occurs outside of the parameters of societal norms and results in physical or emotional harm (Liel et al., 2022). According to Liel et al. (2022), family violence is a risk factor that contributes to child maltreatment. Family violence as a risk factor has an impact on the development of juveniles, which later results in recidivism. Diestel et al. (2022) discovered that family violence is a risk factor that contributes to child maltreatment. Diestel et al. (2022) found that the maltreatment that resulted from the family violence contributed to antisocial behaviors that later resulted in reoffending. Russotti et al. (2021) discovered also that poor mental health is a risk factor for childhood maltreatment and is associated with juvenile recidivism. As a result of the maltreatment, the juvenile developed mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, which led to him or her engaging in delinquent behavior and reoffending as a result of the issues not being addressed (Russotti et al., 2021). Stickley et al. (2021) confirmed that mental illness is a risk factor for child maltreatment and, as a result, for juvenile recidivism because of the traumatic nature of the maltreatment. Exploring childhood maltreatment is significant because it outlines the risk factors for child maltreatment that contribute to juvenile recidivism.

There is a significant relationship between childhood maltreatment and juvenile recidivism. Cho and Lee (2021) discovered that childhood maltreatment is a predictor of recidivism among juveniles. Adverse events have been shown to increase the risk of

juvenile recidivism in those who have experienced them, making the likelihood of reoffending high (Cho & Lee, 2021). Protic et al. (2020) discovered that childhood maltreatment is associated with juvenile recidivism. Childhood maltreatment is a risk factor for antisocial behavior and contributes to juvenile reoffending. Jaggi et al. (2021) discovered that childhood maltreatment encouraged antisocial behavior and the formation of social bonds with a deviant peer group. Antisocial behavior and a negative peer group had an impact on ongoing delinquent behavior, which resulted in recidivism (Jaggi et al., 2021). Font and Kennedy (2022) and Yohros (2022) discovered that children who have experienced maltreatment have long-term consequences, including problems with brain development that result in poor decision making. Making risky decisions and engaging in antisocial behavior as a teenager leads to recidivism (Yohros, 2022). There is a link between childhood maltreatment and recidivism among juveniles.

### **Antisocial Behaviors and Juvenile Recidivism**

Antisocial behavior has been identified as a significant predictor of recidivism among juvenile offenders. According to Stouwe et al. (2019), antisocial behavior in juveniles is defined as a lack of regard for right and wrong as well as a lack of a moral compass. As a result of this uncaring approach, juvenile delinquents are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior, which increases their chances of reoffending (Stouwe et al., 2019). Juveniles involved in the juvenile justice system, according to Robertson et al. (2021), demonstrate a high prevalence of antisocial behavior. The antisocial behavior of juveniles in response to the negative consequences of harsh sentencing in the juvenile justice system leads to reoffending by the same group of juveniles (Robertson et al.,

2021). Recidivism among juveniles with antisocial tendencies is at its highest level, according to Mulder et al. (2019). Juvenile delinquents engage in antisocial behaviors including drug use, truancy, and running away from home, among others (Mulder et al., 2019). Once a juvenile has been punished for antisocial behavior, he or she will continue to engage in the behavior because he or she does not believe the stigma can be removed (Mulder et al., 2019). According to Lee and Kim (2022), substance abuse and gang-related activity are examples of antisocial behaviors that contribute to juvenile recidivism in the United States. Adolescents who use drugs and are members of gangs have a strong sense of belonging to their negative peer group, and they see little point in changing their ways (Lee & Kim, 2022). Therefore, juveniles continue to reoffend without regard for the ramifications of their actions.

Physical aggression and opposition defiance, in addition to antisocial behaviors such as substance abuse, truancy, running away from home, and gang-related activity, appear to be the most prevalent antisocial behaviors that lead to juvenile recidivism. Opposition defiance, according to Levy et al. (2022), is defined as disobedient behavior toward authority figures. Ramsey et al. (2022) discovered that juveniles who were physically aggressive and oppositionally defiant had a lower regard for the consequences of their actions. The juvenile's disregard for the consequences enabled him or her to engage in delinquent behavior, which contributed to his or her continued involvement in the criminal justice system (Ramsey et al., 2022). Juveniles who are labeled oppositionally defiant have been shown to have experienced some form of trauma, according to McCarthy et al. (2022) and Menand and Cox (2022). They have had their

ability to make sound decisions diminished as a result of their traumatic experience, and they have resorted to crime as a coping mechanism (Menand & Cox, 2022). In general, engaging in antisocial behavior can be indicative of juvenile recidivism.

### **Socioeconomic Status and Juvenile Recidivism**

The socioeconomic status (SES) of a juvenile has been identified as a determinant of juvenile recidivism. SES is a measure of an individual's or family's access to resources, and it is a combination of education, income, and occupation (Murtha et al. 2022). Khan (2021) discovered that juveniles who come from low-income families have higher rates of recidivism. Juveniles from low-income families have a limited ability to meet their own needs as well as the needs of their families, which leads them to turn to crime to supplement their income (Khan, 2021). With no changes to their SES, the likelihood of reoffending remains high (Khan. 2021). Wodarczyk-Madejska and Ostaszewski (2021) discovered that juveniles from low socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to be involved with the juvenile justice system than juveniles from high socioeconomic backgrounds. Involvement in the juvenile justice system can be costly, and it can exacerbate the financial difficulties that the juvenile and their family are already experiencing, leading to the juvenile reoffending in order to assist the family (Wodarczyk-Madejska & Ostaszewski, 2021). Holloway et al. (2022) argued that there is a link between low SES and juvenile recidivism, which supports this viewpoint. Low SES leads to an increase in the amount of crime committed by juveniles, and with no changes in SES, the juvenile continues to reoffend (Holloway et al., 2022). Juveniles

from low socioeconomic backgrounds are shown to commit crimes in higher numbers, and the continued low SES contributes to a higher rate of recidivism.

Equally important is an understanding of how low SES is linked to parentification, which results in juvenile recidivism. Parentification is the process by which a child assumes the parental role and takes on the responsibility of caring for the family (Abdallah et al., 2022). Landi et al. (2022) discovered that juveniles from low SES may have parents who are ill. As a result, the juveniles take on the role of primary caregiver in the home, looking after themselves as well as everyone else. With little or no work experience, the juvenile turns to crime in order to provide for their parents and family, which contributes to recidivism (Landi et al., 2022). Jajodia and Roy (2022) discovered that juveniles from low SES families are deprived of proper education as a result of the parental role they take on within the family unit. With the emphasis on making sure the family is fed, education is delayed and committing crimes as a means of survival becomes the focal point (Jajodia & Roy, 2022). No change in SES may result in reoffending. Jiang and Dong (2022) discovered that low SES is associated with negative social bonds as a result of the parentified role, which results in reoffending. Because of their role in the family, the juvenile begins to believe that they are the adult, and they make poor decisions that lead to recidivism.

### **Community Institutions**

Community institutions are a type of sentencing that is used to combat juvenile recidivism in the juvenile justice system. The terms juvenile detention center, juvenile facilities, treatment facility, outpatient treatment, and long-term care can all be used to

refer to community institutions depending on the field of expertise (Vaugh et al., 2022). The goal of community institutions, no matter what they are called, is to assist in the reduction of recidivism by providing rehabilitation for juvenile delinquents who have committed crimes (Vaugh et al., 2022). A juvenile delinquent is typically committed to a community institution and must complete a set of requirements before a judge will recognize them as having completed a program successfully (Walker et al., 2022). According to Hancock (2017), community institutions are used to rehabilitate juvenile delinquents while simultaneously reducing the likelihood of recidivism. Hancock discovered that when the emphasis is placed on all aspects of a juvenile's life as a whole, community institutions are effective in reducing recidivism among juveniles. Community institutions were found to be effective in reducing recidivism in a similar study by House et al. (2018) as long as all aspects of the juvenile's life were addressed while at the institution. In order to reduce recidivism, it has been discovered that a holistic approach to treatment is beneficial.

Despite the fact that the goal of community institution sentencing is rehabilitation in order to reduce recidivism, some researchers have discovered that this is not always the case. According to Trulson et al. (2020), sending juvenile offenders to community institutions has no effect on recidivism. After completing their program, juvenile offenders would be released back into their community of origin, where they would begin reoffending again (Trulson et al., 2020). Put et al. (2021) discovered that community institutions had the potential to be effective in reducing recidivism, but that this rarely happened. Follow-up after treatment should be the primary focus; however,



because this does not occur on an ongoing or regular basis, juveniles continue to reoffend. Community institution sentencing and its relationship to recidivism were the subject of a study conducted by Walker and Herting (2020). Walker and Herting discovered that juveniles who were sentenced to detention had a higher rate of recidivism than those who were not sentenced. Community institution sentencing, according to Breckwoldt et al. (2022), is ineffective because of the increased risk of recidivism correlated with association with delinquent peers. Because juvenile detention does not address the needs of the juvenile detainee's mental health and trauma, the juvenile continues to engage in delinquent behavior (Breckwoldt et al., 2022). It is possible that community institutions may not be as effective as they were intended to be in terms of reducing juvenile recidivism.

