2020

Dispositional Self-Control and Motherhood: An Investigation into Recidivism

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Abstract

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MS, Walden University, 2011

BSN, Kaplan University, 2010

BSBA, University of Phoenix, 1997

ADN, Kankakee Community College, 1972

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Psychology

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Abstract

The goal of many female offenders when released from prison is reunification with their children. However, resumption of motherhood is a gendered challenge that may increase the risk of recidivism. The purpose of this research was to investigate whether resuming custody of minor children would increase the risk of recidivism or support and maintain desistence. This research is grounded in feminist theory, identity theory, and self-control theory with a quasi-experimental design. The key research question, whether motherhood increased the risk of recidivism, was investigated using a researcher-generated, 18-question research questionnaire. Additionally, the Dispositional Self-Control (DSC) scale consisted of 17 questions to investigate the impulsive behaviors of the participants. Ninety-three participants were chosen for the research and divided into two groups: mothers and nonmothers. A 2x2 chi-square analysis was used to examine the answers from the 18-question survey. Results revealed that motherhood had no influence on the housing, employment, substance abuse, mental illness, and victimization that have been known to influence recidivism among female offenders. The DSC scale also displayed no significant difference between mothers and nonmothers for risk of recidivism. Both mothers and nonmothers had previously recidivated multiple times. Thus, recommendations include improved community resources to assist with negotiating reentry into the community. Positive social change begins with the improving substance use intervention, mental health treatment, improved housing, and employment, which benefits the community, government, and ex-offenders.

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Dedication

The journey toward my dissertation has been a long and tiring one. There were so many times when I just wanted to quit and remain in the nursing profession where I was already doing quite well. However, my mentor and friend, who later became my chair, enticed me to take my education further. He lent his knowledge, guidance, and emotional support when I started to fall apart.   The late Dr. Jack Apsche was the catalyst that helped this dissertation get its start. This dedication to Dr. Apsche is with my deepest gratitude. My late husband, Lyle Bayles, was the shoulders on which I leaned. He kept me focused on my destination. He was not able to finish this journey with me, but I know he and Dr. Apsche is watching from above.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to the extraordinary dissertation committee, Dr. Sandra Caramela-Miller, Dr. Sharon Xeureb, and Dr. Stephen Hampe. I am so grateful for the guidance that each of you provided toward the completion of this project. Dr. Caramela-Miller, first and foremost thank you for stepping up when Dr. Beyer asked you to take Dr. Apache's place as my chair. You are a perfectionist. You would not accept anything less than perfection in my writing. With each step of this process, you provided me with understanding and insight. Thank you for your in-depth knowledge and wisdom, your strict and firm guidance, and taking the time to talk to me, which helped me change my topic to one that was achievable. Thank you to Joan Swart, who took the time out of editing, and running a psychological journal to edit my papers. Last, but certainly not least, thank you to Paige Blossom and Tina Villalobos. We spent numerous hours texting, emailing, and talking on the phone to guide and console each other during the stressful times that we all encountered during this process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Although there were minimal studies regarding female offenders, knowledge from feminist research is now dispersed across numerous areas of psychological areas of science (Eagly & Riger, 2014; Michalsen & Flavin, 2014), with criminality no longer looked at as a man's world (Islam, Banarjee, & Kantun, 2014). Criminology and the role that females have played in criminogenesis had long been misunderstood (Garcia-Hallett, 2019; Jung & LaLonde, 2015). The 1970s showed biases directed toward the female gender as it pertained to criminal behavior and criminal justice (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). Female offenders have unique characteristics and circumstances with risks and protective factors that are a prediction of recidivism (Adams, Morash, Smith, & Cobbina, 2016). For instance, investigating female recidivism related to the resumption of motherhood during parole is worth consideration. Thus, the purpose for conducting this study was to focus on how female criminology affects reentering the community, particularly while resuming motherhood. There is a need to inspire and educate the community, parole officials, and policy makers on the effects that pursuing motherhood could have during the transition from being incarcerated to reentering the community. The results may support minimizing the challenges of reentry, which can result in a potential positive social change for mothers and nonmothers.

This chapter provides a background on the study's topic and the nature of the study, which was a relationship-based, quasi-experimental design to compare whether mothers and nonmothers successfully negotiated the reentry process. The framework is

also explained, which includes theories to explain why women may commit crimes and whether resuming motherhood increases the risk of recidivism. Theories that address the concerns and criminal activities of female offenders are both sociological and psychological in nature. Additionally, this chapter presents definitions; assumptions, limitations, and delimitations; and the significance of the study.

Background

The number of female offenders incarcerated has out-paced men, and they usually return to the community in greater numbers because they are sentenced to less time (Scott, Dennis, & Lurigio, 2017). The past four decades has shown an excess of 800,000 federal and state prison parolees (Bonzar, 2015), and female parolees increased seven-fold from 1980 to 2014 (Chen & Adams, 2019). Additionally, 11% of the parole populations and 24% of the probation population have accounted for the influx of female offenders into the community (Morash, Kashy, Smith, & Cobbina, 2015; Morash et al., 2016). Thus, parole officers need to understand the magnitude and impact that release from prison has on the female offender and the community (Adams et al., 2016). The increased need for housing, employment, and community support but unavailability of these resources has damaged families and made community reentry as well as successful desistance challenging (Chen & Adams, 2019). However, there is a gap in research regarding how female offenders have been affected by their specific needs in relation to what is available to them in the community (Adams et al., 2016).

Recent researchers have suggested that the female incarceration rate has largely increased over the last two decades (Heidemann, Cederbaum, Martinez & LeBel, 2016), which means more children left with family members or wards of the state after incarceration of their mothers. This has led to more mothers seeking custody of their children upon reentry (Nicholls et al., 2015). Many incarcerated women are a single parent to minor children, and resuming motherhood is the primary concern for these women once released from prison (Bachman, Kerrison, Paternoster, Smith & O'Connell, 2016). Many of the offenders' minor children have been at risk of foster care placement (Nicholls, Cruise, Greig, & Hinz, 2015). A female's concern for her children emphasizes the seriousness of receiving effective assessment and intervention that does not unnecessarily place her into custody situations but rather effectively manages her in the community setting. Poor criminal justice policies and practices are more than likely to over intervene and inadvertently escalate adverse outcomes (Nicholls et al. 2015).

Futher, research has often left women out of many of studies on offenders (Adams et al., 2016; Eagly & Riger, 2014). However, a small amount of research has been conducted on whether motherhood would result in recidivism (Adams et al, 2016). Some researchers who have examined the effects of motherhood have suggested that it influences desistence (Bachman et al., 2016). But fewer researchers have looked at motherhood and its influence on recidivism, and a smaller number of researchers looked at the female perspective of law breaking, which included parenting and parental stress (Adams et al., 2016; Jung & LaLonde, 2015).

This study was necessary to address how challenges have influenced the resumption of motherhood, the female offender, and the community. The results inform whether motherhood facilitates a successful reentry or leads to recidivism. This study's results may lead to social change by making it easier for women on parole to acquire necessary housing, employment, access to substance abuse programs, and health insurance for themselves and their children. The reentry process can be difficult without family or community support.

Problem Statement

Many incarcerated women are mothers to minor children with at least two goals in mind: release from prison and reunification with their children (Adams et al., 2016). Resuming motherhood has been a primary concern for female offenders (Bachman et al., 2016). But female offenders who return to the community lack housing, financial support, employment, social and work skills, knowledge on how to obtain a working network of resources, and for many, a lack of hope for their future (Gill & Wilson, 2016). There are also a multitude of obstacles for offenders, and women who have resumed custody of minor children had their challenges escalated, making recidivism likely (Gill & Wilson, 2016). Therefore, women on parole resuming motherhood can be risky, which has led to restrictive state policies and parole officer discretion regarding contact with children, especially if the children are living with relatives who the state has deemed inappropriate based on conditions of parole (Opsal, 2015).

Despite research suggesting that motherhood may be a risk of recidivism, much of the research reviewed did not show an agreement about the relationship between motherhood and recidivism. For example, Salvatore and Markowitz (2014) argued that transitioning into motherhood for women living in disadvantaged neighborhoods increased illegal earnings and related activities. Research has also suggested that a female offender's relapse into criminal activity could have been influenced by return to parental duties and financial strain (Adams et al., 2916; Garcia-Hallett, 2019), as there is a different set of challenges when resuming the role of parenthood after incarceration (Opsal, 2015). Female offenders raising young children with little or no support were vulnerable to environmental stressors, resulting in a relapse into criminal activity (Garcia-Hallett, 2019).

Other authors have explored the role of parenthood as a catalyst for making and sustaining a positive change (Bachman et al., 2016). Researchers have indicated that parenthood was fundamental to theorizing about desistance (Adams et al., 2016), and motherhood is an important factor in preventing reoffending (Bachman et al., 2016; Garcia-Hallett, 2019). For instance, women have desisted criminal activity and substance use for a while during pregnancy and after delivery, though they may resume illegal activity later (Garcia-Hallett, 2019; Salvatore & Markowitz, 2014). Because researchers have not shown a consensus on whether motherhood promotes recidivism (Bachman et al., 2016), the goal with this study was to provide empirical evidence that supported whether motherhood prevented recidivism or led to it.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this quantitative study was to compare the relationship between two groups of female offenders: mothers and nonmothers. The intent was to determine whether the return to motherhood would assist the offender in desisting from criminal activity or become a prediction for recidivism due to problems encountered during the reentry process. For instance, research has suggested that there are gender-specific factors that lead to recidivism for female offenders like being victims of abuse (Garcia-Hallett, 2019), being economically disadvantaged (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014), and being involved in drug-related offenses with prior victimization (Bachman et al, 2016).

The independent variable (IV) was motherhood, and the dependent variable (DV) was recidivism. The covariates influenced by motherhood included dispositional self-control (DSC), financial situations, support, and parole compliance. The results were intended to address whether resuming motherhood should be encouraged, especially if it does not influence recidivism.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Research questions were designed to address the challenges of the offenders, and the hypotheses were the assumptions regarding the potential outcomes relating to the questions. The hypotheses explained the direction of the study by predicting whether the parolees would relapse under the pressures of motherhood, and recidivism occurred as a result.

Research Question 1: Whether resuming motherhood while reentering the community, on parole, increases the risk of recidivism.

$H_0 1$: Resuming motherhood while reentering the community on parole does not increase the risk of recidivism.

$H_a 1$: Resuming motherhood while reentering the community on parole increases the risk of recidivism.

Research Question 2: Whether women with children are more likely to receive support from family, than women without children are.

$H_0 2$: Children will have no significance on whether the female offender will receive support from family.

$H_a 2$: Children will have a significant impact on whether the female offender will receive support from family.

Research Question 3: Whether women with children are more likely to receive community support, than women without children are.

$H_0 3$: Female offenders who have custody of children are not likely to receive more community support than nonmothers are.

$H_a 3$: Female offenders who have custody of children receive significantly more community support than nonmothers.

Research Question 4: Whether mothers are more likely to violate parole, than non-mothers, due to strict parole governance.

H_04: Strict parole governance will have no effect on female offenders with children.

H_a4: Strict parole governance increases the risk of mothers violating parole.

Research Question 5: Whether there is a significant difference in dispositional self-control between mothers and nonmothers.

H_05: There is no significant difference in dispositional self-control between mothers and nonmothers.

H_a5: There is a significant difference in dispositional self-control between mothers and nonmothers.

For Research Question 1, a 2X2 chi-square analysis was utilized. Female offenders were dichotomized (mothers and nonmothers). Recidivism was also dichotomized: had no prior felony conviction or had at least one prior felony convictions. The specific rate of recidivism was derived by computing the percentage of women with no less than one prior conviction out of the total sample.

Research Questions 2-4 were also investigated with a 2X2 chi-square analysis, with motherhood status dichotomized (mothers and nonmothers). Additionally, for Research Question 2, receipt of support from family was also dichotomized (yes or no). For Research Question 3, receipt of support from community was also dichotomized (yes or no). Finally, for Research Question 4, parole violations were also dichotomized (yes or no).

Research Question 5 was analyzed using an independent *t* test. The IV was motherhood status with two categories (mothers and nonmothers). The DV was measured by the DSC scale. The scores were compared between mothers and nonmothers and determined significant or not significant.

Theoretical Framework

There were a few theories that informed the framework of this study. Most female offenders who are mothers look forward to resuming their relationship with their children immediately after release (Barnes & Stinger, 2014; Bachman et al., 2016). But female offenders on parole and resuming motherhood have been met with an additional challenge of being a parent again. Parole conditions impact parolees, and the governing process may not be conducive to resuming motherhood and successful reentry (Opsal, 2015). Additionally, feminist theories have indicated that social factors involving substance abuse and historical indicators of mental illness, including stress and victimization such as childhood abuse influence female criminology (Gehring, 2018). Further, self-control informs how complex automatic cognitive responses that are generated by a person's environment significantly influence an individual's behavior and help predict future reoffending (Horstkotter, 2015). Apsche, Ward, and Evile (2003), recognizing the short comings of Beck's theory of modes (1996), also pointed out how victimization causes cognitive changes that influence personality, which could lead to criminal activity. A more detailed explanation of these theories related to whether resuming motherhood leads to recidivism is provided in Chapter 2.

Nature of the Study

A quasi-experimental design with a 2X2 chi-square analysis was chosen was for the purpose of comparative research to establish a significant difference between female offenders in terms of recidivism. The relationship among mothers and nonmothers was compared to determine which group of female offenders was at greater risk for recidivism. For instance, research has indicated that parole violations are less likely to happen for offenders without parental roles (Bachman et al., 2016), and housing is more difficult to obtain for female offenders,which is made more challenging with concerns about the school district, types of childhood peers in the neighborhood, or afterschool resources available for children (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014; Stone et al., 2016). Additionally, nonmothers probably may find it easier to meet with their parole officers because they do not have to worry about finding babysitters (Stone et al., 2016).