### **Summary**

The effects of juvenile delinquency were the primary focus of this literature review, which included defining juvenile recidivism, defining family problems, poor academic performance, the environment, race, childhood maltreatment, antisocial behaviors, SES, and community institutions. The secondary focus was to draw attention to the main tenets of SLT and how they relate to the study. Recidivism among juvenile offenders is a persistent public health concern (Baglivio et al., 2021). Juvenile recidivism has a long history and understanding how it developed as a result of juvenile delinquency may provide the information needed to assist in developing programs that are effective in decreasing juvenile recidivism.

Reducing juvenile recidivism is important for juvenile delinquents because it ensures that they will not be involved in the adult criminal justice system and that they will have the opportunity to pursue their dreams after they have completed their juvenile sentence. According to the literature, there are risk factors that cause juvenile delinquents to reoffend on a regular basis despite the fact that they have received numerous interventions (Trinidad et al., 2021). What is not known is how juveniles perceive the effectiveness of community institutions, as well as what approaches would be most beneficial in assisting them in reducing recidivist behavior.

The methodology for this study will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating.

This chapter includes a discussion of the research design and rationale for the study, as well as the research question and the role of the researcher. The methodology, the selection of participants, the instrumentation, and the procedures for recruitment are also discussed. In addition, the processes that were used for participant recruitment, data collection, and overall study participation are examined. Finally, this chapter includes a discussion of the methods for analyzing the data, as well as the trustworthiness of the researcher, and a detailed summary.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

RQ: What are the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating?

For the purpose of this research, I employed a qualitative approach to explore the perspectives of formerly delinquent juveniles regarding the role that community institutions played in preventing them from recidivating. Collecting and analyzing nonnumerical data is the essence of qualitative research, which aims to comprehend concepts, opinions, and perceptions held by participants (Edwards et al., 2021; Weissman et al., 2022). It is common practice to collect in-depth understanding of a problem from

study participants through the use of the qualitative method, as well as to come up with novel concepts for research (Heap et al., 2022). The purpose of qualitative research was to format concepts that enabled understanding of social phenomena in natural settings, stressing the meanings, experiences, and viewpoints of all the participants (Singh et al., 2022). Researchers engage in interviews with participants as part of their qualitative research in order to better understand the phenomenon of interest (Luciani et al., 2019). I chose to use the qualitative approach because I wanted to be able to conduct in-depth interviews with participants and focus on their perspectives in relation to the issue of juvenile recidivism, which is in accordance with the guidelines for qualitative research.

In order to answer the research question, I selected the generic qualitative design. The generic qualitative design is adaptable and does not conform to any one particular qualitative construct (Goodman et al., 2018). The generic qualitative design is an amalgamation of the many components of the various other qualitative methods (Goodman et al., 2018). The qualitative generic design is interpretative, and the primary focus is on the manner in which experiences are interpreted, the manner in which the worlds of the participants are built, and the meaning that is attributed to the experience (Khan & MacEachen, 2021). The gathering of data in the generic qualitative design is used to find themes from the information obtained from participants. This results in the researcher and the readers of the research having a stronger understanding of the research subject (Kim & Crowley, 2021). The flexibility and adaptability of the generic design were sufficient to suit the criteria of this study, which is why I decided to utilize it. I

picked the generic qualitative design because individual perceptions do not necessarily fit into a formal qualitative design.

Before settling on the choice to utilize the generic qualitative design, I explored the possibility of employing a variety of alternative qualitative designs. The qualitative case study and the qualitative ethnographic design were the two additional possibilities that I considered. Qualitative case studies are carried out to study a specific aspect of a situation involving each individual participant (Rashid et al., 2019). Because the purpose of my study was to investigate the participants' perceptions, which encompass multiple points of view, the case study methodology was not a good fit for providing an answer to my research question. The qualitative ethnographic method gives the researcher the opportunity to interact with the participant in their natural environment in order to investigate aspects of culture that are connected to the person's core experiences (Ritter, 2021). I did not choose the ethnographic research design because it required participants to be observed in their natural surroundings. Because I investigated the perceptions of formerly delinquent juveniles, I did not utilize this design.

### **Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher for this study, I was in charge of the instrumentation, recruiting, data collecting, and analysis. The researcher is considered an instrument in qualitative research because they are necessary to accomplishing the objectives of the study (Wambaleka, 2019). The researcher plays the role of an instrument; therefore, it is essential that reflexivity be used in order to acknowledge the influence of the researcher at every stage of the study (Geddis-Regan et al., 2022). The term reflexivity refers to an ongoing

reflection of each process of the study, in which the researcher considers their own influence on the findings of the study (Geddis-Regan et al., 2022). The best way for me to practice reflexivity was to keep a journal in which I recorded some of the thoughts that came into my head both during and immediately after doing interviews with participants (see Shelton & Flint, 2019). To lessen the risk of being affected by bias while carrying out the research, I employed reflexivity both when gathering the data and when transcribing it. This allowed me to acquire a comprehensive knowledge of the information that was discussed during the interviews and reduce any bias I may have had.

I have worked with juveniles in the field of human services for more than 15 years. Nevertheless, I have not had, nor do I have now, any relationships with any of the participants in this study. Because of the length of time I have spent working in this industry and the intensity of my desire to assist young people, I have preconceived ideas about this topic, which might have led to researcher bias. Researcher bias occurs when the beliefs and views of a researcher impact the results of a study for the researcher's own personal gain (Martin & Ricciardelli, 2022). In order to avoid interpreting the data via the filter of my own personal experiences and perspectives, my preconceived notions were bracketed in a researcher journal. The use of bracketing made it less likely that the research would run into problems caused by biases.

The researcher has a responsibility to protect both the participant and the broader study. Therefore, I made sure to keep each participant's information private and anonymous, as suggested by Morina (2021). To protect everyone's privacy while still adhering to all of the ethical guidelines, I made sure that the participants' names were

obscured by using pseudonyms. As a token of appreciation to participants for their time and travel, each participant received a \$10-dollar Visa gift card.

## **Methodology**

### **Participant Selection Logic**

The participants in this study were former juvenile delinquents who were currently in the United States and between the ages of 19 and 25. The participants had to be former juvenile delinquents to ensure that they had a perception regarding community institutions and resources, as well as the ways in which these support systems, helped (or did not help) to prevent the participants from recidivation.

In order to recruit participants to take part in the study, I used purposeful sampling. The nonrandom sampling method known as purposeful sampling is used to recruit individuals who are able to provide in-depth and thorough information about the phenomenon that is the subject of the inquiry (Staller, 2021). I decided to employ purposeful sampling for the research because it gave me the opportunity to be intentional with the type of participants who were chosen for this study. It was essential for me to conduct interviews with former juvenile offenders because doing so allowed me to obtain insight into the perspectives held by former juvenile offenders. In addition, purposeful sampling was chosen because it allowed for the collection of qualitative replies, which ultimately led to enhanced insights and more accurate study outcomes. Finally, I used purposeful sampling because it allowed me to conduct my study with a relatively small sample size while producing useful results.

Since all participants were successfully recruited through purposeful sampling, the utilization of snowball sampling was unnecessary. Snowball sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher invites people who are taking part in the study to ask others who they may know who would also be interested in taking part in the study (Leighton et al., 2021). My secondary technique of snowball sampling was chosen because former juvenile offenders are a population that is somewhat hidden, and members of this population might have been reluctant to come forward to participate in the study. Snowball sampling had the potential to be helpful because participants share the same characteristics as the participants that they would be referring to the study.

In order to take part in the study, participants needed to demonstrate that they fulfilled a given set of requirements. Participant requirements are the qualities that a participant needs to be able to demonstrate in order to take part in the study (Hendricks et al., 2022). The criteria for participants required them to have a history of delinquency as a juvenile, to be between the ages of 19 and 25, and to live in the United States. Participants were requested to produce a valid form of identification as well as the name of the community institution into which they were placed in order to verify that the criteria for participation in the study have been met. As the purpose of this research was to gain an understanding of the perspectives held by former juvenile offenders, juveniles who were currently serving time in a community institution were not considered.

The proposed sample size included nine to 13 participants. According to Hennink and Kaiser (2021), the optimal number of participants for a qualitative study is nine to 13. For the majority of qualitative designs, Braun and Clarke (2021) suggested having nine to



12 individuals in the study as an adequate sample size. By using the generic qualitative technique, I was able to gather data from participant samples that were small. According to Goodman et al. (2018), it is possible for qualitative research to be conducted with a small sample size and still produce sufficient results because better data can be obtained from lower sample sizes. In the end, data saturation will determine the sample size for qualitative research.

The size of the sample that is used in qualitative research is determined when saturation has been reached. When there are no longer any unique concepts that are being formed from the information that is obtained from the participants, the researcher is said to have reached a state of saturation (Hennick & Kaiser, 2021; Serafin et al., 2022). Saturation is an essential component of qualitative research because it enables the researcher to check that there is no longer any fresh material that can be acquired from any following interviews.