The IV being divided into two groups triggered this operation to require a bivariate statistical analysis (Field, 2019). The results of this study helped determine whether there was a relationship between mothers and nonmothers relating to recidivism, as a comparison of mothers to nonmothers who recidivated had not been well studied (Jung & LaLonde, 2015). The DVs, in addition to recidivism, are DSC, support, and violation of parole. Recidivism was the ultimate outcome investigated in this study, but DSC influenced by motherhood could be challenging if there is a reason to choose immediate gratification rather than choosing delayed gratification (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). Additionally, community reentry may fail if the offender does not receive family,

agency or community support, either financial or nonfinancial (Garcia-Hallett, 2019).

Substance abuse, mental illness, physical illness, victimization, and social factors were

also analyzed as covariates. Whenever a variable or group of continuous variables

influences an outcome, these covariates are measured along with the main part of the

study.

The population for this study was women who were currently on parole.

Participants were drawn randomly from a self-reported questionnaire that I generated.

Researcher choice was based on whether potential participants were mothers or

nonmothers, between age 18 to 45, and if this was their first incarceration or they had

more than one. The number of participants depended on the total number drawn from the

sample. A certain number of participants in each sample of nonmothers and mothers

were drawn. It was assumed that the sample of women would be normally distributed to

make it easier to test the hypotheses using independent t tests. But the sampling

distribution was not normally distributed, so it was recommended that a nonparametric

alternative to the t test be used for the analysis (Field, 2019).

G-power is a statistical analysis that was used to reject the null hypothesis,

estimate the sample size, confidence interval, and the likelihood that the statistical

analysis would detect effects of a given size, in a situation (Field, 2019). Power is the

probability of rejecting the null hypothesis, when the true hypothesis is equal to the true

critical parameter value (Field, 2019). Another way to test for power was to find the

effect size. The effect size is determined by subtracting the true critical value from the

hypothesized value (Field, 2019). If the null hypothesis is not rejected, then the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Definitions

Adult offender: The legal age for an offender to be tried as an adult. In the state of Arizona, legal age is 15 years old (Title 13, A.R.S 13-501).

Desistance: The point in which someone ceases to engage in criminal activity is described in two main clusters, each pitted against each other. One cluster is the point at which the crime stops, and the other is the "process of moving toward desistance" (Rodermond, Kruttschnitt, Slotboom, & Bijleveld, 2016).

Economically disadvantaged: A lack of financial stability due to under or unemployment that affects the female offender's ability to reenter the community (Rodermond et al., 2016).

Mental illness: Women suffering from illnesses such as major depression, anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) etc. that requires psychotropic medications or therapy to control their symptoms (McCormick, Peterson-Badali & Skilling, 2015).

Recidivism: Occurs when the offender's first arrest that violates her parole or commits a new crime that results in her return to prison (Fitzgerald, Cherney, & Heybroek, 2016).

Social factors: Factors that are key turning points in the lives of women that can cause changes in their behavior (Rodermond et al., 2016).

Substance abuse: Occurs when women, who are dependent on illicit substances or alcohol prior to incarceration and continue their use after release from prison (Winham, Golder, Renn, & Higgins, 2015).

Assumptions

The aspect of this study assumed to be true were answers provided by the participants and the accuracy of the instrument used. There were two reasons why these assumptions were necessary. First, if the participants were not truthful with their answers to the questionnaire, the survey would be biased. Second, the instrument that was used to measure DSC must do what it was intended in order to be accurate, and the answers to the questionnaire were based solely on the participants' self-reported responses. It was also assumed that the participants understood, spoke, read, and wrote the English language. Additionally, it was assumed the participants answered all questions on the survey truthfully and to the best of their ability. It was also assumed that the instrument used for the survey, the DSC scale, was appropriate to measure the variables set forth in this study. Finally, it was assumed that the sample was homogenous and normal to make it easier to test the hypotheses using parametric statistics (Field, 2019).

Scope and Delimitations

The focus of this study was the resumption of motherhood during the simultaneous reentry into the community. The main research question was whether resuming motherhood increased the risk of recidivism. Specific aspects of the research problem were two groups of female offenders released on parole. One group of women

reunited with their minor children while the second group was childless. Women

released on parole are around 30 years old on average (Barrick & Stinger, 2014), and

research has shown that individuals naturally desist from crime as they age (Sampson &

Laub, 2015). Thus, the most significant threat to internal validity was maturity.

Participants chosen for this study were women between the ages of 18 and 45. The only

female adult parolees considered in this study were those in one nearby city. Excluded

from the study were men, females under the age of 18, and over 45. Only one parole

office was willing to allow access to the women on their caseload, thus the sample size

decreased by a population of approximately 200 female parolees in the state of Arizona.

Generalizability is negatively affected by this research because of the small sample size

of female offenders on parole.

Additionally, theories not included in the study were rational choice theory, strain

theory, and life course theory. The self-control theory touches on certain aspects of the

life course theory as it relates to social ties but does not include the theory in its entirety.

Limitations

This research was limited to the female offenders on parole in one city in Arizona.

The sample size for the study was too small to be generalizable due to the availability of

parole participants. The research was also limited to adults 18 through 45 years of age,

so maturation could have become a problem with this project because offenders tend to

decrease criminal activity as they age or peer relations change during the course of life

(Bachman et al., 2016; Rodermond et al., 2016). Additionally, biases that could have

influenced the outcome of this research may have been a result of the participants' incorrect survey answers or my own personal biases. The results of this research were based on the truthfulness of the answers submitted by the participants. Further, for the results to be accurate, no questions could be left blank as experimental mortality would become an issue.

Significance

Over the past four decades, the United States has had historically augmented rates of incarceration. Criminology theories sought to demand prison as a method of punishment for committing criminal acts (King, 2018), and imprisonment was the "go-to" solution for most crimes committed in the United States. The significance of this research includes introducing Arizona and policy makers to the benefits of improving community supervision and simplifying the reentry process for female offenders, especially those who want to resume their parenting role. The results may support that helping female offenders with housing and financial assistance can improve the reentry process. Theorists have also posited that reuniting mothers with their children reduces recidivism (Samson & Laud, 2015). Thus, state assistance by helping with resumption of motherhood could help solve the issue of recidivism with female offenders. Further, recidivism can decrease if parolees are assisted with finances, housing, and financial support whether they are resuming motherhood or just reentering the community.

Additionally, it is important for policy makers should know how childhood victimization leads to criminal activity. The results can support that the Arizona

Department of Child Safety should have a larger budget to hire and train enough people to respond to child abuse reports at a much faster rate. Reducing childhood victimization may reduce criminal activity, thus reducing recidivism over time.

<div align="center">**Summary**</div>

Female offenders on parole have accounted for 11% of the offenders in the United States (Morash et al., 2016). Women endure gender-specific challenges while trying to reenter the community such as victimization, including physical and sexual abuse during childhood and adulthood, substance abuse, and mental illness (Morash et al., 2016; Opsal, 2015). Further, state and local governments that have supervised with harsh restrictions have adversely affected the ability of offenders to reenter the community (Opsal, 2015). Thus, this study addressed the challenges of female offenders with and without children reentering the community.

Chapter 2 covers current research on the characteristics female offenders portray and the factors that led them to criminal activity resulting in incarceration. The literature review also covers challenges that are gender neutral and gender specific in addition to subjective and objective, with a focus on explaining the gender-specific challenges that have the most severe impact on female offenders trying to avoid reoffending. Social factors such as marriage and peer relationships were also addressed related to recidivism. Further, the literature review addresses differences in how parole affects mothers versus nonmothers and the conflicting results surrounding whether motherhood leads to desistance or recidivism.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Multiple factors related to recidivism have had a significant effect on female offenders reentering the community while resuming motherhood and trying to comply with parole requirements. Reentry for most female offenders is made more difficult from many gender-neutral and gender-specific challenges such as the stigma of being a felon. Additionally, a lack of support and necessities such as suitable housing, employment with sufficient income, child care, physical and mental health care, and substance abuse programs may affect reentry and the successful resumption of motherhood (Stone et al., 2016). Thus, the purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the challenges female offenders face and the effect motherhood has on these challenges, which may influence whether offenders can reestablish themselves in their community and resume motherhood (Stone et al., 2016). Only a small number of researchers have provided empirical evidence regarding the difficulty of trying to conquer these challenges as women with children, so this study addresses a gap in the literature.

This chapter covers the databases that were reviewed as well as studies related to the challenges women have faced during the reentry process such as housing, employment, financial assistance, and social factors. Additionally, challenges associated with motherhood and reentry including substance abuse, mental and physical health issues, and victimization are presented. All of the challenges addressed in this chapter are gender-specific issues for this group of women.

Literature Search Strategy

A literature search using the following databases at the Walden University Library was conducted: PsycINFO, PsycARTICLES, ProQuest, Psychology: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Google Scholar, Thoreau, and Criminal Justice Periodicals. Keywords used were *women prisoners, motherhood, incarceration, reenter, reintegration, parole, adult female offender, desistance, social ties, social conduct, social control, identity, maternal script, feminist perspectives, personality dysfunction, female criminal pathways, victimization, motherhood and substance abuse,* and *female offenders and mental illness.*

Scope of the Literature Review

Much of the literature search was focused on peer-reviewed literature from 2014 through 2019, though it was necessary that literature search went as far back as 1977 to support some of the theories reviewed in this current study. Little quantitative data regarding the comparative relationship between the resumption of motherhood and recidivism came from this search. Therefore, data contained in prior qualitative research was used to create a questionnaire that the participants of this study could answer. The answers were converted into numerical data that could be entered into a software program to yield comparative information. The purpose was to determine whether offenders resuming motherhood were at a higher risk of recidivism than are non-mothers.

Theoretical Foundation

Theory is the intersection between development and research and is at the heart of scientific discipline (Miner, 2015). Psychological theories incorporate two key elements: describing a behavior and predicting a future behavior. Major theories considered for this study were feminist theories (Turanovic, Reisig, & Pratt, 2015), which illustrate causes of female criminal behavior and the relationship among sexually and physically abused females. Beck's theory of modes (1996) also highlighted how victimization, especially childhood sexual abuse, relates to maladaptive and inflexible personality traits that lead to criminal activities. Further, Apsche et al. (2003) expanded on Beck's theory of modes, suggesting that people learn from unconscious, experiential components as well as cognitive structural and cognitive components. Also considered in this study was identity theory, which helps describe how female offenders perceived motherhood and their desire to reunite with their children immediately out of prison (Bachman et al., 2016; Barnes & Stringer, 2014). Finally, the self-control theory aligns with the social-control theory to illustrate how social ties with peers, intimate partners, and family relate to the involvement in criminal activity and affects motherhood (Barrick et al., 2014).

Theories surrounding female criminology led to the main research question of whether female offenders could resume motherhood and reenter the community without increasing the risk of recidivism. An examination of the relationship between mothers and nonmothers during the reentry process was conducted to discover whether motherhood increased the risk of recidivism. Female offenders face challenges upon

release, especially for many who had minor children as their time of arrest, as motherhood increases the demands on them (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014). Female offenders in this situation must commit to balance work and family duties (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014). But when these women return home and resume their parental role, their ability to redeem parental capacity is reduced because of circumstances beyond their control.

Feminist Theories

Feminist theories relate to the female population and maintain that gender (femininity) is a woman's central organizing component of social life. This can include criminal offending, victimizing, and criminal justice processing. Feminist theories suggest that masculinity has been valued higher than femininity, and professional studies have marginalized or excluded females (Naegler & Salman, 2016). Thus, the main principle of feminist theories is to include female perspectives and experiences in all research to increase awareness that the female population cannot compare to the male population (Naegler & Salman, 2016).

Research has suggested that there are unique pathways to crime that relate to gender (Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016; Turanovic et al., 2015). For instance, there are five developmental pathways that female offenders have taken that resulted in risky behaviors leading to victimization (Turanovic et al., 2015). The *street women* pathway refers to those who ran away from their abusive homes,and chose to live on the streets. This increases the risk to be further victimized through prostitution, drug dealing, and

theft. The *drug connected pathways* for criminal offending refers to those who usually

began using drugs later in life and have had modest histories of antisocial behavior.

Additionally, abused and neglected children experience violence at an early age, which

leads to the *harmed and harming pathway* to crime. Further, the pathway of *battered*

women is usually not one of violence but is caused by sexual or physical abuse from an

intimate partner. The pathway considered the "other pathway" or the pathway of being

economically motivated includes women who committed crimes out of greed or tried to

cope with poverty. The economically motivated women lack a history of abuse or

violence and likely did not engage in alcohol or drug activity and use (Turanovic et al.,

2015).

      These criminal pathways for women align with self-control or lifestyle theory,

which indicate that risky behaviors or lifestyles could lead to victimization. Self-control

can be used to explain patterns of crime and outcomes, including victimization

(Turanovic et al, 2015). Research has also suggested that victims and offenders all share

the same social and personal characteristics. Criminal offending was always the same

end result, regardless of the cause leading to each of the pathways. Thus, general

theorists have contended that the route taken to becoming an offender is less important

than the fact that their offending put them at risk of victimization (Turanovic et al.,

(2015).

      In addition to different pathways to crime, women may have different levels of

risk for recidivism. For instance, some parolees recidivate quicker after release from

prison, whereas others recidivate at a slower pace and some do not recidivate at all. Parolees may be low risk, moderate risk, or high risk for recidivism, with women generally being moderate risk as well as having characteristics like being nonindigenous, in a relationship, and younger with a shorter sentence (Fitzgerald et al., 2016).