Various social media channels were utilized in order to contact the participants and carry out the recruitment process for this study (LinkedIn and Instagram). I posted a flyer on the various social media platforms promoting the need for participants in the study, including my contact information on the flyer. I requested the potential participant's contact information via email and or phone call as soon as they made initial contact with me through the means of communication detailed on the flyer. I inquired about both a phone number and an email address, and I inquired whether or not sending text messages was acceptable as a backup option. In order to maintain an accurate tally of everyone who is took part, I used Google Sheets to create a spreadsheet. As I collected

the various contact details, I documented them on my spreadsheet. The participants received a reminder of the interview 1 week before it was scheduled to take place, and this reminder was delivered in the form of either an email or a phone call. I informed each participant that a token of appreciation would be mailed out after arranging a date and time for the interview. In addition, I let the participants know that they would be contacted following the interview to ensure that their responses had been accurately transcribed.

### **Instrumentation**

In preparation for this study, I developed a researcher-created interview protocol. According to Castillo-Montoya (2016), the process of establishing an interview protocol consists of four phases. These four phases consist of respectively ensuring that the research questions and the interview questions are aligned, ensuring that the questions will enable inquiry-based discourse, getting input regarding interview questions to boost reliability, and piloting the interview questions (Castillo-Montoya, 2016). Castillo-Montoya (2016) mentioned that, in the event that piloting the interview questions is something that cannot take place, more emphasis should be put on Phase 3 in order to guarantee that the interview procedure is adequately honed. In order to answer the research question posed for this study by utilizing semistructured interviews, I developed an interview protocol by following the first three steps given by Castillo-Montoya. Interviews that are semistructured provide the researcher the opportunity to ask questions that have been prepared in advance, but they also leave room for inquiries that have not yet been considered (Price & Smith, 2021). According to Jacobsen and Harrison (2022)

and Mutillo et al. (2022), semistructured interviews give the researcher the opportunity to ask additional questions that may develop from responses to questions that were asked earlier in the interview. This allows the researcher to get more information from the interview participants. Participants had the ability to express their perceptions in my study with the researcher-created interview protocol and semistructured interview questions I created.

I validated the interview protocol by conducting an expert panel review with subject matter experts. The panel was comprised of three individuals who were well-versed in qualitative research techniques and who had previous expertise in the field of human services, specifically in the field of working with juvenile offenders. The first member of the panel was a human services professional with 15 years of experience who was also a professor teaching criminal justice at a university. The second member of the panel was an expert in the field of research, and their areas of expertise included juvenile recidivism, the school-to-prison pipeline, and criminal justice. They had published more than 10 research articles that used the qualitative methodology. The final member of the panel was a human services professional who had worked in the industry for 30 years, who sat on the boards of four organizations that support juvenile causes, and who had previously published 12 qualitative studies.

Following the review of the interview questions, the panel reached the consensus that I should modify the questions so that they had a more conversational tone. I was instructed to steer clear of using academic jargon and to begin the interview by getting to know the participant. These changes made the interview feel less formal and enabled the

participant to feel more at ease when responding to my questions. The last piece of advice that the panel gave to me was to make the questions less difficult and to phrase them in such a manner that it appeared as though I was attempting to get to know the person and have a discussion, rather than appearing to be formal. Therefore, I revised and rearranged the sequence of the questions that I posed to reflect the comments and suggestions that were provided to me by the panel.

### **Procedures for Recruitment**

The data collection for the study was carried out by me using the conference platform Zoom. Participants took part in a one-on-one, semistructured interview that lasted approximately 1 hour. The research involved two separate times where data was gathered. The first occurrence was during the interview, which lasted around an hour, and the second event took place after the participant received the transcript to review. The data was collected through the use of Zoom's audio recording features, in addition to me taking notes during the interviews.

Upon encountering an inadequate participant count during the recruitment process, it was initially planned to employ the snowball method as a secondary sampling approach to supplement the sample. This would involve reaching out to the participants already involved in the study and requesting their assistance in identifying potential additional candidates. Contact information for the new recruits would be obtained from the referral source, and it was intended to establish communication through email or telephone by sharing my contact details. However, due to the successful recruitment

outcomes obtained via purposeful sampling, the implementation of the snowball method was ultimately unnecessary.

Following completion of the interview, a debriefing was given to the participants. I expressed my gratitude via a thank you email to all of the people who took part in the research and verified that they had received the token of appreciation that was mailed out after we had agreed on the time and day of the interview. Once the research was completed, I sent the participants an email that included the findings of the study in the format of a Word document, as well as a transcript of the interview and a summary that explained how the information they had provided would be utilized. I assure each participant once more that there was no need to do any follow-up interviews, and I provided them with my contact information in case they had any further questions.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

For the purpose of data analysis, I modeled my data analysis after Saldana (2016). According to the guiding principles outlined by Saldana, the process of data analysis must consist of the following four steps: (a) locating codes in the data, (b) organizing these codes into more specific categories, (c) analyzing these higher-level categories to generate themes through analytic memoing, and (d) using these themes to address the study's research question. According to the inductive coding process for data analysis as outlined by Saldana (2016), the objective was to generate the codes as I moved through the process of reviewing the data. Coding is a form of high-quality analysis that must be carried out in stages for maximum precision.

Keeping Saldana's (2016) inductive coding technique in mind, I took the following steps for data analysis.

1. In order to gain a better comprehension of the material and become more familiar with the data, I read the transcript using Microsoft Word.
2. When I began the initial coding process, I made use of the comments tool in Microsoft Word to jot down descriptive codes as I read through the data, as well as to maintain track of the meaning of the codes.
3. I went over the data once more, line by line, diving deeper, and adding additional codes as required.
4. I organized a formalized set of codes and then refined those codes as necessary.
5. I reread the data and applied the codes that I had identified.
6. I read over and grouped codes into categories where appropriate.
7. I continued with the process until all of the interviews had been coded and I had reached the point of data saturation.

During the phase of data analysis, careful attention was paid to the identification of discrepant cases or outliers to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the findings. This required a comprehensive examination of the data to determine whether coding errors had occurred. (McAleese & Kilty, 2019). Outliers are cases that deviate considerably from the established norms based on the collected data. Identifying and differentiating these outliers from other themes can improve the quality of the data (Durand et al., 2021). However, as no outliers were encountered in this study, there was no need to address or account for them, thereby preserving the overall validity of the collected data.

## **Issues of Trustworthiness**

### **Credibility**

During the course of my research, I made certain that credibility in the study was maintained. When conducting qualitative research, credibility refers to how credible the data collected and presented in the study appear to be (Prosek & Gibson, 2021). The correctness and precision with which the study's findings are presented is another factor that can be considered when evaluating credibility (FitzPatrick, 2019). The legitimacy of the outcomes can be ensured by the use of member checking (Candela, 2019; FitzPatrick, 2019). Data are shared with the participants so they can verify their accuracy and determine whether or not they are consistent with their own experiences (Candela, 2019). I utilized member checking as a means of ensuring the credibility of the study. For the purposes of determining the study's level of credibility, I had the participants read over the transcripts of the interviews as well as the final results.

### **Transferability**

It is essential when conducting qualitative research to establish credibility, and one of the ways in which this can be accomplished is by assuring transferability. The extent to which the findings of the research can be applied to situations that are different from those studied is referred to as transferability (Byram, 2022). Additionally, transferability refers to the ability of the research to be utilized by someone else in a setting that is unrelated to the original research (Sebastian & Slaten, 2022). In order to demonstrate that my findings were transferable, the data linked to this research was

reported in great detail. A person will have the ability to judge whether or not the information offered in the research is worthwhile to transfer if the research is described in sufficient detail.

### **Dependability**

When conducting qualitative research, dependability is another factor that must be taken into consideration. Dependability is used to maintain consistency of the research findings and makes it possible to reproduce the study if it is ever required (Byram, 2022). In order to demonstrate the dependability of the findings, I described each stage of the research technique in such a way that it should be straightforward for another researcher to carry out the same step. In order to further ensure dependability, I kept a record of all of my field notes and any other documents that highlight what I have done, witnessed, or thought about. This practice is also known as conducting an audit trail.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is an important component of qualitative research. Confirmability is achieved when the conclusions of one piece of study can be corroborated by another researcher (Byram, 2022; Oraki & Rashidi, 2022). Confirmability can be achieved when the researcher does not incorporate any personal biases into the study, so assuring that the research is entirely based on the information provided by the participants (Byram, 2022; Oraki & Rashidi, 2022). To ensure confirmability, I detailed the process of data gathering, data analysis, and interpretation of the data. I utilized bracketing in my journaling to prevent any personal biases from entering into my research. By doing so,



confirmability is ensured, and it confirms that the data collected supports the findings of the research.

### **Ethical Procedures**

I committed to act ethically with participants throughout the course of the study and after it was concluded. There was no imbalance of power that existed between me and the participants in this study. I did not gather data until I received approval from the IRB. I protected the privacy of the participants by labeling the data with participant codes rather than their names. I made sure all participants gave their informed consent. I made it clear to participants that they were free to leave the study at any point during the process with no negative repercussions. I ensured data security by storing information on a computer that was only accessible to me and that required a password to be entered. I will safely save the results of the research for a period of 3 years, after which I will delete the results securely by destroying any paper records and erasing any electronic data. The participants received an electronic copy of the summary that I prepared of the study's findings via email. I used \$10 visa gift cards as tokens of appreciation in an ethical manner by providing participants with a clear policy that indicated that tokens of appreciation would be given based on willingness to participate in the study and compliance with minimum wage guidelines. This ensured that the token of appreciation was given in a manner that is consistent with ethical standards.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 3, I outlined the design of the research and rationale, the role of the researcher, and the methodology which included participant selection, instrumentation, and procedures for recruitment and participation. I then discussed the data collection and analysis plan and issues pertaining to trustworthiness including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Last, I discussed ethical standards. In the following chapter (Chapter 4), I will talk about the findings of the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating. The information collected from reformed juvenile offenders in this study may help human service professionals to enhance their practices and provide more appropriate services to juvenile delinquents. Human service providers can assist juveniles in developing healthy, prosocial relationships and in increasing their activities and involvement within the community. Policies that are responsive to the vulnerabilities of juveniles may aid in the reduction of recidivism.