Beck's Theory of Modes

Beck (1996) described modes as powerful suborganizations of the personality. Modes are a complex integration of networks of cognitive, affective, motivational, and behavioral components that originally developed as protective strategies in response to traumatic and abusive life experiences (Beck, 1996). Emotions activate the modes when individuals perceive threats of harm, which can manifest in a person's personality as maladaptive, automatic responses to the perceived threats (Beck, 1996). Expanding on this theory of modes, Apsche et al. (2003) indicated that to effect individual behavioral change, there must be restructuring of experiential components and a corresponding cognitive reformation of the structural components. The automatic response instantly floods young victims with anxiety, rage, and fear that they were unable to override by employing cognitive behavioral therapy controls, causing them to become distrustful, guarded, and fearful, with acute sensitivity to adult–child power issues (Swart, Bass, & Apsche, 2014).

Based on the theory of modes, female offending may be explained by victimization on a physical and sexual level because of low esteem and poor self-control, which resulted in risky behaviors (Turanovic et al, 2015). Youth with long histories of

physical and sexual abuse, including neglect and emotional abuse, are more likely to

respond in ways consistent with personality and conduct disorders (Bayles, Blossom, &

Apsche, 2014). Sexual, physical, and emotional abuse have a strong correlation with the

development of personality and conduct disorders in adolescents (Bayles et al., 2014).

Individuals experiencing childhood abuse and neglect are four times more likely to have

been diagnosed with PTSD, aggression, oppositional disorders, anxiety, and depression

due to a cognitive vulnerability as a result of traumatic experiences (Bayles et al., 2014).

This may explain why female offenders have had a higher frequency of mental health

problems than male offenders (Stone et al., 2016).

Identity Theory

This theory can be used to identify who and what a woman is, as identity is a

significant link between a woman and society (Barnes & Stringer, 2014). Female

offenders have identified with two conflicting roles: mother and prisoner (Barnes &

Stringer, 2014). How the roles ranked determined which were embraced and performed

(Barnes & Stringer, 2014). Research has suggested that motherhood is embedded in

identity for some women and can lead to reform when they see their childrne as a reason

for desistance (Kerrick & Thorne, 2014; Schmalz, Colistra, & Evans, 2015; Smith,

Padgett, Choy-Brown, & Henwood, 2015). However, a certain level of state or

community assistance is required for success (Bachman et al., 2016; Barrick et al., 2014).

Despite the positive impact of motherhood, some research has suggested that

children are not a causal factor in the desistance of female offenders (Bachman et al.,

2016), and there are complex reasons why female offenders desist. For example, some researchers have posited that the change in identity was due in part to parenting causing the adoption of a prosocial identity by reclaiming their role of mothering. This prosocial identity served to solidify the new identity (Bachman et al., 2016). It was not a structural change that led to desistance from criminal activity but rather the prosocial role that prevented the women from further offending (Bachman et al., 2016; Stone et al., 2016). However, the theory of informal social control, the theory of cognitive transformation, and the identity theory point to different factors that influence desistence (Rodermond et al., 2016). These factors include marriage, employment, agency, and identity transformation. Additionally, Barrick et al. (2014) reported that not all social bonds are helpful.

Theory of Self-Control

The social control theory is one of the three categories the constructionists developed to describe the existence of crime and delinquency. It is the best theory that describes the existence of crime (Barrick et al., 2014). The social control theory aligns with the self-control theory (Barrick et al., 2014), because social control theory describes the importance of social bonds, or social ties, that individuals had at the time the decision was made to offend, and the ability to consider the long-term effect of an act is described as self-control, a major component in the calculation of an individual's decision to commit a crime. People with low self-control have difficulty resisting short-term pleasures derived from criminal acts (Hirtenlehner & Kunz, 2015). Thus, self-control is a

relevant factor in the cause of criminal behavior (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), only when moral forces do not prevent offensive conduct from being perceived as a viable alternative action (Hirtenlehner & Kunz, 2015). Because there is an interaction between morals and self-control, it is the self-control ability that influences behavioral decisions when morals are weak (Hirtenlehner & Kunz, 2015). Individuals may drink too much alcohol, use profanity in public, take drugs, steal, destroy property, and kill people when they do not have the self-control to consider the consequences of their actions (Turanavic et al., 2015).

Rationale for Choice of Theories

The theories discussed in the previous sections apply to the current study on female offenders in multiple ways. Feminist theories were applied in the study of female criminology, as most research is based on male offenders (Naegler & Salman, 2016). Additionally, Beck's (1996) theory of modes rationalizes the trajectory from childhood to criminology. The identity theory also fit the study because it provides a profile of who a woman is, whether a female offender or homemaker (Barnes & Stringer, 2014; Kerrick & Thorne, 2014; Schmalz et al., 2015). A positive identity of self gives a woman a sense of self-efficacy, which can help cope and self-regulate when struggling (Bandura, 1977). Positive identity allows women to provide for themsevles and their children during the hardship of reentering the community. A positive self-efficacy will allow the female offender to push through her struggles without committing further criminal activities (Stone et al., 2016).

Literature Review Related to Key Variables

Almost all research reviewed was based on qualitative studies. For example, Bachman et al. (2016) used qualitative studies to explore resumption of motherhood through life course theory, which related to this study on the factors involved in motherhood and recidivism. Other qualitative research informed this study by suggesting that motherhood played an important part in helping with female offender desistance (Barrick et al., 2014) and the problems and stresses associated with motherhood that can interrupt the process of desistance (Rodermond et al., 2016). Previous researchers have also consistently argued that the DVs—support, compliance, situation, and self-control— are major factors involving recidivism for mothers and nonmothers, which led to selecting these variables for the study. Though qualitative research has strengths in describing female offenders' experiences and feelings toward the challenges they faced and the advantages or disadvantages of resuming motherhood, it lacks generalizability and measurable outcomes for the DV, recidivism, as it relates to resuming motherhood.

Another issue discovered in the qualitative research is that researchers cannot agree on whether resuming motherhood will increase the risk of recidivism. Some researchers have argued that motherhood promotes desistance (Bachman et al., 2016; Stone et al., 2016). But others have argued that motherhood led to desistance for a short time though may not have been long lived (Adams et al., 2016; Salvatore & Markowitz, 2014).

Challenges of the Female Offender: Overview

Past research revealed that 11% of female parole population were women (Morash et al., 2016). Female parole population has out grown the male population over the past decade. Researchers suggested that within the last decade approximately 1700 women left prison every day. In the 1990s and 2000s, women's incarceration outpaced that of men, which led to an increase in female offenders currently released from prison today (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014; Morash et al., 2015; Stone et al., 2016). Other researchers consistently suggested the success of reentry was based on their pathways to offending. They were focused primarily on their history of victimization during childhood and adulthood from intimate partners (Nuytiens & Christiaens, 2016; Opsal, 2015). Feminist researchers provided empirical evidence that women were marginalized in past research with respect to their pathways to crime and to their needs in order to establish a successful reentry into the community (Opsal, 2015). It was once believed the needs and challenges of female offenders were no different for women than for men. It was evidenced that the needs of women *were* different, and gender demonstrated how *specific* these needs were to women reentering the community successfully (Morash et al., 2015).

The goal of incarceration was crime reduction. A higher concentration of prisoner release into the community may become overwhelming with a lack of resources and social conform (Morash et al., 2015). The experiences of women trying to reenter the community were shaped by their past victimization and gender (Rodermond et al.,

2016). Many authors indicated that having a felony conviction exacerbated the challenges they faced during the reentry process (Morash et al., 2015; Opsal, 2015). It was important to see what a female offender looked like when leaving prison in order to consider her needs.

Characteristics of the Female Parolee

The average woman leaving prison was approximately 30 years of age and had never been married (Barrick & Stringer, 2014; Michalsen & Flavin, 2014; Opsal, 2015). Familial and community support was marginal, but necessary for successful reentry. She could have been a woman of color, reflective of the war on drugs with an incomplete high school education (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014; Opsal, 2015). The female offender was most likely convicted of a property crime or a drug offense. If a female offender had a history of drug or alcohol use, she might still have drug related problems which may be associated with physical and mental health issues. Drug addiction was probably the result of her initial use of drugs as a coping mechanism for her abuse history, according to some research (Cafferky & Anderson, 2018; Hollis, Jennings, & Hankhouse, 2019). There was a high probability that she had custody of her minor children at the time of her arrest (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014; Opsal, 2015). This woman was usually unemployed or under-employed, which contributed to her economic marginalization. Living under poor economic circumstances increased the likelihood of committing crimes for the survival of herself and family (Garcia-Hallett, 2019; Opsal, 2015).

Research from previous authors exposed that the pathway to female incarceration was caused by victimization. A family member or intimate partner usually victimized the woman (Spencer et al., 2017). Researchers who evidenced this type of victimization indicated serious and long-term mental health problems (Wattanaporn & Holtfreter, 2014). Child and adult victimization did *not* directly relate to criminal offending, the victimization *did* directly relate to mental illness which was directly related to criminal offending (Bayles et al., 2014). These characteristics were the key issues that feminist researchers revealed as major complications to female offender reentry. They were issues that seriously hindered her ability to obtain housing, employment, and other necessities that were important to reduce the risk of recidivism (Scott, Dennis, & Lurigio, 2017).

Gender-Neutral Factors Affecting Female Offenders: Subjective Factors

Financially disadvantaged. Previous researchers established that female offenders were financially disadvantaged prior to incarceration, and this continued to be a problem during the reentry process. Barrick et al. (2014) discussed the financial difficulties that impinged on the ex-offender's ability to reestablish themselves in the community. Rukus, Eassey, and Baldwin (2016) suggested that the most difficult task of reentering the community was finding a job that paid a wage high enough to make a living. These authors agreed the same type of structural barriers that brought about economic disadvantage in the community had a negative influence on prisoner reentry. Rukus et al. (2016) pointed out that female offenders who initiated reentry had previously

experienced many financial difficulties and raising young children with no income or support was a prerequisite for recidivism.

It is important to improve prisoner reentry into the community (Rukus et al., 2016). One of the most important issues of reentry is often associated with diminished employment opportunities for female felons (Barrick et al., 2014; Rukus et al., 2016). Unemployment or underemployment is one of the main causes of financial disadvantages associated with female criminology. The only thing that could have improved the financial disadvantages of the female offender would have been the ability to obtain suitable employment to support herself and her family (Barrick et al. 2014; Rukus et al., 2016). Many studies suggested female offenders did not come out of prison with very many skills to improve their financial situations (Barrick et al., 2014; Rukus et al., 2016). Rukus et al. (2016) suggested that family support was essential when offenders were reentering the community. Families assisted offenders with housing, employment, transportation, and medical care in some cases.

Housing challenge. Researchers disclosed that prison mothers envisioned release to resume living with their children. Many female offenders reported their highest priorities were housing and family reunification. Health, education, and employment was second on their priority list (Sheehan, 2014). Women who resumed custody of their children found it a key motivation for connecting with family members and the community. They perceived family as emotional and instrumental support (Barrick et al., 2014). Women welcomed the connection but were more reluctant than men to live with

family members when they returned to the community. This was particularly true for

women who continued to abuse drugs or alcohol (Opsal, 2015). Women living with

family or intimate partners had encountered victimization. Many women who are victims

to domestic violence chose to remain in that violent situation. A lack of financial support

prohibited an abused woman from leaving (Avdibegovic, Brkic, & Sinanovic, 2017;

Wattanaporn & Holtfreter, 2014). Alternate housing would be a better solution if it were

available, but since this was not possible many of the women experienced high rates of

homelessness. Unstable housing placed women at a greater risk of recidivism

(Wattanaporn & Holtfreter, 2014).

Researchers revealed economically marginalized women came from communities

that were of lower socioeconomic status, higher crime areas, and inadequate in public

resources (Opsal, 2015). Finding safe and affordable housing was a critical and

challenging first step for women returning to their former communities. Current

investigators disclosed that when a female offender was financially disadvantaged,

finding independent living arrangements were difficult because public housing tried to

control crime in and around itself (Barrick et al., 2014). Women with the stigma of

having a criminal record found that many property owners refused to rent to ex-offenders

for fear of community safety (Barrick et al., 2014). This was particularly true of the

women convicted of drug crimes. Public housing in larger urban areas made it more

difficult because if a previously incarcerated woman moved in with her family, the city

government would evict the entire household since it was against their policy to have an ex-offender living in city apartments.

Additional research results indicated that in other areas unless a woman had resumed custody of her children, housing priority did not exist (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). This forced the women without children to seek private housing arrangements (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). The financially disadvantaged female offenders found obtaining their own apartments were beyond their reach due to high costs of security deposits, first month's rent, and criminal background checks (McDonald & Arlinghaus, 2015). Trying to arrange for private housing created a vicious cycle of rejection for women without children who lacked employment and financial status (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014).

Employment challenge. Previous and current researchers suggested that many women reentering the community from prison relied on their spouses, intimate partners, or some sort of assistance for financial support (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014; Opsal, 2015). Quality employment was a key factor in having the ability to pay for housing, food, clothing, transportation, childcare, restitution, and other expenses associated with parole (Michalsen and Flavin, 2014). Another important reason for employment was most women's crimes were due to the desire these women had to provide economic support for others, especially their children. Employment changed the way the women perceived themselves (Stone et al., 2016). They saw themselves as transformed and no longer needed to involve themselves in criminal activity. Employment provided a sense of

security and support (Stone et al., 2016). The women saw their new lives as an improvement over their previous lifestyle.

Female offenders often returned to economically marginalized communities that offered less employment opportunities. Other recent investigators suggested that barriers to women were uniquely disproportionate in the workforce due to their criminal histories, lack of education, skills, and training. These barriers made them unemployable. The percentage of released offenders who were employed would probably make less than women who were never incarcerated (Rodermond et al., 2016). Rodermond et al. (2016) argued there still lacked evidence demonstrating whether employment was beneficial enough to deter women from criminal activity and offending. Further employment challenges were maintaining enough income for survival. Women continued to depend on support from family and government assistance (Opsal, 2015).

Rodermond et al. (2016) reviewed extensive literature which suggested that employment alone may not be the causing factor of criminal cessation. Seeking employment was very limited in the kinds of work female felons could do. Recent studies reported the laws and policies prohibited felons from working in certain positions, and the stigma of being an offender contributed to the status of unemployment or low-wage employment (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). Most employers used background checks prior to hiring, which meant that women with felony convictions were unable to pass a background check causing her to be less likely hired. Such limitations affected women more than men because these types of jobs disproportionately employed women

(Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). Rodermond et al. (2016) questioned in their mixed studies, whether employment for women helped with criminal desistance. The effect of employment on women and criminal desistance should not be overlooked simply because it is of benefit to more men than women.

Johnson (2014) suggested that a prior study reported the stigmatism of female offenders prevented them from obtaining any needed services such as food stamps, subsidized housing, education loans, and employment. It was a violation of federal law for the offender to access such resources as Temporary Aid to Needy Families and Supplemental Social Security Income. Stigmatization and social seclusion caused the created challenging situations for females on parole due the inability to access necessary resources (Johnson, 2014).

Gender-Specific Variables Associated with Female Offenders: Objective Factors

Jung and LaLonde (2015) posited that maternal imprisonment resulted in multiple negative outcomes for both mother and child. Female imprisonment, and later release, created very gender-specific variables associated with female criminology by their enhanced degree of severity. These variables are victimization, physical health, mental health, substance abuse, chronic poverty, and social factors (Jung & LaLonde, 2015). Objective factors and maternal stress are described in this section. The objective factors are relative to the understanding of how substance use and addiction, coupled with mental health issues, played an important part in the difficulties female parolees encountered during their reentry into the community (Jung & LaLonde, 2015).

Victimization. Few-Demo and Arditti (2014) previously indicated that violent and sexual victimization placed women at the intersection of relational and situational vulnerability. This had long lasting negative effects on mental and physical health which affected individuals throughout their life course. Relational vulnerability is described as how an individual perceives oneself in relationships with others as a normal relationship. Situational vulnerability encompasses life's circumstances such as incarceration history, victimization, poverty, or life-stage stress (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014). Feminist theorists have empirically documented multiple factors leading to the incarceration of women. Victimization was one of the factors that indirectly caused female offending (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014). Researchers agreed that traumatic childhood experiences and abusive, or exploitive relationships with men were factors in present day literature that led to female incarceration and recidivism (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014). Many incarcerated females reported sexual and physical abuse after adulthood, typically by intimate partners. Bayles et al. (2014) documentation on domestic violence statistics denoted over 10 million children were witnesses or victims of physical or sexual abuse. Misaligned emotional states became the behavioral expressions of these young individuals as they entered adulthood. These expressions were manifested in the form of anxiety, oppositional defiant disorders, conduct disorders, PTSD, and proactive and reactive aggressions (Bayles et al., 2014).

McCormick et al. (2015) predicted mental health concerns were much higher in the criminal justice system than in the general public. This prevalence of mental health in

criminology caused researchers to bring it to the frontline of research, practice, and policy making. Spencer et al. (2017) posited that PTSD and anxiety were major contributors of female victimization, especially among intimate partner violence. PTSD affected many children who were victims of childhood sexual abuse. Spencer et al. (2017) discovered that PTSD and anxiety were stronger correlates of intimate partner violence and victimization for women. These authors reported it significantly correlated with interpersonal violence victimization. Spencer et al. were unable to determine whether intimate partner violence caused PTSD or if PTSD caused intimate partner violence. They did agree that PTSD, anxiety, and victimization were strongly correlated (Spencer et al., 2017).

Recent researchers conducted studies on survivors of trauma related intimate partner violence and presented evidence that strongly correlated to victimization (Spencer et al., 2017). Repeating the traumatic events by way of exposure to such events left the female child, and later the adult, tense with fear, helplessness, or horror. This type of trauma also had an adverse impact on the child's developmental process. Wattanaporn and Holtfreter (2014) reported that exposure to sexual childhood abuse and adult sexual assault or re-victimization was predictive of posttraumatic cognition, somatization, and PTSD severity. There was an indirect effect in the association of childhood sexual abuse, through adult sexual assault, on the severity of PTSD, cognition, and somatization. Symptoms of the effects are positively associated with anxiety, mental and physical health issues (Wattanaporn & Holtfreter, 2014).

Jung and LaLonde (2015) theorized the degree rather than the type of trauma may be significant. In extreme cases of childhood sexual trauma, the victim may have developed various symptoms of a personality disorder. Spencer et al. (2017), along with Wattanaporn and Holtfreter (2014) identified patterns in violent sexual victimization associated with anxiety symptoms. Spencer et al. (2017) noted a higher prevalence of diagnoses, such as, generalized anxiety disorders, and borderline personality disorders (BPD). Jung and LaLonde (2015), with Spencer et al. (2017) suggested that mental illness in victimized women were manifested in various forms, including PTSD and anxiety-related disorders. Whether there had been childhood or adult sexual trauma, it was certain that there was no one particular response experienced by all the survivors.

Investigators conducting research regarding female victims of rape reported that many sexually assaulted women never seek professional mental health help, which may be due to cultural cognitions and beliefs (Wattanaporn & Holtfreter, 2014). Bayles and Van Nevel (2015) argued that victims of crime were very similar to offenders. These authors suggested with individual-level research, they found that offenders were frequently victims of crime. The similarities between the victimization and offending raised the possibility that a common underlying cause could influence the likelihood of the victim becoming the offender. That common causal factor was shared by all individuals believed linked to childhood cumulative trauma and manifested as self-regulatory disturbances (Bayles & Van Nevel, 2015). Turanovic et al. (2015) suggested

that victimization coupled with risky lifestyles and low self-control is positively associate with increased mental disorders, which ultimately resulted in criminal offending.

Mental health issues. Undiagnosed mental health issues were primarily a result of childhood victimization and substance abuse. The mental health problems seriously limited the female offenders' abilities to function in their community before and after prison (Spencer et al., 2017). Researchers recently suggested that some female offenders were diagnosed with mental illness prior to admission to prison. They displayed considerably higher rates of major mental disorders upon admission, such as schizophrenia, PTSD, depressive disorders, and various personality disorders, including antisocial personality disorders (Spencer et al., 2017). Women with increased mental disorders experienced increased vulnerability to victimization and self-injury.

There was empirical evidence that female offenders with mental disorders experienced higher rates of sexual victimization than other female offenders (McCormick et al., 2015; Spencer et al., 2017). Knowledge of these vulnerabilities and risks associated with the offenders can help the parole officers reduce the risk of recidivism by taking steps to prevent gender-specific issues through training and dissemination of information (McCormick et al., 2015). Researchers provided evidence indicating mental health issues made it difficult to get housing and employment because both illnesses predicted reoffending for all offenders, especially women (Opsal, 2015).

Other countries also reported similar results that suggested mentally ill female offenders had an increased vulnerability to arrest, parole revocation because of technical

violations, and inadequate social support in the community after release (Barrick et al., 2014; Opsal, 2015). The need to understand female offender mental health issues is a global necessity. Stone et al. (2015) posited that mental health issues affected women, more than men, and required gender specific options and intervention. McCormick et al. (2015) reported female offenders were recognized as a subpopulation who experienced higher rates of mental health issues than that of women in the general population. Those who were diagnosed with severe mental illness were found to be concurrent with drug or alcohol use disorders, making it difficult for the provider to treat since treatment services focused on specific issues and not concurrent problems (Bayles & Villalobos, 2015).

Substance abuse challenge. Substance abuse affects women distinctly different from men. Numerous female offenders have a high rate of substance use disorders that are co-morbid with mental illness, such as PTSD, generalized anxiety disorder, and major depressive disorder (Spencer et al., 2017). Childhood abuse linked the onset of substance and alcohol abuse in the adolescent. Bayles and Villalobos (2015) found that physical and sexual abuse along with witnessing violence was a precursor to substance use among adolescents. It accounted for the relationship between alcohol use disorder and depression in young adults.

Parolees returning to substance abuse was a key factor that caused female offenders to recidivate (McDonald & Arlinghaus, 2015). Many women who returned from prison felt that avoiding a return to drug use was their biggest challenge. These

researchers suggested many substance users recidivated within 3 years of release from prison because of drug relapse.

Substance abuse affected the ability to obtain housing and employment. It had a negative impact on reentry into the community. McDonald and Arlinghaus (2015) indicated that many offenders were cut off all means of support from friends and family prior to incarceration. Women with co-occurring substance use and mental disorders were significantly less likely to receive housing, or financial support from family, social agencies, or other organizations (McDonald & Arlinghaus, 2015). Other female offenders who could qualify financially for public housing were turned away because of their involvement in drug-related offenses. This situation put women in a position to experience homelessness, and were at increased risk of victimization (Opsal, 2015).

Sheehan (2014) discussed how incarcerated mothers expect to return home to live with their children after their release. Sheehan pointed out women transitioned into community living in a sustained manner when families reunited, accommodation was stable, and finances were secure. If the women continued using drugs, it was more difficult for them to regain custody of their children. Women who were insistent on resuming their role as primary parent understood they needed to do something to prove that they were willing to end their substance abuse problems (Sheehan, 2014). Substance abuse treatment was very limited in correctional facilities and communities. Drug abuse and mental illness were proven to be the controlling factors in the components of the pathway to offending. Mental health, physical health, and substance abuse affected

women more than men, but women were more likely to have co-occurring mental disorders and physical health conditions (McCormick et al., 2015).

Physical health concerns. Many female offenders had physical health problems prior to their incarceration and entered prison with medical problems. Female offenders experienced physical health disorders during incarceration such as back problems, diabetes, asthma, hepatitis C, HIV, AIDS, heart conditions, and cancer (Johnson, 2014). Prison staff provided treatment for the physical health problems and, in some cases, mental disorders. There was also a very strong possibility that the physical illnesses and mental disorders remained undiagnosed. Most women entered the prison system with at least one chronic health condition that required continued management and treatment after release from prison (Johnson, 2014). Most of the women either had no insurance or lost their insurance after incarceration (Johnson, 2014).

Many states revoked Medicare and Medicaid after conviction. This left the offenders without health insurance for several months while their application for insurance processed for reinstatement. Some states provided what is called a Blue Card to women who needed medical care. A Blue Card allows them to pay a reduced co-pay (Johnson, 2014). The Blue Card provides a false sense of security for those who are not in a dire emergency, yet not enough of an emergency to go to the emergency room. The daunting task of making the appointment, and the time it takes to get into doctor's office, can be quite challenging and take months to be seen. If medical coverage arrangements could be made to bridge this care into the community prior to release, it would ensure

that the woman could acquire access to health care outside of prison. Many women are

unable to receive medical care after reentry due to the absence of health care insurance.

Social factors. Many researchers expanded on a lot of the studies regarding life-

course theory on desistance (Adams et al., 2016; Bachman et al., 2016; Rodermond et al.,

2016). They explained that age-graded theory informs why there was a drastic decrease

in crime. Empirical evidence was suggestive that age was a predisposition to desistance.

Many of all criminal activities eventually decreased with age. The theory of life-course

informal social control anticipates the routine prosocial activities that satisfy the role of

motherhood related to women's desistance from criminal activity (Adams et al., 2016).

Motherhood was a key turning point though it did not necessarily initiate

desistance (Adams et al., 2016). Several researchers reported marriage as a turning point

and desire of many females causally related to desistance (Bachman et al., 2016). A

marriage meant little to disadvantaged women (Bachman et al., 2016). Children were

born out of wedlock and served as a *hook-up* to find a suitable husband (Adams et al.,

2016). Women who were living in disadvantaged neighborhoods believed children

provided meaning and fulfillment for an otherwise empty life. Women in more

advantaged neighborhoods found that marriage was a turning point in their lives and led

to desistance of crime (Adams et al., 2016; Stone et al., 2016). Salvatore and Markowitz

(2014) posited that motherhood produced stronger bonds with their children as the

women aged, more than in younger years. This bonding reduced the influence of peers

and increased the influence by family which inhibited criminal activity (Stone et al., 2016).

There could also be a negative side to marriage being a turning point to desistance. Women committed crimes alone or with a male counterpart. Social relationships that indicated the strongest predictor of criminal involvement was marriage or cohabitation. This was true in severely disadvantaged neighborhoods because of the abundance of illicit role models, incentives, and opportunities in urban cities (Salvatore & Markowitz, 2014). Salvatore and Markowitz (2014) suggested that the attachment to the male partner who was engaged in criminal activity increased the likelihood that the female would recidivate. A marriage could not deter criminal activity unless it was of good quality. Intimate partnership or cohabitation may positively relate to criminal activity.

Jung and LaLonde (2015) reported that feminist theorists and researchers indicated social factors to be a contributory influence on all female offenders, which included poverty and violence against women. Specific social factors, victimization and economic disadvantage, related to most female offenders. There was very little information that suggested the behaviors of mothers differed from the behaviors of non-mothers, as far as criminality caused by victimization, substance abuse, and mental health issues (Jung & LaLonde, 2015). Poverty crossed generations of people. It resulted in fewer family resources that included inheritance, social capital, and cultural capital, which passed down from parent to child for both mothers and non-mothers. The

existence of poverty placed many women at a disadvantage early in life (Salvatore &

Markowitz, 2014). Women, who came from poor conditions had situations that

negatively influenced their maternal experiences prior to incarceration.