The research question guiding this study was the following: What are the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating?

The sections in this chapter include the study setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, results, and summary.

### **Setting**

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, all interviews were carried out virtually through the Zoom platform. Virtual interviews were conducted to protect both participants and interviewer from possible infection due to the Coronavirus.

To maintain each participant's anonymity, I limited my use of Zoom to only the audio features during the interview. There were no events related to the study that took place in

the private lives of the participants or within the organizations that could have had an impact on how the findings of the study were interpreted.

### **Demographics**

In total, there were nine people who participated in the study, and they came from different parts of the United States. The participants ranged in age from 19 to 25 and were all former juvenile offenders. Two of the participants were 19-years-old, one was 22-years-old, two were 23- years-old, three were 24-years-old, and one was 25-years-old. Of the nine participants, five identified as males and four identified as females. Interviews did not result in the collection of any demographic data because that information was not pertinent to answering the research question.

### **Data Collection**

In total, there were nine participants who took part in this study. One interview was conducted with each participant. In accordance with the method outlined in Chapter 3, I made sure to obtain a written informed consent form before the interview. Interviews were conducted virtually in a secure environment to gather the data needed. During the interviews, there was no one else present besides the interviewer and the participants. During the interviews, I was secluded in a private room for confidentiality reasons. The length of the interviews varied anywhere from 60 to 90 minutes according to how much the participants talked. The average interview length was 65 minutes. The information was audio recorded with Zoom's recording capability, with a backup recording on my mobile device, and then it was transcribed. There were no variations from Chapter 3 regarding data collection. The only unusual thing that happened was that I had one

particular participant interview scheduled, and at the scheduled time, I signed into Zoom, but the participant did not. I texted the participant to confirm their participation and to remind them of the interview. I waited on Zoom for a total of 20 minutes without receiving a response before logging out. Four hours later, the participant apologized and said they had mixed up their plans but still wanted to take part. When they called me after getting home, I was able to conduct the interview that day later than planned.

### **Data Analysis**

After using Zoom to conduct the recorded audio interview, I transcribed the interviews using the transcription option that Zoom provides. After that, I downloaded the transcription and copied it into a Microsoft Word document so that I could review it. I made sure that the acquired information was comprehensible and correct by reading over each document, editing any misspelled terms, and correcting any grammar errors that I found. Because I wanted to ensure that I had a complete understanding of the information, I repeated this procedure multiple times. I then emailed the transcript to the participants in accordance with the informed consent form. This allowed the participants to verify that they agreed with the transcription of the interview and to confirm that there were no errors within what was written in the transcript. The participants replied to my emails, and I adjusted in accordance with their feedback.

Once the transcripts were verified by the participants, I printed out the transcripts for the first round of coding. Using highlighters of various colors and post-it notes, I read through each interview so that I could identify codes. After I had completed performing this task manually, I used Microsoft Word to build a chart that would show the results

broken down by participant and by interview question. To take notes, I made use of the Word comments feature.

During the second round of coding, I used the same chart that I had previously generated in Microsoft Word to look over the codes for each participant. I then organized codes and categories individually for each participant, placing the codes and categories in separate columns. After that, I went over the data and highlighted the pieces of data that seemed to be related to one another or similar (i.e., better myself or fear of returning to institution). I reviewed the codes for two more rounds using the same chart and original codes from the beginning rounds of coding process. Some examples of identified codes found in the data were not getting in trouble again, made changes in my behavior, stopped hanging out with old people, socialize with positive peers, received therapy, functional member of society, skills learned in community institution, and more family involvement.

Following identifying the codes, a thorough review of the data was conducted. In this iteration, I conducted an analysis to identify codes that could be clustered into distinct categories. I conducted a comparative analysis of the codes to identify similarities in relation to the research question. Upon reviewing the codes for every transcript, I commenced the process of identifying and marking the words that exhibited resemblance to one another. For example, the codes behavioral stuff, new person, not get in trouble, make changes in my behavior, not getting in trouble again, desire to show family and friends I changed were observed to exhibit similarities, and were thus categorized as

changed behavior. The procedure was iterated until all codes were systematically classified, yielding a total of more than 15 distinct categories.

Following the development of categories, the subsequent step involved the evaluation of emergent themes from the data. With the research question as the primary focus, I commenced the analysis of the categories and sought to identify recurring patterns and themes within them. Upon identifying recurring patterns within the aforementioned categories, I proceeded to assign labels to these patterns, henceforth referred to as themes. Theme 1, behavior modification contributed to prevention of recidivism was developed from categories such as changed behaviors and interpersonal views. Theme 2, specialized programs incorporating family involvement may reduce recidivism was developed from categories such as family involvement and struggle with programs. Theme 3, receptivity to program connected to prevention of recidivism was developed from categories such as new coping skills and changed lifestyle. Theme 4, interpersonal perceptions connected to involvement with resources prevented recidivism was developed from categories such as aftercare choices and how people see me. Theme 5, perceptions from others impacted behavior and the connection to recidivism was developed from categories such as new attitude and society views. Theme 6, being involved in communities helped prevent recidivism was developed from categories such as community activities and changed lifestyle. Theme 7, reliable adults prevented recidivism was developed from categories such as invested adults and new coping skills. Theme 8, fear of returning to institutions prevented recidivism was developed from categories such as treatment resistance and exposure to negativity. Theme 9, desire to

become a better person linked to decrease in recidivistic behavior was developed from categories such as accomplished goals and lifestyle alternatives.

The codes that correspond to the themes that have been identified are as follows:

Theme 1 consisted of codes such as behavioral stuff, new person, not get in trouble, desire to show friends and family I changed, I never want to go back, not get in trouble again, keeping my return home at the forefront of my mind. Theme 2 codes included willing to help me, treated me differently, proud of me for completing the program, more family involvement, find different ways to incorporate the juvenile's family and go back home to your family. Theme 3 codes included positive ways to express myself, learn how to communicate differently, life was much easier, new skills, expressed myself, never get in trouble again, practice breathing techniques, counting backwards, skills learned in community institution, and did not have to keep it bottled in. Theme 4 codes included work at the Boys and Girls Club, outpatient services, list of mentors in my community, and help rehabilitate. Theme 5 codes consisted of items such as making the best decisions, never have to go back, make changes, focus on myself, not get in trouble again, doing something positive, and engaging in delinquent behavior slim. Theme 6 codes included start writing music, took up music, doing music, playing the drums, going to the YMCA, exposed to things that are greater, pull kids off the street, sports, and music, create opportunities for kids keeping us busy, and little room for mischievous behavior. Theme 7 codes included always under adult supervision, not acting out, positive ways to express myself learn how to communicate differently, and new skills work. Theme 8 included codes such as life was hard, felt weird, I didn't belong, forced



me to be away from my family, vulnerable to the negativity, right back in the spot again, and different worlds. Theme 9 codes included going to my outpatient, stayed on the straight and narrow, start attending church, graduate from high school, get a job, and give back to community.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

#### **Credibility**

To establish and maintain credibility during the interviews, I asked the participants clarifying questions to ensure I had a full understanding of their answers to the interview questions. Interview transcripts were sent to the participants via email in order to verify that they agreed with the transcribed versions of the responses they had submitted. Adjustments were made in accordance with their feedback.

#### **Transferability**

I wanted to explore perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating through the course of this research. For this study, I conducted interviews with nine different individuals; nevertheless, the findings of this research may also apply to other individuals who were formerly classified as juvenile delinquents. This research also has the potential to address the perspectives of juveniles when developing community institutions intended to assist juveniles. This research may be used to educate professionals working in the field of human services regarding the ways in which they might collaborate with former juvenile offenders to enhance the resources and services offered by community institutions.

**Dependability**

To ensure dependability, an audit trail was established by maintaining a record of all of the relevant notes and documents throughout the study. The research was conducted in the same format with each participant to maintain consistency. I used the transcription feature on the Zoom platform to transcribe the interviews, manually checked for grammatical errors, and asked the participants to check the data for accuracy. All of the participants met the criteria of having lived in the United States, were between the ages of 19 and 25, and had previously been in a community institution. I carried out the plan for the analysis of the data to the letter, just as it was described in Chapter 3.

**Confirmability**

To ensure confirmability during the process of data analysis and coding, the only information I used was that which I acquired from the participants. Using the data from the study, I conducted analysis by coding the data, developing categories, and developing related themes. I received interview confirmations from the participants, and I bracketed my knowledge from previous work history with juvenile delinquents, which might have influenced the study topic using a journal. I did this to make sure that my personal biases did not get introduced into the data that were collected. Before beginning the research, I ensured that I had complied with all the ethical requirements mentioned in Chapter 3 that were set forth by Walden University.