  Motherhood versus Non-motherhood. Not all women offenders were mothers,

yet they shared the same characteristics as far as criminogenics. They differed in several

other ways. They differed in demographic profiles, mental health, and timing of contacts

with the criminal justice system (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). Research regarding the

female offender population in 1970 included demographics, family history, and reentry

outcomes that became more prominent. Research was documented regarding the

involvement of women in the criminal justice system (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014).

Women were disproportionately financially disadvantaged, and of the minority races with

histories of physical and sexual abuse, associated mental health, and substance use

disorders. Not all women fit these characteristics though (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014).

  Michalsen and Flavin (2014) reported only 62% of the women in prisons were

mothers. The remaining 38% were women who did not have children. These researchers

suggested that of the imprisoned nonmothers were more likely to report having never

been married, more likely convicted of a violent offense, less likely convicted of a current

or prior drug offense and receive harsher sentences. Nonmother offenders tended to be in

a higher socioeconomic status, although nonmothers and mothers were likely to be

unemployed at the time of arrest. Nonmothers were more likely to be White and non-

Hispanic (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). Nonmothers were in a better position to pay rent

and utilities in their own name, but the results of the Michalsen and Flavin's (2014) study yielded contradictory information. Mothers were more likely to have leases and utilities in their own names rather than nonmothers. Those living in expensive areas were less likely to have stable living conditions than mothers in depraved neighborhoods. Mothers may live with a partner or family out of concern for her children. Researchers suggested that nonmothers would probably have more time to devote to pursuing an education and a career (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014).

Michalsen and Flavin (2014) suggested that research on physical and mental health, medical care, and substance use was limited due to the complicated nature of health. Mothers reported having better physical health than that of nonmothers because of increased surveillance of their health behaviors by the community. Findings were mixed regarding mental health (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). Some researchers confirmed that mothers had enhanced mental health and social networks. Other researchers presented evidence that motherhood had a negative effect on the woman's mental health due to economic hardships, interpersonal conflicts, and role strain (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014).

Nonmothers' children were expected to have a higher involvement in the criminal justice system than mothers for two reasons. The presence of children provided some form of social control that encouraged desistance from criminal activity. Women without children did not have the paternalistic protections that women had with children. Non-

mothers were expected to encounter the criminal justice system at an earlier age than those who were mothers (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014).

Motherhood: Desistance or recidivism. A study conducted by Salvatore and Markowitz (2014) determined that motherhood had a slight influence in female desistance. These authors concluded that women desisted from criminal activity during their pregnancy, but according to their research, it was inconsistent on whether desistance did not decay later. Salvatore and Markowitz (2014) viewed it as an "off time transition". Paternoster et al. (2016) suggested that motherhood served as hooks for change, in hopes of finding a suitable partner for marriage in the African American female population. Women who were mothers and lived in financially disadvantaged neighborhoods were prone to entering periods of illegal earnings, according to Salvatore and Markowitz (2014).

Rodermond et al. (2016) advanced their study to include males and posited that male-based theories of desistence could also held true for women. Economic independence, abstinence of substance abuse, and individual agency have a definite influence on both men and women who are reentering the community and trying to desist from criminal activity. Only the results of the female participants will be included in this study. Sampson and Laud (2015) suggested that social ties bind individuals to society. This bonding provides the offender with social capita that the individual may be afraid of losing if they continue to offend.

Rodermond et al. (2016) explored the role of parenthood as a catalyst for making and sustaining a positive change based on gender differences. Rodermond et al. (2016), along with Sampson and Laud (2015) conceptualized the parenthood experience and its effect on criminal involvement. These authors considered the influence of cognitive processes, social bonds, and parenting within the context of marriage or cohabitation. Rodermond et al. (2016) suggested that parenthood fostered desistance by providing strong feelings of attachment, obligation to another individual that acted as a form of informal social control, and the reduced influence of bad associations among peers. Crime, although associated with having a familial history of criminal activity, Sampson and Laud suggested that parenthood shifted the routine activities of an individual to the development of new identities. This new shift in routine perpetuated a profound life change that connected to becoming a parent.

Adams et al. (2016) suggested that although children played an important role in the desistance of crime and motherhood, they could be positive and negative experiences for female offenders. Women described their children as both prosocial bonds and stressors (Adams et al., 2016). Children were not at the top of the list of reasons for desistance from crime according to the women interviewed (Adams et al, 2016). Some research documented that children motivated their mothers to desist from criminal activity, the same studies exemplified negative influences of parental stress. Adams et al. (2016) reported that many of the women who participated in the research reported no motivation from their children to desist from committing crimes. They simply did not

want to change their current lifestyle of crime or to maintain sobriety. Other women

expressed a strong desire to resist the negative effects of imprisonment. Only a few of

the women voluntarily discussed the attachment they had with their children whom they

considered the most important reason to desist criminal activity (Adams et al., 2016).

Reentry, the process of desisting, and resuming motherhood constituted subjective

factors. The women were separated from their children for extended periods of time,

depending on the sentence they received in many cases. Women who resumed

motherhood not only had to negotiate the reentry process, but also had to negotiate terms

and conditions under which they could reestablish a relationship with their children

(Adams et al., 2016). Resuming their role as mothers were their uppermost concerns

upon release from prison for most women. This was considered a significant subjective

aspect of their lives.

Summary and Conclusions

Information in Chapter 2 was relevant to current research as it related to pathways

that led to females offending, the challenges they faced during reentry, and female

offenders resuming motherhood while trying to reenter the community. Research into the

study of theories, such as feminist theories, theory of modes, identity theory, and self-

control theory, scholars became aware that females experienced some of the same

problems in life that their male counterparts experienced, but in different ways and with

different outcomes. Women's problems were more intense and a higher frequency than

the experience of the male. A detailed explanation was given of how these problems

affected the lives of the women prior to their incarceration evidenced by Beck's Theory

of Modes (1996). These problems continued to be challenges they faced on parole,

reentering the community, and simultaneously resuming motherhood.

A gap existed in research that provided statistical evidence whether resuming

motherhood was catalyst for recidivism. A few researchers conducted qualitative studies

on the experiences of female offenders resuming motherhood, but contradicted each other

in their conclusions (Bachman et al., 2016). Some of the existing research on this subject

was controversial in nature, as seen with Salvatore and Markowitz (2014). This

researcher provided statistical evidence regarding the probability of motherhood leading

to recidivism.

Further discussions conveyed a quasi-experimental design utilized to conduct a

quantitative analysis. IV, motherhood, was divided into two groups. One group was

mothers, and another nonmothers. A 2X2 chi-square analysis was appropriate for

conducting a comparative relationship to determine which group was at greater risk for

recidivism. Subjective and objective covariates were previously suggested as influences

for recidivism. Participants who had been incarcerated, had never recidivated, and who

had recidivated at least once were chosen from a selected sample of female offenders on

parole. The data received from a self-generated questionnaire was analyzed using

International Business Machines (IBM), and the once known software, statistical package

for social sciences (SPSS), version 24. This information was used to examine the

relationship among the IV, DV, and the amount of influence the covariates exerted on the

DV. Results from this analysis was tabulated and answers surrounding the questions on whether motherhood influenced female offender recidivism was provided.

Chapter 3: Research Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to compare women resuming motherhood and those with no children at home to determine whether the role of motherhood obstructed the process of reentry for female offenders, leading to recidivism. Though there was much research comparing the success rate of women reentering the community with that of men, there was little quantitative, empirical evidence comparing the success rate of women who resumed their parenting role with women who did not. Further, although research has indicated that objective factors (victimization, substance abuse, mental disorders, physical health problems, and social factors) and subjective factors (housing, employment, and financial support) are all interrelated and strongly correlate with the failure of a female offender's reentry (Opsal, 2015), there is conflicting evidence on whether motherhood is an important factor in female offender desistance (Bachman et al., 2016; Salvatore & Markowitz, 2014).

This chapter reviews the methodology to examine the relationship among the IV and DVs. The objective and subjective factors that affected female offenders in general during their process of reentering the community were also examined. This chapter includes a detailed explanation on the rationale for using the chosen design and its appropriateness to the study as well as an explanation of the methods utilized in selecting the population. A description of sample characteristics, explanation of sample size, along with instrumentation and measures are also included. Further, effect size, internal and

external threats to validity, and reliability are addressed. A discussion on treatment of covariates during the analysis process is also part of this discussion. Finally, this chapter addresses ethical concerns associated with this study.

Research Design and Rationale

A quantitative approach was utilized employing a quasi-experimental design to analyze the relationship between women with children and women without children and examine the female offender's ability to negotiate community reentry without recidivating. The approach was quantitative because numerical data were analyzed. Additionally, quasi-experimental designs are appropriate when there is at least one nonmanipulated IV and one measured DV. There is one IV: motherhood (mothers or nonmothers). This nonmanipulated variable was subdivided into two groups: women with minor children at home and women without children at home. The DV is recidivism, and other DVs influenced by motherhood included the DSC scale, support, compliance, and financial situations, which were used to measure and analyze the impact that self-control may have on either group of female offenders. Recidivism was the expected outcome if the covariates, victimization, housing, employment, substance abuse, mental health, physical health, and social factors are not influenced by the effects of motherhood. Each of these variables were measured to examine their impact on the outcome of this study.

The sample was not chosen at random but selected by me (Cook, 2015) to ensure that the study measured the risk of recidivism for mothers and nonmothers. No time or

resource constraints were consistent with this research design. The research department

of the Arizona Department of Corrections reported 90 days were required to issue an

approval to conduct the research, and approval was granted in less than 60 days.

Questionnaires were used to collect data and the DSC scores for analysis, which made it

appropriate for the design of choice. The DSC was used as an instrument because it also

aligns with the social control theory and social ties theory, making it appropriate for use

in this study.

Questions posed in this study relied on 2X2 chi-square analysis to answer the

research questions. The categorical IV necessitated this type of analysis, and the DVs

recidivism, support, parole compliance, and self-control deemed computing the

percentage of women who had at least one prior conviction from the total sample scores.

The DSC is a continuous variable, so it required the use of an independent t test to

measure the results of the DSC scale.

The design choice was not consistent with any other research found regarding this

study. My review of previous research conducted by Garcia-Hallett (2019), Nuytiens and

Christieans (2016), along with Opsal (2015) as qualitative research designs revealed in-

depth information into the experiences of female offenders and those who resumed

motherhood. However, many researchers lacked significant measures to determine

whether resuming motherhood was a situation that states can use to give the women

incentive to desist criminal activity. Thus, this study was guided by a quasi-experimental

design to provide knowledge that can be used to assist parole officers, parole boards, and

correction departments to develop more programs to support female offenders resuming motherhood while on parole.

Methodology

Population

The population for this study included female offenders on parole who were first-time offenders or had previous convictions. The study was designed for women between 18 and 45 years old who have custody of at least one minor child or no children at all. Some of the women who participated were over 50 years of age, but they were removed from the sample, though it is possible that they had custody or were caregivers of minor children. It was preferred participants from both disadvantaged neighborhoods and neighborhoods of higher socioeconomic status. From an estimated size of approximately 200 to 300 female offenders, it was difficult to gather the required 128 participants with the location of only one parole office.

Sampling and Sampling Procedures

Participants' parole officers provided access to all the female parolees from their caseloads, making this a convenience sampling strategy. The parole officers were interested in this research and asked participants if they would be willing to volunteer for this study. More than 250 female offenders were in this office, but many of the women did not want to participate. All the women who participated in the study came from one central region of the city. The sample of 128 parolees were selected conveniently from the list of women on the parole officer's caseload. The sample population were presented

with a questionnaire that addressed minimal demographic information. No names, addresses, or personal information were included on the questionnaires. The sample groups selected came from the participating population based on the results of their questionnaires.

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame consisted of all female offenders on parole who fell within the specified age range considered for this study. Though there were a few outliers due to age over the requested limit, most of the females ranged between 18 and 45 years old. Arizona considers anyone tried in adult court to be an adult, so 18 years old was the youngest age for a participant to be accepted. All participants were required to read, write, and understand English. All participants were given return addressed envelopes, though many chose to take them home and returned the questionnaires in envelopes with their parole officers for pick up after completion.

Ethnicity and race were not a considered factor. None of the participants were eliminated from the study because of ethnicity, race, national origin, sexual preference, or religious preference. Socioeconomic status was considered to determine whether the participant is at, above, or below the poverty level, because poverty seemed to be a factor included in previous research. All participants resided in Arizona. Juveniles, women over the age of 45, and men were eliminated from this study.

Power Analysis

A power analysis was conducted using G-Power 3.1. G-Power is a tool that computes statistical power analyses for different types of statistical tests using an analysis-by-design approach (Stat Trek, 2015). Certain input parameters were required to conduct the power analyses. The first input parameter was effect size, which is a standardized way of quantifying a difference or a relationship. Effect sizes can be categorized as small (.30), medium (.50), and large (.80; Cohen, 1969). This study worked well by utilizing a medium effect size (.50).

The second parameter was the alpha level. The alpha level referred to the level of significance. It was the possibility of making a Type I error or the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when it was true (Stat Trek, 2015). The significance level for this study was $p < .05$. This meant that the probability of the result occurring due to chance was less than .05 or less than five times out of 100, as $p < .05$ is the level of significance used in social sciences (Field, 2019).

The third required parameter was the power level. Power level referred to the degree of confidence one had in the results obtained from the study. The minimum accepted power level was .80 (Stat Trek, 2015). A range of power of .80–.95 was elected in order to provide more flexibility in obtaining the required sample size for the purpose of this study.

A 2X2 chi-square analysis with a medium effect size ($w = .30$), an alpha level of .05, a power level that ranged from .80–.95, and a sample size of 88–145 was required.

An independent sample *t* test with a medium effect size ($d = .50$), and a power level that ranged from .80–.95 required a sample size of 128. Because the power analysis for the independent samples *t* test required the largest sample size, the range of 128–210 was sought with 128 the actual sample size obtained. Figure 1 provides an illustration of G-Power.
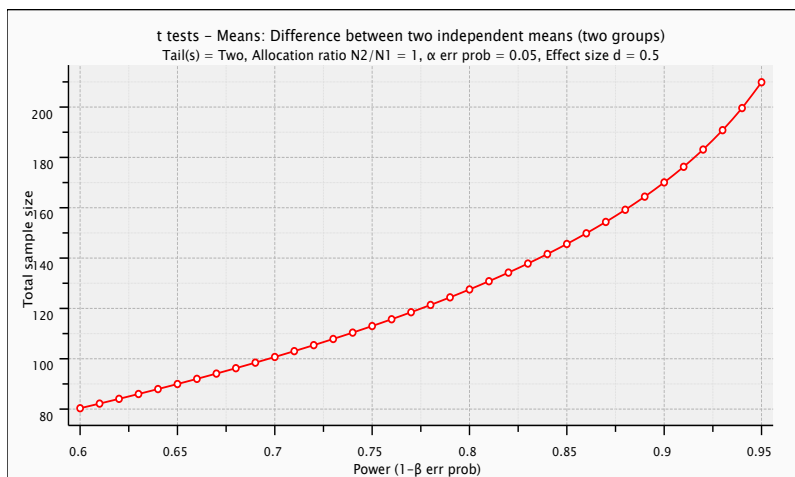
Figure 1. Power analysis.

Procedure for Recruitment and Collection

The Department of Corrections, though not part of the study, approved the recruitment process for obtaining female parolees. I asked permission to sit in an office so that parolees were approached as they entered their parole office. Parolees were introduced to the study via written invitation. Parolees who acknowledged their willingness to participate in the study verbally were given an informed consent form, the

DSC scale (see Appendix A), and a questionnaire (see Appendix B). The participating women needed only to complete the questionnaire and the DSC scale, then return them to me by mail or in person. They were given a self-addressed stamped envelope provided with the survey. Some participants returned the surveys to their parole officers to bring back to the office. All the participants were chosen based on the answers given on the survey. The survey contained data that included information such as the participants' age, whether there were minor children living with them, marital status, employment, income, and the number of times incarcerated. The survey included no personal information to identify the participants in the study.

Participants were able to complete the informed consent form and questionnaires in the office where they could ask questions. Written instructions were on the consent forms. The women were instructed that participation in this study was strictly on a voluntary basis and there would be no monetary compensation for their participation. The consent form allowed the participants to drop out of the study at any point in time without any problems by sending an e-mail, a letter, or a phone call withdrawing from the study with my contact information supplied on the invitation. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the study is voluntary and dropping out carried no repercussions.

The participants were subdivided into two groups based on the answers provided on the questionnaires. This group was divided into mothers and nonmothers. Contrast coding was utilized for the two groups. Mothers were coded 1 and nonmothers were coded -1. An attempt was made to select an equal number of women with children and

women without children. It was less likely that the number of women who have previously recidivated would be equal in either group of women.

The informed consent included a description of the research, the purpose, potential risks and benefits, estimated length of time it would take to complete the study, information regarding confidentiality, how the information was stored, and a discussion on ethical concerns. Data were collected from the answers presented on the questionnaires. After the questionnaire and DSC scale had been completed and returned, the participant exited the study. Any questions were directed to me or the research participant advocate.

Instrumentation and Operationalization of the Construct

Two instruments were used for this study: a questionnaire and the DSC scale. Answers from the questionnaire that I created were utilized to separate the IVs into two subgroups of mothers and nonmothers. Numerical values assigned to each of the two groups were entered into version 24 of the IBM SPSS Software. The second instrument used for this study was the DSC. Further discussion of the questionnaire and DSC continues in this chapter.

Dispositional Self-Control Scale (short form). Ein-Gar and Steinhart (2011) designed the DSC scale to measure the degree of self-regulation that an individual had in certain situations. Self-regulation refers to an individual who did not think about the consequences of their actions, where the need for immediate gratification might supersede their ability to see past the instant fulfillment. This instrument was suited for

this study because most inmates recidivated because they were unable to realize the consequences of their actions and acted to gain immediate gratification.

The theoretical framework for this scale was self-regulation as well as resource depletion. Ein-Gar and Steinhart (2011) argued that individuals have a limited pool of resources when they are actively required to change, override, or regulate their responses to stimuli. Because this pool of resources is so limited, engagement of these resources in many different self-regulating tasks reduces the ability of the individual's performance in successive tasks (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). For instance, if an unplanned task that presents itself would deplete the pool of resources, the task would be an impulsive response. Negative effects of depletion of performance in self-regulation include increased smoking, over-eating, alcohol abuse, credit card use, and aggressive behavior (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). This instrument was made available through the Walden Library under Tests and Measures; thus, no written permission was required.

Concepts measured by the Dispositional Self-Control Scale. The most prominent dispositional attribute of self-regulation is self-control. It is the stable ability to override or inhibit behaviors, urges, emotions, or desires that would interfere with a goal-directed behavior (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). The dispositional attribute is the facilitating driver of performance for one who is under depleted states (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). Individuals with high dispositional attributes (high self-control) are better able to regulate their behavior and accomplish their goal-directed task even when resources have been depleted. Situational involvement is another facilitating driver for

self-regulation. If the involvement in a situation to which the directed goal is perceived as important or desired, it is performed even under a state of depleted resources (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). This instrument was appropriate to measure DSC. It was necessary to determine if the female offenders had the ability to self-regulate their own behavior, as it pertained to complying with parole requirements and not reoffending.

Validity and reliability. Four studies were conducted using tests and pre-tests on the author's' hypotheses that resource depleted individuals would behave in the following manner (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). Only the first test resulted in description of the validity and reliability of the DSC scale required for the purpose of this research. The study consisted of two tasks. Individuals who had high DSC, and situational involvement, performed an unexpected second task worse than an individual high in only one facilitating driver (dispositional attribution or situational involvement) when presented with an unexpected task. This was referred to as having the *sprint mindset.* The mindset is suggestive of an individual planning to do well when only one task is presented. Those faced with an expected second task, and have a high DSC and situational involvement, will perform better than those high on only one facilitating driver (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). The expected task allows the individual to set up a *marathon mindset.* An individual who expects a second task mentally prepares for it and can carry it through without the loss of resources (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011).

The findings in the two tests confirmed a positive effect of each driver (DSC and situational involvement). The first pre-test confirmed that situational involvement

enhances performance in two successive self-regulating tasks when involvement was introduced prior to the two tasks. The second pre-test of self-control enhanced performance in two successive self-regulating tasks. Those with increased self-control performed better than participants with decreased self-control did in both tasks (Ein-Gar and Steinhart, 2011).

Administration and scoring. The study was conducted using actual shoppers at the grocery store. Shoppers were approached twice by the researchers, once upon entering the store, and again after the purchasing completed. Shoppers who were informed about the study were handed a short self-report questionnaire on self-control. Next, they were presented the involvement manipulation. Lastly, they were given the attention allocation instructions, designed to deplete resources while shopping (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011).

The DSC scale contained two items which addressed temptation such as: I can work effectively toward long-term goals while resisting temptations along the way and, usually when tempted I manage to resist temptation (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). These two items were positively correlated. The involvement was manipulated through stated sample size. Those in high involvement conditions were told they were participants with less than 50 other members. Those with low involvement conditions were told they were participants with more than 1000 members, and scores of each of the groups would be added together so they needed to be very honest (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011).

Resource depleted shoppers were expected to enjoy their experiences less than that of non-depleted shoppers. The results of non-depleted shoppers were significant (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). Impulse purchases were classified after purchases were completed. As hypothesized, highly involved participants with high self-control were more likely to engage in impulse buying than participants with low self-control. Findings showed the individuals who were highly involved shoppers with high self-control were even more likely to engage in impulsive purchases than shoppers with both low self-control and involvement. (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011).

Strength of the Study

The strengths of the study conducted by Ein-Gar and Steinhart (2011) differed from the studies in previous research in the timing of the introduction of involvement manipulation. This study which consisted of the involvement manipulation occurred prior to the depleting task, and the subsequent task (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). The involvement manipulation that was introduced prior to the experiment gave the shoppers the opportunity to increase their resources and prepare themselves for any unexpected second tasks.

Data Analysis Plan

Statistical analysis software utilized for the data analysis in this study was IBM SPSS Software, version 24, provided by Walden University. If known errors were in any of the data entered the software, the data in error was cleaned by converting it into "missing" data, and the remaining data entered the software was not changed. None of

the data obtained and entered was in error since I collected and reviewed the data. No outside dataset was utilized.

Research Questions, Hypotheses, and Statistical Tests

Research Question 1: Whether resuming motherhood, while reentering the community on parole, increases the risk of recidivism.

For research question one, and hypothesis one, a chi-square 2X2 analysis was utilized, dichotomizing female offenders (mothers and nonmothers). Recidivism was dichotomized: (had zero prior conviction, had one, or more, prior convictions). The specific rate of recidivism resulted from computing the percentage of women with zero, or at least one, prior conviction out of the total sample.

$H1_{0:}$ - Resuming motherhood, while reentering the community on parole, does not increase the risk of recidivism.

$H1_{a:}$ - Resuming motherhood, while reentering the community on parole, increases the risk of recidivism.

Research Question 2: Whether women with children are more likely to receive support from family than women without children are.

Research question two, and hypothesis two, continued with the investigation via chi-square 2X2 analysis, dichotomizing motherhood as mothers and nonmothers. Dichotomization of receipt of support from family remained: (yes or no).

$H2_0$: Children will have no significance on whether the female offender will receive support from family.

$H2_a$: Children will have a significant impact on whether the female offender will receive support from family.

Research Question 3: Whether women with children are more likely to receive community support than women without children are.

Research question three, and hypothesis three, continued investigation with a chi-square 2X2 analysis. Motherhood status remained dichotomized (mothers or non-mothers). Receipt of support from community was dichotomized (yes or no).

$H3_0$: Female offenders, who have custody of children, are not likely to receive more community support than women without children are.

$H3_a$: Female offenders, who have custody of children, receive significantly more community support than nonmothers are.

Research Question 4: Whether mothers are more likely to violate parole, than non-mothers, due to strict parole governance.

Research question four, and hypothesis four, was analyzed using a chi-square 2X2 analysis. Motherhood status was dichotomized: (mothers and nonmothers). Parole violations was dichotomized: (yes or no).

$H4_0$:   Strict parole governance will have no effect on female offenders with children.

$H4_a$: Strict parole governance increases the risk of mothers violating parole.

Research Question 5: Whether there is a significant difference in dispositional self-control between mothers and nonmothers.

Research question five, and hypothesis five, was analyzed using an independent *t test*. The IV was motherhood status with two categories (mothers and nonmothers). The continuous DV was DSC as measured by the DSC scale. The scores were compared between mothers and non-mothers and dichotomized. DSC was dichotomized: (significant or not significant).

$H5_0$: There is no significant difference in dispositional self-control between mothers and nonmothers.

$H5_a$: There is a significant difference in dispositional self-control between mothers and nonmothers.

Table 1 illustrates the hypotheses and statistical tests, IV and DVs, and scales of measurement. IBM SPSS, version 24 will be used for analyzes in this study. Statistical tests used to test the hypotheses are 2X2 chi-square analysis and independent samples t-test for the DSC scale. Chi-square analysis is applicable when there is one dichotomous DV influenced by an IV. The IV, motherhood, was subdivided into mothers and non-mothers. A 2X2 chi-square analysis was applied to assess the relationship between motherhood and recidivism. The subdivision of the IV makes this statistical procedure possible. All covariates were included in the chi-square analysis. Past and current research results showed that the covariates were a major factor in recidivism. This is the best statistical analysis to indicate how strongly the covariates influence the DV, recidivism. The results were interpreted by the number of incarcerations of mothers and non-mothers, in addition to the significance of the covariates in each relationship. It was

difficult to predict whether children influenced recidivism based on the differences in previous results of other researchers.

Table 1

Hypotheses and Variables Relates to Statistical Tests and Scales of Measurement

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Scales of Measurement
$H1_0$: Resuming motherhood after release from prison does not contribute to an increased rate of recidivism.	2X2 chi-square	Resumption of Motherhood status	Recidivism Rate	Nominal
$H2_0$: Women with children are less likely to receive help from family, than non-mothers are.	2X2 chi-square	Motherhood status	Receipt of family support	Nominal
$H3_0$: Women with children are less likely to receive community support than non-mothers are.	2X2 chi-square	Motherhood status	Receipt of community support	Nominal
$H4_0$: Mothers are less likely than non-mothers to violate their parole.	2X2 chi-square	Motherhood status	Commission of crimes for money	Nominal
$H5_0$: There is no significant difference in dispositional self-control between mothers and non-mothers	Independent t test	Motherhood status	Dispositional Self-Control	Self-Control: Continuous

Threats to Validity

This researcher employed this design because of its ability to minimize threats to internal, external, construct validity. An external threat to validity was created because this study was only conducted in one county within the State of Arizona. Generalization of the entire female offender population on parole became unlikely. Internal threats to validity included experimental mortality, if any of the women fail to answer all the questions on the survey. Maturation of the individual who had served repeated sentences

or endured long-term sentences gave them the opportunity to age and mature behind bars. Researcher bias was another threat to internal validity. It was addressed by being open and honest with the parole officers, course instructors, participants, and most importantly with myself.