**Results**

To effectively present the data, I classified codes into a total of 18 different research-related categories and then identified themes that also related to the research

question. The themes I identified were the following: (a) behavior modification contributed to prevention of recidivism, (b) specialized programs incorporating family involvement may reduce recidivism, (c) receptivity to program connected to prevention of recidivism, (d) interpersonal perceptions connected to involvement with resources prevented recidivism, (e) perceptions from others impacted behavior and the connection to recidivism, (f) being involved in communities helped prevent recidivism (g) reliable adults prevented recidivism, (h) fear of returning to institutions prevented recidivism, and (i) desire to become a better person linked to decrease in recidivistic behavior. All nine themes were directly related to the research question.

### **Behavior Modification Contributed to Prevention of Recidivism**

During the interview, the participants mentioned behavior modification in a variety of ways. The idea of behavior modification appeared in response to more than one of the interview questions. Participant 0119 stated, “because I was sent away, I realized that I needed to make changes in my behavior and that is what kept me from getting in trouble again after I left the program.” Participant 0201 shared, “I really needed to get my act together otherwise this would be my life moving forward.” Participant 0126 stated, “I learned about my behaviors and how it negatively impacted my community, I was applying all the skills that I learned in the community institution.” Participant 0123 said, “I learned skills to express myself and how to talk to people about my needs instead of doing the bad things that I was doing to get placed.” Participant 0129 stated, “make changes to my overall life and not get in trouble again.” As per the accounts of the participants, their reasoning were put to the test during their stay in community

institutions. They realized that modifying their behavior would serve as a deterrent against being readmitted to the community institution, thereby preventing recidivism.

### **Specialized Programs Incorporating Family Involvement May Reduce Recidivism**

The participants indicated that community institutions needed to incorporate family involvement to increase the desire to participate in the programs and reduce recidivism. Participant 0125 shared,

I think that if it is your first time getting in trouble you shouldn't automatically be sent away from home. Maybe if they would have started me with outpatient first, I might have stood a better chance because I would have been close to my family and getting help and not close with all the people I used to get in trouble with.

Participant 0201 stated,

Maybe keeping the kid in the home and offering some type of family therapy or in home services where you still get to be in your natural surrounding but getting the help that you need. I feel like being sent away made it more obvious, so I think resources that are created to help juveniles and their families need to be a little bit more discreet. I don't see any value in taking the kid away from their families to teach them a lesson. It might be more important to find out what type of assistance the parents need and provide them with those tools. So that they can raise their own child.

Participant 0119 stated

Moving forward if they want to continue to create community institutions, they need to find different ways to incorporate the juvenile's family into the program

so that there is more of an inclusive approach and more investment from the juvenile instead of just going through the motions.

According to the participants, more family involvement in community institutions and resources would contribute to the juvenile being more invested in the program and helping in reducing recidivism.

### **Receptivity to Program Connected to Prevention of Recidivism**

Receptivity to being in community institutions and its connection to preventing recidivism appeared to be a common theme amongst the responses that participants gave during their interviews. Participant 0123 stated,

I mentioned before when I would get upset one of the things that I would do is curse and throw things. My therapist and I practiced breathing techniques and counting backwards whenever I found myself getting really upset to help calm me down. That is a skill that I learned in the community institution that I now use when I am home because there are still things that get me upset. The only difference is now I am not throwing things or cursing people out instead I focus on my breathing and count backwards”.

Participant 0118 stated, “community programs after school stuff kept me off the streets.” Participant 0129 stated, “I am just grateful that I took everything they taught me in the community institution and at the YMCA seriously and made better choices for myself otherwise I would not be interviewing with you today.” Participant 0126 shared, “those resources help keep me from getting into trouble because I was busy, I really had no time to get caught up in any negative behavior because every hour of my day was

practically accounted for.” According to the participants, being open to the participating in community institution contributed to their success in the community institution, which ultimately led to reducing recidivism.

### **Interpersonal Perceptions Connected to Involvement with Resources Prevented Recidivism**

During the interviews, the participants provided replies that demonstrated self-reflection in the decision-making process, which led to their interaction with community resources. Participant 0119 shared,

I felt like there was a stigma following me because I was away for behavioral stuff. But I was determined to prove everybody wrong and really show that I could better myself. I spent a lot of time volunteering and looking for jobs that would allow for me to be able to give back to my community.

Participant 0118 stated,

I have come a long way. So, I was not really around the right people before I went in. And when you go into a place like that you kind of see what you don't well not everybody does but for me you kind of see what not to be around and how not to be around it. So, I kind of took up music while I was in there. Kind of started writing music and everything. So, once I left there, I started doing music.

Participant 0129 stated,

Learning how people viewed me currently and knowing that is not how I wanted to be viewed forced me to listen to the things the staff were saying. So that I could make changes to my overall life and not get in trouble again.

Participant 0123 stated,

I really liked therapy and after leaving the program I couldn't keep my same therapist. But I would start up with therapists that continue the work I was doing in the community institution. This to me was the most powerful resource because I was able to talk about the things that annoyed me and devise a plan with the professional on how to address those things so that I wasn't acting out. Therapy helped me from getting into trouble because I had an outlet. I was able to talk to someone about the things that were frustrating me, so I didn't have to keep it bottled in.

Participant 0126 shared,

When I was young, I always felt like I had to do everything on my own and because I consulted with no one when making decisions I made a lot of bad decisions that ultimately got me into trouble and sent away from my family. I come from a family of seven and my mom was so busy dealing with my other siblings she had no time for my mistakes, and I made lots of them. It's when I went into the community institution and really focused on what they were teaching me that I learned I don't have to do everything by myself and that my mom doesn't have to be the only person I rely on. My grandmother was always there trying to help me but again I wanted to do things on my own. But in going through group therapy and all of the other lessons in the community institution I learned that asking for help is okay and it proved itself to be true.

According to the participants, focusing on the consequences of their juvenile delinquency-related activities enabled them to participate in resources that reduced recidivism.

### **Perceptions From Others Impacted Behavior and the Connection to Recidivism**

Behavior and the connection to recidivism were both influenced by the perceptions of others. Participant 0123 stated,

Post-conviction everybody I knew treated me differently but in a good way. They were surprised that I have finished something that I started because that has never been the case for me. As a result, people that used to say no to me all the time were willing to help me and accomplishing my goals.

Participant 0119 stated, “people expected me to just be the same person unchanged making mistakes over and over again. It was like I was not fixed, and I could tell just by the way that they looked at me or the things that they said they did not see me as a new person.” Participants 0126 stated,

Even though I was done with the program there were still other things that needed to be monitored to make sure that I didn't get in trouble again, so it was like they were tracking me which in hindsight I think really helped me.

Participant 1211 stated, “people look at you different just because of your charges.” The participants claimed that the simple presence of an outside perspective, whether positive or negative, prompted them to modify their behavior.



### **Being Involved in Communities Helped Prevent Recidivism**

The participants indicated community involvement as a factor to preventing recidivism. Participant 0126 shared, “my probation officer used to take me to talk to younger kids about why they need to stay out of trouble I really like that part because it made me feel like I was an activist of some sort.” Participant 0129 stated,

After I left the community institution I got involved with the YMCA in my neighborhood. They have a big swimming pool and I learned how to swim. From there I started using swimming as an exercise and then I got so good at it I actually became a lifeguard. My supervisor took a liking to me and helped raise money to get me certified to become a teacher and I would help teach little kids how to swim. Being involved with the YMCA really helps keep me out of trouble because I was doing something positive with my time.

Participant 0119 stated,

I worked at the boys and Girls Club so I was able to work with youth and share my experiences on why they should listen to their parents and the adults in their lives so that they will not get in trouble.

Community involvement appeared to reduce the participants' idle time and allowed them to do something productive with their time, resulting in the reduction of recidivism.

### **Reliable Adults Prevented Recidivism**

The participants identified reliable adults in their lives as being important in preventing recidivism. Participant 0126 stated,

When I got out of the community institution there was a team that was still following me to make sure that I was applying all of the skills that I learned while in the institution. That was helpful because I didn't have to do things on my own, I had help. Having a team of people supporting me and the changes that I wanted to make and needed to make in my life. My probation officer the staff from the program I was in my therapist and my grandma.

Participant 0129 stated,

My mom worked a lot so there was never any adult at home but at the YMCA I was always under adult supervision. So, the chances of me engaging in delinquent behavior was very slim to none. I would do my homework while I was there, swim, socialized with positive peers and wait for my mom to pick me up after she got off of work.

Participant 0125 shared, "I had a good lawyer who was able to spare me the consequences I deserve and that's ultimately what ended up putting me on the straight and narrow." Participant 0123 stated,

I have family members letting me use their car teaching me how to drive and my mom who used to say no all the time would take me to different places to apply for jobs because she was so proud of me for completing the program.

According to the participants, having reliable adults in their lives made them feel supported. The support from the reliable adults aided in the prevention of recidivism.

### **Fear of Returning to Institutions Prevented Recidivism**

The apprehension of reentering community institutions served as a deterrent for recidivating. Participant 0201 stated,

The most important factor that prevented me from recidivating would have to be the fear of having to return to that type of community institution. As I mentioned earlier, I hated every aspect of it, so my goal was to make sure I did everything necessary to never to have to return.

Participant 0129 stated, “I was serious about not being sent away from home.” Participant 0118 shared, “I don't want to get in trouble anymore. For me I like to learn from my mistakes so like just grow up and really try to make sure when I get out, I do not go back.” Participants 0119 stated, “I was scared when I was in the program, and I knew that when I left it was a place I never wanted to go to.” Fear, according to the participants, was a driving factor in their decision to avoid returning to community institutions, ultimately contributing to a decrease in recidivism.

### **Desire to Become a Better Person Linked to Decrease in Recidivistic Behavior**

The participants indicated their desire of improving their personal character as being associated with a reduction in the likelihood of recidivating. Participant 0201 stated, “it was me that made the conscious decision that I wanted to do better and as a result did not engage in negative things that some of my peers in the community institution were engaging in.” Participant 0129 stated,

I really use the time to focus on myself and learn why my way of doing things had been getting me in trouble and what I can do differently to never have to return to

a place like that again. I could make changes to my overall life and not get in trouble again.

Participant 0118 shared,

I know this is one thing I want to work on as I better myself. I want to like I said earlier create outlets for kids who are in areas like I live in. I want to build up those areas in a positive way and I know it's possible because I've seen that.

Participant 0119 stated, "I needed to make changes in my behavior and that is what kept me from getting in trouble again." According to the perspectives of the individuals involved, individuals who repeatedly engage in criminal behavior are perceived as morally deficient. The individuals expressed a desire for self-improvement and recognized that modifying their behavior could potentially lead to a reduction in recidivism.

Through conducting interviews with former juvenile delinquents, I identified nine themes. All of the themes may be interpreted as the former juvenile offenders having favorable attitudes of the community's institutions and resources, which served as a factor in preventing them from recidivating. Further analysis of the results will be discussed in Chapter 5.

### **Summary**

In Chapter 4, an overview was provided on the setting and demographics of the study, followed by a detailed description of the data collection and analysis methods employed. The chapter also discussed the evidence of trustworthiness of the study, and I presented the results obtained. The nine themes discussed in the study can be used to

answer the research question, which pertains to the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents regarding community institutions and resources that prevented them from recidivating.

The primary theme that emerged was behavior modification contributed to prevention of recidivism. The participants expressed their cognizance that the sole means of ceasing their involvement in misconduct would be to discontinue engaging in delinquent conduct. The second theme that emerged was specialized programs incorporating family involvement may reduce recidivism. The study participants were able to discern that involving their families in the program would prove advantageous in mitigating negative behavior. This is because the family unit plays a pivotal role in providing support and implementing structure within the household. The third theme that emerged was receptivity to program connected to prevention of recidivism. Merely participating in the program did not suffice; active receptivity and engagement with the provided services were also necessary. The fourth theme that emerged was interpersonal perceptions connected to involvement with resources prevented recidivism. The impact of participants' self-perception and self-talk on their engagement with services was significant. Encouraging positive self-talk facilitated engagement in community institution services to ensure successful completion of community institution. The fifth theme that emerged was perceptions from others impacted behavior and the connection to recidivism. The perception of others, regardless of whether it was positive, negative, or neutral, served as a motivating factor for the individual to actively participate in and successfully complete the program. The sixth theme that emerged was being involved in

communities helped prevent recidivism. Several participants highlighted community involvement as a proactive measure to prevent idle time. Engaging in constructive activities proved to be effective in reducing the likelihood of reoffending. The seventh theme that emerged was reliable adults prevented recidivism. The participants identified reliable adults in their lives and attributed their presence to the positive change in their behavior. The eighth theme that emerged was fear of returning to institutions prevented recidivism. The participants said the fear of being institutionalized within a community setting served as a motivating factor for them to maintain good behavior. The final theme that emerged was desire to become a better person linked to decrease in recidivistic behavior. The participants exhibited a strong aspiration for self-improvement, which motivated them to adopt a proactive mindset aimed at promoting positive transformation, rather than engaging in delinquent conduct. The study found that participants held diverse perspectives regarding community institutions and resources that prevented their recidivism. However, despite the differences in their views, there were commonalities in their responses, suggesting that the community institutions and resources were effective in preventing recidivism.

Chapter 5 will involve an interpretation of the study's findings, a discussion of its limitations, recommendations, and an analysis of its implications. This study's findings may guide future research on former juvenile delinquents' opinions of community institutions and resources that prevented them from recidivating. Finally, an evaluation will be conducted to determine how the findings of this study can equip professionals in

the field of human services with the essential resources required to effectively engage with juvenile offenders. There were no discrepant cases found during analysis.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this generic qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents as to how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating. This study was important because understanding the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents regarding how community institutions and resources helped to prevent them from recidivating may provide the information needed to assist in developing programs that are effective in decreasing juvenile recidivism. Additionally, the study may contribute to social change by providing guidelines that enhance the human services provided at a community institution.

The areas that will be discussed in this chapter are the interpretation of the findings, the limitation of the study, recommendations, implications, and the conclusion.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

#### **Behavior Modification Contributed to Prevention of Recidivism**

One of the primary themes that emerged from the study was that behavior modification contributed to prevention of recidivism. This theme was consistent with the literature examined in Chapter 2, which posited that community institutions play a role in mitigating juvenile recidivism by facilitating the rehabilitation of the juvenile (Harper et al., 2021). According to Vaugh et al. (2022), rehabilitation can be observed when the juvenile ceases to participate in delinquent behavior. According to Walker et al. (2022), the placement of the juvenile in a community institution has facilitated a positive change



in behavior, resulting in a reduction of recidivistic behavior. Participants in the interviews acknowledged modifying their behavior in order to avoid returning to community institutions. The findings of the study were consistent with the existing body of literature.

This theme also aligns with SLT. Bandura (1977) posited that SLT places significant emphasis on human behavior as a fundamental construct. This theory underscores the dynamic and multifaceted nature of behavior, highlighting the social and environmental factors that contribute to its development and manifestation (Bandura,1977). The participants reported implementing modifications in their behavior to avoid reoffending. The alteration in behavior corresponds with the motivation stage of SLT. According to Bandura (1977), juveniles exhibit motivation to modify their behavior when they can recognize a favorable outcome as a result of their actions. The present study verifies the existence of a correlation between behavior modification and SLT.

### **Specialized Programs Incorporating Family Involvement May Reduce Recidivism**

The theme specialized programs incorporating family involvement may reduce recidivism partially aligns with the literature from Chapter 2. The participants in my research expressed a desire for their family to be involved in their treatment at community institutions. The participants indicated that their families' involvement in community institutions and resources was a motivator for recidivism reduction. The literature concentrated on how exposure to familial violence affects recidivism (Weir et al., 2021). Although the literature in Chapter 2 did not specifically reference specialized programs with familial involvement, it did discuss family involvement being essential to complete programs when a juvenile enters a community institution (Zettler & Craig,

2022). The participants expressed a desire for their family to be included in their rehabilitative treatment for delinquency, but only in a home-based setting.

This theme aligns with SLT. Environmental surroundings is one of the major themes of SLT (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) posited that an individual's behavior is influenced by the presence or absence of certain factors in their environment. For instance, being raised by both parents versus being raised by a single parent can create environments that have a significant impact on an individual's behavior. Regarding this theme, the environmental setting would entail specialized programs that incorporate family involvement. The participants in the research demonstrated an ability to recognize the behaviors that resulted in their involvement with community institutions.

Additionally, they acknowledged the potential for reduced recidivism through the involvement of their families in specialized programs. By establishing a correlation between specialized programming involving families and a decrease in recidivism, it can be inferred that such programs have a positive impact on reducing reoffending rates.

### **Receptivity to Program Connected to Prevention of Recidivism**

This theme aligned with the research presented in Chapter 2, which stated that involvement in community institutions can serve as a preventive measure against recidivism. Receptivity to community institutions and resources was discussed by many of the participants during their interviews. Hancock (2017) established a correlation between receptiveness towards community institutions and resources and the prevention of recidivism. According to Bolin (2022), the provision of suitable rehabilitation programs can reduce or eliminate recidivism among juveniles. The participants in the

interview reported that, upon making a deliberate choice to adopt an open and receptive attitude, they began to observe the advantages of the program and the favorable transformations taking place in their personal lives.

This theme aligns with SLT. Bandura (1977) proposed that SLT consists of four stages: attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. The act of paying attention can be observed in the context of a juvenile residing in a community institution, where attention is demonstrated through active listening during educational instruction. The phenomenon of retention is observed when the juvenile can recall the information that has been imparted to them during their stay at the community institution. Reproduction is manifested when the juvenile demonstrates comprehension of conveyed knowledge or instruction by successfully executing assigned activities and adapting conduct accordingly. The final component of SLT pertains to the aspect of motivation. According to Bandura (1977), the presence of attention, retention, and reproduction alone is insufficient to bring about changes in behavior. Motivation is also a factor that must be present in order for behavioral changes to be observed. Demonstrating receptiveness towards the program entails internalizing and implementing the various phases of SLT while actively participating in community institutions and resources. The research participants demonstrated an ability to recognize their openness to the program, indicating a link between receptiveness to the program's benefits and a reduced likelihood of recidivism.