The design on the survey would have been the most revealing threat to construct validity. The questions were designed to cause minimal emotional pain or stress. The stress is impossible to remove because of past events that happened with the women. Many participants' past problems were the reasons for their situation. Threats to statistical conclusions occurred if the participants were not truthful on their survey questions.

Ethical Procedures

Careful consideration was given to the nature of the study, and the sensitivity of the participants. Members of the judicial system are vulnerable adults (Browne et al., 2015) so special care was taken to ensure the confidentiality of their participation and answers to the questionnaires. Personal identification was not obtained. Since the information was obtained at one location, demographics were not included in the data to ensure protection of the participants. Confidential issues were discussed, and all questions answered.

The participants were informed via written consent as to the voluntary status, risks, and benefits for participating in the study. Notification appeared on the consent form that no monetary compensation existed for participating in this study. The consent

form contained verbiage to let participants know they were free to exit the study at any time, without any fear of repercussions or loss of confidentiality. Beyond the possibility of invoking emotional reactions to evaluation questions, scholars must not bring direct harm to examines during the research (American Psychological Association, 2013). Participants were informed in writing that no physical risks were involved, but that the survey contained some sensitive content which may cause some emotional upset. The participants received my contact information and the school's contact information. Informed consent was not necessary nor received at the onset of the research. The participant only needed to indicate she read the consent, understood the study, risks and benefits, and agreed verbally to participate in the study. Data was be stored on a flash drive in a locked cabinet. I will have the only access to the information.

Summary

Chapter 3 detailed information regarding the research design and methodology this study carried out on sampling procedures, data gathered, and analyzation. Ethical concerns and procedures considered and followed throughout this process was addressed. This study employed a quasi-experimental design, applying a quantitative approach. A 2X2 chi-square analysis was adopted for the categorical variable motherhood as the IV. The IV was subdivided into mothers and nonmothers from data collected from the questionnaire. The approach is quantitative because IBM SPSS 24 will be analyzing numerical data. Rational for choosing this approach and design was appropriate because most of the research (recent and past) was qualitative in nature, based on personal

experiences of female offenders. There were no significant measures to examine whether the resumption of motherhood, prior to their reestablishment into their own community was beneficial to their success. Discussions will further describe gathered data, analysis of the data, and the results obtained after the analysis.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to compare the risk of recidivism among women who resumed motherhood and nonmothers during reentry into the community. The intent was to determine whether the return to motherhood would assist the offender in desisting from criminal activity or whether motherhood became a prediction for recidivism due to problems encountered during the reentry process. Research Question 1 related to whether resuming motherhood while reentering the community on parole increases the risk of recidivism. Research Question 2 was whether women with children were more likely to receive support from family, than women without children. Research Question 3 was whether women with children were more likely to receive community support, than women without children. Research Question 4 was whether mothers are more likely to violate parole than non-mothers, due to strict parole governance. Research Question 5 was whether there is a significant difference in DSC between mothers and nonmothers.

Chapter 4 describes the process through which data were collected and analyzed, and the results are displayed. This chapter describes the techniques used to collect data, the number of participants, and the process for cleaning and analyzing the data through IBM SPSS Version 24. The results include the demographic specifics about the sample population and whether it is a representation of the female offender population. Graphs and tables are inserted to provide for a visual representation of the results. Tables

represent the findings of the research questions that were answered in depth. The summary provides a brief overview of Chapter 4.

Data Collection

The time frame to collect data took longer than was described previously. Data collection for this research took 2 years because of the difficulty gaining acceptance with many of the parole offices. There was only one parole office that allowed data collection at its location in Arizona. This parole office supervised a total of 400 parolees, and approximately one-half of the parolees were female. Two hundred surveys were given to the women on parole. One hundred twenty-eight questionnaires were returned, and 35 questionnaires were destroyed due too much information missing, or the participant did not meet the age requirement. Ninety-three surveys were organized, cleaned, and analyzed, of which three of the nonmothers and two of the mothers did not participate in Research Question 3. This resulted in a possible experimental mortality. I was unable to collect more data because there were no more women available to participate in the research at this location.

The ages of the women were divided into four groups ranging from ages 18-25, 26-30, 31-39, 40-45 for each subvariable. Many of the mothers were in the age group 31-39, whereas many of the nonmothers were in the 40-45 age group. There were some older mothers who had minor children in their custody, but they would have been above 50-55. This group was rejected because age-graded informal social control theory suggested that criminal behaviors ceases as the individual ages. Thus, all the

questionnaires of the older women were removed and shredded. Only those received by women in the acceptable age groups were kept. The data were coded and entered into IBM SPSS Version 24. Results were obtained.

Previously G-Power required a medium effect size of 0.5. The medium effect size required 128 participants. During the data collection phase, 128 women received and returned the questionnaires with their answers. However, there were 35 women who were older than the maximum age limit, and these questionnaires were discarded. This reduced the number of active female offenders to 93 participants. This reduction resulted in having to recalculate effect size to determine the magnitude of the statistical power. Using G-Power, the effect size was downsized from medium (0.5) to small (0.3). The alpha remained 0.05 and the power remained at 0.95. The required number of participants necessary to obtain a smaller effect size yielded a sample size of 580 women. Because this number of participants was unobtainable, the effect size was changed to a larger effect size of (0.8) and the confidence level was remained at 0.95. Once the effect size was increased to (0.80), the required number of participants decreased to 84 female offenders. Based on this higher effect size, the 93 participants that were in the study provided enough power to prevent a Type II error of wrongfully failing to reject the null hypothesis, which means that there is not enough evidence to prove anything other than expected has occurred.

Figure 2 depicts the nonrejection area of the null hypothesis in the center of the red curve. The two red tails represent the rejection area of the null hypothesis. The null

hypothesis generally stated that there was no significant relationship among the two groups of women. That being the case, there was not enough evidence to state that a relationship existed. The x-y plot graphs provide a clear depiction of the two independent groups, the effect size of 0.80, and the error probability of 0.95.
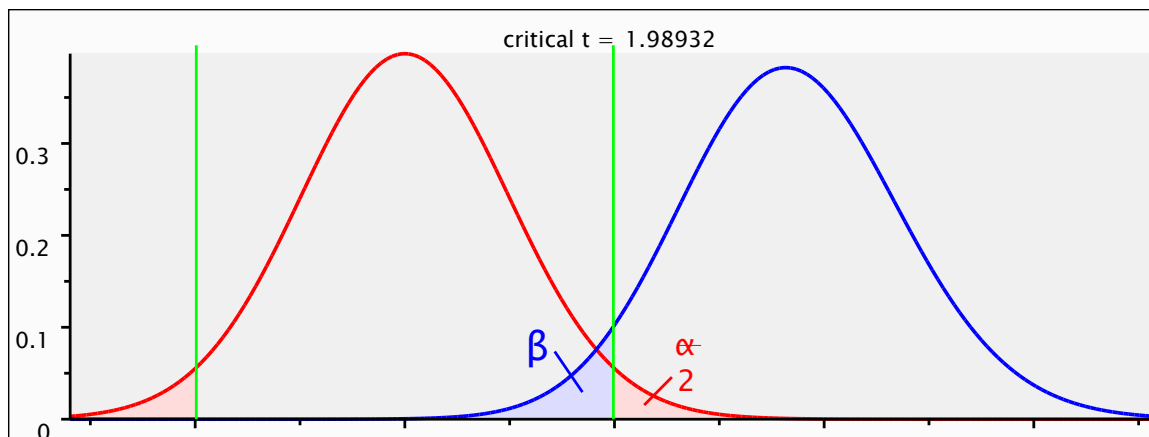

Figure 2. Two independent groups with effect size of 0.80.
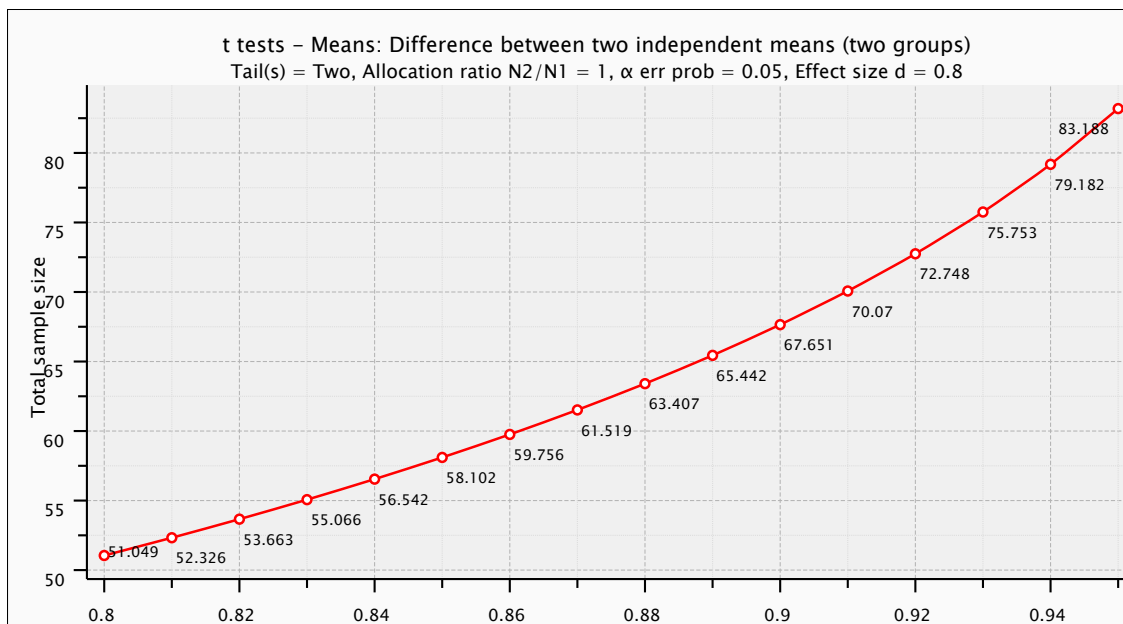
Figure 3. G-Power for reduced number of participants.

Demographic Characteristics

Ninety-three female offenders on parole were surveyed over a 2-year period. The data were divided into four age groups ranging from 18-45. The four age groups were entered into IBM SPSS Version 24. The largest group of the women were mothers at 69.9%, and 30.1% of the women were nonmothers. Characteristics for mothers showed a mean of around 16, and nonmothers showed a mean of around seven (see Table 2).

Table 2

Ages of Participants

Motherhood	*N*	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	*SD*
Mother	65	18	45	16.2500	13.0224
Nonmother	28	18	45	7.000	2.309

The sample obtained did not represent the population of female offenders on parole due to the small number of female offenders who were available. Community supervisors reported that there were 600 female offenders on parole in the county at the time this research was conducted, but I was allowed to conduct this study at only one office. The population was limited and represented a small percentage (15.5%) of the female offenders under community supervision.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

A quasi-experimental design was developed for the purpose of comparing two groups of female offenders reentering the community on parole. The groups were

divided into mothers and nonmothers. Data were gathered using a self-generated

questionnaire and Ein-Gar and Steinhart's (2011) DSC scale, which was obtained from

Walden University. A total of 128 questionnaires were distributed to the participants.

After cleaning the data, 93 were usable questionnaires. Data were entered into SPSS 24

and a 2X2 chi-square analysis utilized to complete the study.

It was anticipated prior to data collection that there would be an equal number of

mothers and nonmothers. However, findings included more mothers than nonmothers.

During the analysis mothers were coded subvariable number 1 and nonmothers were

coded subvariable number 2. The data appeared leptokurtic with the largest number of

outliers in the category of nonmothers. Table 3 shows that the tailedness of the

nonmothers was the heaviest -6.00. Normal distribution has a value of three. Both

subcategories of motherhood represented values below and above the normal distribution

of the means.

Table 3

Kurtosis of Mothers and Nonmothers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	*SD*	Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	*SE*
Var 1	65	6.00	34.00	16.2500	13.02242	.135	2.619
Var 2	28	5.00	9.00	7.0000	2.30940	-6.000	2.619

Note. Minimum expected count was greater than 5.

At the beginning of this research, it was assumed that the distribution of mothers

and nonmothers would be equally distributed for the IV motherhood. Because there was

such a difference in the number of participants in each group, I performed a frequency

distribution analysis to determine the frequency of occurrences of each outcome. The minimum expected count for each group must be greater than 5. The minimum expected count for mothers (Var 1) was greater than 5 and the minimum expected count for nonmothers (Var 2) was exactly 5.

Further, kurtosis is the combined weight of the distribution's tails relative to the center of the distribution; it is the sharpness of the peak in the frequency distribution curve. Kurtosis is like skewness in that it describes the measurement of a distribution in the real-value of a random variable. It expresses itself as the pointedness or the flatness of the distribution. A negative kurtosis has a lighter tail and is flatter given that it has less data in the tail (Field, 2019). Nonmothers had a negative kurtosis statistic, meaning the results were platykurtic (see Table 3), which may be due to a lower number of participants providing less data. It would appear almost as a flat line on a graph. The mothers' variable in contrast had a heavier tail, making the results leptokurtic. If this variable was depicted on a graph it would be pointy and closer to a normal distribution of 3.

Assumption Tests

Assumptions of this research involved the women answering the questions truthfully and that the DSC scale accurately measured the women's DSC to predict recidivism or desistance. A total of 200 questionnaires were passed out to the female offenders. At the end of the data collection phase 128 questionnaires and DSC scales had been returned. A review of collected data showed that 35 participants were over the age

of 45, and further review revealed that five of the participants did not answer Research

Question 3. They were kept in the sample pool because their omission of this question

was important. After cleaning the data, 93 were usable questionnaires. Data were

entered into SPSS 24 and a 2X2 chi-square analysis utilized to complete the study.