## **Interpersonal Perceptions Connected to Involvement with Resources Prevented Recidivism**

This theme did not align with the literature in Chapter 2. During the interviews, the participants discussed how their self-perceptions influenced their decision to engage with resources. It was imperative to ascertain the factors that precipitated their placement within the community institution, necessitating the utilization of resources to address these issues and prevent recidivism. Chapter 2 of the literature review primarily emphasized the factors that contributed to recidivism, with limited attention given to the juveniles interpersonal perceptions concerning resources. Community institutions have been identified as a means of rehabilitation by scholars such as Hancock (2017) and Walker et al. (2022). Conversely, Walker and Herting (2020) and Breckwoldt et al. (2022) posited that juveniles placed in community institutions exhibit a higher rate of recidivism. The existing body of literature presents divergent views on the relationship between community institutions and resources and recidivism. Some scholars contended that these factors serve as protective measures against recidivism, while others argued that they exacerbated the problem. The study participants reported that their interpersonal perceptions were the key factor that led to their involvement in resources that ultimately prevented their recidivism.

This theme is compatible with SLT. SLT is characterized by the combination of cognitive, behavioral, and environmental variables (Bandura, 1977). Bandura (1977) emphasized that behavioral skills, personal behavioral expectations (also known as confidence or self-efficacy), and environmental setting all play roles in human behavior.

The participants focused on their interpersonal perspectives to determine their connection with resources, which is what connects this theme to SLT. Interpersonal perceptions are equal to self-efficacy, and the participants acquired the practice of looking within to make judgments that will help them prevent recidivism.

### **Perceptions From Others Impacted Behavior and the Connection to Recidivism**

During the interviews, the participants provided insights into how their behaviors were influenced by the perceptions of others. Certain individuals displayed a discerning and derogatory demeanor, which consequently acted as a catalyst for the participants to improve their behavior and refute the skeptics. Some participants were motivated to continue their positive behavior and avoid recidivism based on the positive perceptions of others. This theme is consistent with the current literature on how perceptions from others influence the behavior of juveniles. Kurlychek et al. (2022) affirmed that employing evidence-based intervention strategies in the treatment of juvenile offenders can mitigate the negative effects of stigmatization and lead to a decrease in recidivism rates. The manner in which juveniles conduct themselves to prevent recidivism can be influenced by the perceptions of others, whether they are positive or negative (Bosomprah, 2023). The influence of others' perceptions, whether favorable or unfavorable, has the capacity to affect the behavior of juveniles in their efforts to avoid reoffending.

This theme aligns with the principles of SLT. One of the fundamental tenets of SLT is that individuals acquire knowledge and skills through observation and by processing information from their surroundings (Bandura, 1977). According to Bandura (1977), individuals who are subjected to positive reinforcement tend to exhibit higher

levels of self-confidence. The receipt of positive reinforcements is consistent with the environmental setting theme in SLT, which impacts the behavioral tendencies that a juvenile desires to demonstrate. The presence of various components of SLT is apparent within the given theme.

### **Being Involved in Communities Helped Prevent Recidivism**

The involvement of juveniles in their communities in preventing recidivism aligns with existing literature. In interviews with participants, their local community involvement emerged as a crucial factor in their rehabilitation journey. They emphasized the benefits of having a positive scheduled routine, which was made possible through their engagement in community activities. Cavanagh (2022) affirmed that active participation in community initiatives helps to reduce the likelihood of reoffending among juveniles. Supporting this view, Kubik and Boxer (2020) stated that juveniles who actively participated in community-based programs and activities had a lower risk of reoffending compared to those who did not engage in such initiatives. The positive structure and support provided by community involvement played a role in reducing the risk of reoffending. By providing structured activities and opportunities for skill development, community programs effectively help juveniles decrease their idle time, which, in turn, contributes to a decrease in recidivism rates.

This theme aligns with SLT. The concept of community involvement is closely associated with the fundamental tenets of the SLT, which asserts that people acquire knowledge and skills by means of observing, emulating, and engaging with others in social settings (Bandura, 1977). Through participation in community-based initiatives

such as YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club, individuals who are involved in the criminal justice system are afforded the opportunity to engage with constructive role models, acquire new skills, and observe prosocial conduct. The provision of constructive models and supportive communities facilitates the acquisition and implementation of new behaviors, thereby promoting the development of healthier coping mechanisms, enhancing decision-making abilities, and mitigating the likelihood of reoffending.

### **Reliable Adults Prevented Recidivism**

The theme reliable adults prevented recidivism does not align with the findings of Chapter 2. The study participants elaborated on the role of dependable adults in their lives in preventing recidivism during the course of their interviews. Upon completing community institutions and utilizing available resources, individuals recognized the need for assistance that exceeded their personal capabilities. The presence of dependable adults, including committed family members and juvenile probation officers, proved instrumental in facilitating constructive transformations. Chapter 2 of the literature review centers on the absence of adult supervision and its correlation with recidivism. Kim et al. (2022) stated that the absence of supervision can result in opportunities for deviant behavior. Moreover, the literature centers on the adverse impact that adults have on the lives of juveniles. According to Newman et al. (2022), juvenile offenders tend to engage in similar criminal activities as the adults they have been exposed to. The literature essentially elucidated adverse associations between adults and juveniles. However, the participants recognized the adults as dependable and instrumental in the deterrence of reoffending.

The theme is aligned with SLT. One of the main purposes of SLT is to provide positive role models (Bandura, 1977). The purpose of role models is largely based on the assumption that people mimic the behaviors they watch (Bandura, 1977). The participants' identification of trustworthy persons in their lives aligns with the SLT goal of having positive role models.

### **Fear of Returning to Institutions Prevented Recidivism**

During the participant interviews, a recurring topic that appeared was the participants' fear of going back to institutions. The participants cited a variety of reasons of why they never wanted to go back to a community facility, including the fact that they would be away from home, the fear of the staff and their peers, and other issues. This theme is confirmed by current literature. Juveniles did not feel respected or safe in the community institutions to which they were committed, and they indicated that personnel required additional training to adequately address their needs and ensure a supportive environment. (Enujioke et al., 2023). Narvey et al. (2021) stated that juveniles' perceptions of the community institution influenced their views on their future and contributed to their desire to avoid returning to a community institution. Fearful juveniles seemed to take greater precautions to avoid returning to the facility, which contributed to a reduction in the rate of recidivism.

This theme aligns with SLT. According to Bandura (1977), motivation is derived from the anticipated outcomes of a particular action. Bandura posited that individuals can modify their behaviors to attain a desired reward through the processes of attention,



retention, and reproduction. Regarding this topic, the adolescents employed fear as a driving force to avoid reentry into a community institution.

### **Desire to Become a Better Person Linked to Decrease in Recidivistic Behavior**

During the interviews, the participants articulated their desire to improve themselves as individuals in order to reduce the likelihood of recidivism. The participants shared the effects of being assigned to a community-based facility on their personal lives, as well as the recognition of the potential of reducing recidivism rates to achieve positive outcomes. This approach can lead to successful reintegration into their homes, where they can become more effective members of their families and communities. This theme aligned with current literature. According to Liu and Orrick (2022), juveniles who exhibited prosocial attitudes demonstrated a reduced likelihood of engaging in criminal activities. Lee et al. (2022) revealed a significant association between prosocial attitudes and a reduction in recidivism. The aspiration to enhance oneself in order to deter reoffending is consistent with existing literature and demonstrates a correlation between the two.

This theme aligns with SLT. According to Bandura (1977), an individual is more likely to modify their behavior if there are positive rewards associated with the behavior change they are attempting to make. This theme emphasizes how the participants have the desire to improve themselves as individuals. The desire to be better is the driving force behind every effort to make that transformation. Because each of the processes that the participant outlined is an essential component of SLT, the theme is consistent with SLT.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study has limitations that need to be considered. The population studied consisted of individuals who had previously engaged in delinquent behavior during their youth and were currently aged between 19- and 25-years-old. Limiting a study to a specific age group can have several drawbacks for a variety of reasons. The inability to generalize the results to other age groups or populations is a possible limitation of this study. In addition, concentrating solely on the examination of a single age group may lead to the omission of important developmental or contextual factors that can influence the behaviors and outcomes of individuals of different ages. In addition, focusing on a specific age group may lead to overlooking potential differences within that age group.

The study required participants to meet specific criteria, including being within the age range of 19 to 25 and having a history of juvenile delinquency resulting in placement in a community institution. Additionally, participants were required to have resided within the United States. The limitation of establishing participation criteria for a study is the potential for restricting the diversity and inclusivity of the sample, which may subsequently affect the generalizability and applicability of the findings. This limitation can also be considered as exclusionary, as it has the potential to omit individuals who may possess relevance to the research question, thereby failing to capture significant perspectives.

Multiple social media platforms, including LinkedIn and Instagram, was utilized for recruitment purposes. A flyer was produced to delineate the objectives of the research and the criteria for eligibility to partake in the study, as well as to provide details on the

means of contacting the researcher in the event of interest in participation. The utilization of a flyer as a means of research recruitment presents various limitations. The distribution of flyers is characterized by a restricted scope, potentially hindering the researcher's ability to effectively reach a diverse audience. The sole use of social media platforms for participant recruitment resulted in a constrained range of individuals, thereby impeding the inclusivity of diverse perspectives and potentially compromising the applicability of the research outcomes to a broader population. There may exist significant differences between individuals who choose to respond to a study recruitment flyer and those who do not encounter or engage with the flyer. The efficacy of disseminating information through flyers may be compromised if it fails to resonate with the intended target audience, leading to diminished response rates or the recruitment of participants who do not align with the research objectives.

A semistructured, one-on-one interview protocol was designed and used to collect the data from all study participants. By employing a one-on-one interview protocol, I may have missed the chance to capture diverse perspectives or group dynamics that may have emerged in a group context. Alternative methods of data acquisition, such as focus groups, might have yielded a broader scope of insights. The use of a semistructured interview protocol may lead to potential researcher biases into the process of data collection. The researcher's interpretation, questioning approach, or personal biases may inadvertently influence the participants' responses, thereby compromising the objectivity of the study.

The time frame allocated for each interview, ranging from 60 to 90 minutes, may have imposed constraints on the extent and comprehensiveness of the data that could be gathered from the participants. There may exist certain subject matters or facets that have not been thoroughly examined, potentially resulting in the omission of significant insights or perspectives.

In this study, I utilized the participants' subjective perceptions, and I presented their provided information. The presence of biases, inaccuracies, or incomplete information has the potential to affect the reliability and validity of the data.

The interview protocol was validated by an expert panel comprised of subject matter experts. Validating the interview protocol through the review of an expert panel is an important step, but it may not convey the participants' perspectives and experiences. Incorporating feedback from potential participants or conducting a pilot interview with a small sample could provide more thorough validation.

The Zoom platform was used to facilitate semistructured one-on-one interviews, with the audio feature used to protect participant anonymity. Using Zoom for one-on-one interviews provides convenience and anonymity through audio-only participation, but it may have limitations. Technical issues, connectivity issues, and the absence of nonverbal signals in the audio-only format could affect the quality and depth of the collected data.

It is essential to acknowledge these limitations because they can affect the reliability, validity, and generalizability of the study. Future research could consider addressing these limitations by incorporating a variety of sampling techniques,

employing multiple data acquisition strategies, and implementing additional validation techniques.

### **Recommendations**

The effectiveness of community institutions and resources remains a subject of discourse in relation to juvenile delinquency and the deterrence of recidivism. Therefore, I recommend conducting additional research on this matter. Despite the existence of studies pertaining to the perceptions of former juvenile offenders towards community institutions and resources, more comprehensive research is warranted in this area to gain insights into the effectiveness of community institutions and resources in mitigating recidivism. If this study were to be replicated, it would be advisable to augment the sample size in order to generate a larger body of data, and to conduct the research in an in-person setting.

An additional suggestion would be to use a quantitative approach in conducting the research. Quantitative research methodology enables the utilization of statistical analysis techniques to detect patterns, associations, and statistical significance (Locke et al., 2022). Adopting this approach can facilitate a more systematic and impartial evaluation of the subject matter under investigation. Furthermore, it is common for quantitative research to adhere to a methodical and uniform methodology, which minimizes the likelihood of partiality and personal interpretation during the gathering and evaluation of data. External perceptions, behavioral patterns, and intervention effectiveness are some variables that could be measured. I recommend examining the influence of external perceptions on individual behavior and the relationship between

these perceptions and recidivism. This could involve measuring and analyzing the perceptions of others (such as peers, authority figures, and members of the community) and examining their impact on juvenile behavior. Analyzing juvenile behavior patterns, such as specific behaviors associated with criminal activity, participation in community-based programs, and adherence to positive social norms. This could entail gathering quantitative data on the frequency, duration, or intensity of various behaviors. Evaluating the effectiveness of evidence-based intervention strategies in mitigating the negative effects of stigmatization and decreasing the recidivism rates of juvenile offenders. This may involve measuring the impact of specific interventions on behavior modification and recidivism outcomes.

An additional suggestion would be to carry out the investigation with a more targeted approach, such as concentrating on the viewpoints of former juvenile offenders who self-identify as male or female, or those who belong to the African American demographic. Focusing the study on a particular topic or population can yield significant insights into the attributes, conduct, health consequences, and other variables associated with distinct groups. Through the incorporation of a representative sample and the consideration of a wider context, these investigations produce outcomes that possess practical implications, enlighten policy determinations, and augment our comprehension of public health and communal predicaments.

My final recommendation would be to carry out this investigation and examine longitudinal recidivism. By tracking a cohort of juvenile offenders, a researcher may be able to gain additional insight into the effectiveness of interventions and rehabilitation

efforts. The researcher would have the capacity to collect data on risk and protective factors and their potential correlation with the recidivism rate.

### **Implications**

The present study revealed that, overall, individuals who had previously engaged in delinquent behavior during their youth expressed favorable attitudes towards community institutions and resources, acknowledging their role in deterring recidivism. This discovery suggests that a reduction in recidivism can be achieved through the provision of appropriate resources. The former juvenile offenders demonstrated an ability to recognize the advantages of community institutions and resource accessibility, despite initially holding a negative perspective towards such resources. The research revealed that the involvement of families in the functioning of community institutions can enhance the efficacy of such resources in eliciting favorable outcomes from juvenile individuals who participate in them. The research indicated that, while organizations have positive motives in establishing community institutions and resources for juvenile delinquents, there is a requirement for a more comprehensive approach in the development of these programs. The research indicated that juvenile recidivism has significant adverse consequences, not only at the societal level but also for the broader community. Therefore, tackling recidivism can have a positive impact on society.

The present study contributes to the promotion of positive social change by offering insights into strategies for optimizing the efficacy of community institutions and resources in reducing recidivism rates and facilitating the successful reintegration of juvenile offenders into society. This research may offer assistance to human service

professionals who engage with juvenile offenders in devising strategies to integrate the perspectives of young individuals into their community-based institutions and resources planning, as well as in implementing policy modifications.

Enhancing comprehension of the perspectives of former juvenile offenders can facilitate social change as disseminating this knowledge may furnish valuable insights to aid human service professionals in designing interventions for delinquent juveniles. Possessing this knowledge could fill information voids and provide greater clarity for individuals involved in the development of community institutions and resources for juveniles.

### **Conclusion**

There is a need for further research to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents and the role of community institutions and resources in their rehabilitation. Current literature indicated a lack of progress in considering the perspectives of juveniles when developing community-based interventions. This study aimed to address this gap by providing insights into the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents, thus contributing to the understanding of effective strategies specifically tailored for this population. The findings of the study support previous research on factors influencing recidivism and its reduction, emphasizing the impact of recidivism on families, education, and communities when left unaddressed.

The findings of this study have implications for human service professionals working directly with juvenile delinquents and can inform the development of community institutions and resources that effectively reduce recidivism. The perspectives



shared by former juvenile delinquents highlight the benefits of community-based interventions based on their lived experiences, as well as suggestions for making these resources more inclusive. The participants' willingness to provide suggestions demonstrates the potential of community institutions and resources in positively influencing future juveniles receiving therapeutic services, thereby preventing further recidivism.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

### **Interview Protocol**

Hello (Participant). I'm a doctoral student at Walden University. My name is Mardochee Selvy, but you can call me Che. I'm glad we get to talk today. My interview today is about former juvenile offenders and their perceptions of how community institutions and resources kept them from getting into trouble again. This will be a semistructured interview that will take approximately 60 minutes give or take. After getting your permission, I will record an audio version of our conversation today for research purposes only. You can answer questions however you want to. This interview is private, so I hope you feel comfortable to fully share anything with me. Thank you for signing the consent form that was emailed to you. Please give verbal confirmation that you are still willing to take part in the study as of today. I look forward to learning about your perceptions. Do you need to ask me anything before we start?

### **Interview Questions**

1. What was your experience in a community institution post-conviction like?
2. How did being in a community institution help prevent you from recidivating?
3. What community resources were you involved with post-conviction?
4. How did those community resources help prevent you from recidivating?
5. What other types of resources would you recommend to help keep juvenile delinquents from recidivating?



6. What do you think was the most important factor that prevented you from recidivating?
7. What else would you like to share with me about community institutions and resources that prevented you from recidivating?

**Ending the Interview:** Are there any closing questions or comments you would like to ask or make? Thanks for taking the time to meet me with me today. I will be in touch so you can check that I transcribed the interview accurately. I will also be sending you a summary of the results once the study is completed and my contact information in case you have any questions.

Appendix D: Participant Recruitment Flyer

**Participant Recruitment Flyer**

# Participate In A Juvenile Recidivism Study

## What is this study about?

The proposed research aims to explore the perceptions of former juvenile delinquents and how community institutions and resources prevented them from recidivating

## Why participate?

The information gathered from participants from this study might contribute to positive social change by providing information that can be used to reduce the high rate of juvenile recidivism.



## Who can participate?

- Those with a history of juvenile delinquency and placement in a community institution
- Individuals between the ages of 19 to 25
- United States resident

### Interested in joining?

Please call [REDACTED] or send an email to [REDACTED]