The DSC scale measured the self-regulating and DSC of individuals presented

with unexpected tasks in which she would have been able to self-regulate her behavior

(Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). The most prominent attribute of self-regulation is self-

control. It is the individual's stable ability to override impulsive behavior interfering

with their self-directed goal (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). The 2X2 chi-square test of

expected frequencies yielded the smallest expected count of five. The chi-square value of

the frequencies was 20 for mothers and 10 for non-mothers. Values for both mothers

were greater than five and for nonmothers were exactly 5. The assumption was met.

Research Question 1

Whether resuming motherhood, while reentering the community on parole,

increases the risk of recidivism. The related null hypothesis, $H1_0$: Resuming motherhood

while reentering the community on parole does not increase the risk of recidivism.

Alternate hypothesis, H1a: Resuming motherhood while reentering the community on

parole increases the risk of recidivism.

A 2X2 chi-square analysis was conducted with recidivism as the DV and

motherhood as the IV. Motherhood was subdivided into two separate categories, mothers

and non-mothers who reentered the community. The questionnaire specifically asked

how many mothers and nonmothers were serving a second or subsequent term as a

parolee. Mothers and nonmothers indicated by their answers that most of both groups

had previously recidivated. Some of the women recidivated more than three times. One

female offender had been in and out of prison 15 times. The research did not explain

why the women recidivated. The question never asked how many times, though some of

the women wrote the number of times they were incarcerated on the questionnaire.

The analysis showed that the status of motherhood does not increase or decrease

the risk of recidivism. *The* risk of recidivism was not significantly different between the

two groups of women 67.9% versus 64.6%, (p = .76). Therefore, the null hypothesis was

retained. Findings showed most of the mothers recidivated, as did the non-mothers.

Table 4 displayed the association between the risk of recidivism and motherhood by

comparing the two groups of offenders.

Table 4

Association Between Risk of Recidivism and Motherhood

	Recidivism			
Motherhood	No		Yes	
	n	%	*n*	%
No	9	32.1	19	67.9
Yes	23	35.4	42	64.6

Note. χ^2 (1, N = 93) = 0.09, p = .76. Cramer's V = .03.

Research Question 2

Whether women, with children, are more likely to receive support from family,

than women without children are. The related null hypothesis $H2_0$: Children will have no

significance on whether the female offender will receive support from family. Alternative Hypothesis H2$_a$: Children will have a significant impact on whether the female offender will receive support from family.

A 2X2 chi-square analysis was conducted with the DV family support, and motherhood as the IV. Motherhood was subdivided into two separate categories. The questionnaire created by this researcher provided information that children did influence support by family members on a very small scale. The number of mothers compared with the number of nonmothers appears to be significant because there are almost twice as many mothers than nonmothers. There was a close relationship among mothers and nonmothers who received family or spousal support based on percentages. However, statistically, family support was not significantly different between the two groups of women with 68.0% versus 63.2%, (p = .67), thus retaining the null hypothesis. Table 5 displays the association between family support, and motherhood by comparing the two groups of offenders.

Table 5

Association Between Family Support and Motherhood

	Family support			
Motherhood	No		Yes	
	n	%	*n*	%
No	8	32.0	17	68.0
Yes	21	36.8	36	63.2

Note. X^2 (1, N = 82) = 0.18, p = .67. Cramer's V = .05.

Research Question 3

Whether women with children are more likely to receive community support than women without children are. The related null hypothesis, $H3_0$: Female offenders who have custody of children are not likely to receive more community support than women without children. Alternative hypothesis, $H3_a$: Female offenders who have custody of children receive significantly more community support than nonmothers.

A 2X2 chi-square analysis was conducted with the DV community support and motherhood as the IV. Motherhood was subdivided into two separate categories, mothers and non-mothers. This researcher noticed while analyzing the data received, only 88 participants replied to this question. Five of the women did not respond to the question as to whether they had received community support. Two of the mothers did not answer the question regarding community support. Three of the nonmothers did not respond. Therefore, this analysis was based on the 88 participants' responses.

Sixty-three of the mothers responded to the questions. This indicated 58.7% received community support with family or friends. The remaining nonmothers, 68% received community support via half-way housing or friends. It is unknown whether those who did not answer were homeless. Many of the women received community support in the way of shelter being provided in half-way houses, transitional housing, and women's shelters. Community support was not significantly different between the two groups of women 68.0% versus 58.7%, ($p = .42$). The null hypothesis was retained. The answers to the questionnaire indicated that more mothers were receiving support from

families and community. Community support was provided to nonmothers more than mothers. The answers to the questionnaire did not indicate whether motherhood had any influence on community support received. Tables 6 displayed the association between community support and motherhood.

Table 6

Association Between Community Support and Motherhood

	Community support			
Motherhood	No		Yes	
	n	%	*n*	%
No	8	32.0	17	68.0
Yes	26	41.3	37	58.7

Note. $\chi^2 (1, N = 88) = 0.65, p = .42$. *Cramer's V* = .09.

Research Question 4

Whether mothers are more likely to violate parole, than nonmothers, due to strict parole governance. The related null hypothesis was $H4_0$: Strict parole governance will have no effect on female offenders with children. Alternative hypothesis, $H4_a$: Strict parole governance increases the risk of mothers violating parole.

A 2X2 chi-square analysis was conducted with the IV, motherhood and the DV, parole violations. Motherhood was subdivided into two separate categories, mothers and nonmothers. All the women on parole remained under the supervision of their parole officers for periods of time after their reentry into the community. The question was designed to discover whether the female offenders endured the strict rules required for maintaining parole without committing criminal activities.

The survey was designed to capture the number of times each group of women were incarcerated, once or more than once. All the participants answered the questions regarding parole violation. The relationship of parole restrictions among all the women were surprising. Strict parole requirements did not prevent the women from returning to prison after their release back to their communities. Twenty-five out of 28 non-mothers were serving their second or third incarceration. The same was true for mothers. Sixty-three out of 65 mothers were repeat felons. Parole violations were not significantly different between the two groups of women regardless of the strictness of the requirements. Eighty-nine percent of the nonmothers versus 96.3% of the mothers recidivated at least once. The null hypothesis was retained. The association between parole violations and motherhood is shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Association Between Parole Violation and Motherhood

	Parole violation			
Motherhood	No		Yes	
	n	%	*n*	%
No	3	10.7	25	89.3
Yes	2	3.2	63	96.3

Note. X^2 (1, $N = 93$) $= 2.24$, $p = .13$. *Cramer's V* $= .16$.

Research Question 5

Research question 5 was whether there is a significant difference in DSC between mothers and nonmothers. A *t* test for independent means was conducted on the answers provide for the (DSC) scale (see Table 8). The *t* test results ($p=.16$) was not significant.

The answers on the DSC scale indicated that there was no significant difference between the two groups of women on their reported DSC. The null hypothesis was retained.

Table 8

T Test for Independent Means for Dispositional Self-Control Scale Based on Motherhood

Motherhood	n	M	SD
No	28	12.39	4.22
Yes	65	13.57	3.42

Note. *t*-test result: $t(91) = 1.42$, $p = .16$. $\eta = .15$.

Summary

The introduction to Chapter 4 discussed the type of research and its initial intent. A detailed description of data collection, analysis, and results were presented in the form of tables and graphs. Five research questions were posed to determine whether resuming motherhood during the reentry into the community would increase the risk of recidivism. Motherhood was subdivided into two groups, mothers and nonmothers. The study was conducted to find the significance between motherhood and recidivism, including three of the covariates that could possibly be largely influenced by the IV.

Dependent variables family support, community support, and parole compliance were analyzed using 2X2 chi-square analysis. The effort determined whether there were any significant relationships between the two groups of women and recidivism. Data were collected from 93 female offenders to compare the relationship between the two groups. Analysis of the data provided evidence that none of the hypotheses were supported. There were no significant relationships among the mothers and nonmothers in the areas of recidivism, family support, community support, strict parole governance, and

DSC. Next to be discussed are interpretation of the findings and comparison of findings

to previous literature. Conclusions and implications were drawn, and a series of

recommendations suggested.

Chapter 5: Discussions, Limitations, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this quantitative study was to investigate whether motherhood would increase the risk of recidivism, as parenting minor children may impede an offender's ability to navigate reentry into the community. Motherhood was the IV divided into two categories: mothers and nonmothers. A quasi-experimental design was conducted to ascertain whether a significant difference existed between mothers and nonmothers in the prediction of recidivism. I hypothesized that motherhood would not increase the risk of recidivism and that with the support of community, friends, and family, recidivism among mothers would be less than nonmothers. Additionally, I hypothesized that mothers would recidivate faster than nonmothers due to the strict governance of community supervision that sometimes do not allow mothers to see their children while on parole. Mothers were also hypothesized to have more self-control than nonmothers and not act impulsively for immediate gain. Based on the results of this study, none of the hypotheses were supported.

Interpretation of Findings

This section contains a discussion of the findings for each research question. The first research question related to whether motherhood increased the risk of recidivism for female parolees. The second and third research questions addressed the family's and community's response toward the women's reentry phase of parole. Research Question 4 was related to how the female offenders responded to the governance of community

supervisors. The fifth research question was designed to examine the differences among mothers and nonmothers with respect to their ability to self-regulate control.

Research Question 1: Recidivism

This study does not confirm that motherhood reduces the risk of recidivism, as the results showed no significant differences in the number of times mothers (64.6%) and nonmothers (67.9%) were incarcerated. This finding is supported by Jung and LaLonde (2015), who found that recidivism between mothers and nonmothers were similar, 38.8% and 41.2% respectively. However, other research has suggested that motherhood is the catalyst for women to desist from criminal activity because of the desire to find a suitable marriage partner or social ties that bind an individual to society and provide social capita that an offender might fear losing if they reoffend (Paternoster, 2016) .

The reentry process is challenging and resuming motherhood for minor children adds additional strain, especially if she is a single mother. Thus, the hypothesis not being supported for Research Question 1 may be due to female offenders not having the emotional, financial, or physical support they need to keep from reoffending. When finances are low, no one to turn to, and no one to help them, they may turn to criminal activity.

Research Questions 2: Family Support

Findings confirmed that most of the female offenders admitted to living with family during their parole. Some reported living with a spouse or significant other. Many of the participants reported being victims of childhood sexual assault but did not

report that this was an issue with living at home with family members. This research

confirms that family support is beneficial in the reentry process but does not confirm that

living with family reduces recidivism.

Most researchers have also suggested that female offenders returning to the

community need a supportive network or family to be successful in the reentry phase of

parole. Recidivism may be inevitable unless the women receive assistance with housing,

employment, finances, substance abuse treatments, and mental health care (Avdibegovic

et al., 2017; Opsal, 2015; Rodermond et al., 2016; Rukus et al., 2016). However, the

main problem with living with family is that victimization was usually committed at the

hands of family members. Childhood victimization is a pathway to criminal activity

leading to incarceration (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014). For instance, children who have

witnessed domestic violence have developed misaligned emotional states that advanced

to behavioral expressions that manifested as anxiety, oppositional defiant disorders,

conduct disorders, proactive and reactive aggression, and PTSD (Bayles et al., 2014).

Anxiety and PTSD have been major contributors of female victimization, which

indirectly contributes to female offending (Few-Demo & Arditti, 2014).

Further, living with family sometimes provides too much freedom for the

offender. If there are other family members there to leave the children with, she is able to

hang out with her friends who may be the same friends she had prior to incarceration.

Social relationships are the greatest predictors of criminal involvement (Salvatore &

Markowitz, 2014). Additionally, social factors are a large contributory influence on

female offenders (Jung & LaLonde, 2015), which is why living with family may not assist in reducing recidivism. Another reason is that impoverished family members lack family resources that include inheritance, social capital, and cultural capital that is passed down from generation to generation. If an offender grew up in a household of criminal offenders, this way of life would have been passed down from parent to child (Jung & LaLonde, 2015).

Research Question 3: Community Support

Findings indicated that many of the women who were depending on community support did not have family support and were nonmothers. Additional findings showed that 68% of nonmothers received community support through half-way houses, transitional houses, or shelters. Fifty-eight percent of mothers who were not able to find housing or family assistance reported the same information. Findings for this research question did not support the hypothesis that women with children were more likely to receive community support.

Previous researchers have noted that women released from prison return to their previous neighborhoods. Most of these neighborhoods are disadvantaged and lack housing and employment opportunities (Barrick et al., 2014). Though mothers are more likely to find housing in public housing complexes, nonmothers are left to find living arrangements in community shelters, half-way houses, and transitional houses, which have a maximum 30 days stay. Shelters are also limited on occupancy and time allowed to stay there. Women who are unable to get into or remain in the shelters are forced to be

homeless, which leaves a woman vulnerable for victimization. Unstable housing

increases the risk for recidivism (Wattanaporn & Holtfreter, 2014).

Research Question 4: Parole Compliance

This research question addressed strict parole governance and how it affected

mothers and nonmothers. All the women responded to the question regarding community

supervision. Findings showed most of the nonmothers (89.3%) and mothers (96.3%)

reported that they would not violate parole although the requirements were strict. Sixty-

three of the mothers reported strict parole governance made being on parole difficult but

would not cause them to violate it. But data analysis from Research Question 4 indicated

most of the mothers and nonmothers had served more than one prison term, which was

indicative of parole violation at some point in time. Thus, the null hypothesis was

retained, as there was no significant difference between the women.

Parole is an institution of post-released supervision of individuals as they

reintegrate into their communities (Opsal, 2015). Parolees are required to follow a set of

preestablished rules and remain crime free during this process that includes restrictions

on mobility, residency changes, stores they can enter, or employment (Opsal, 2015).

Additionally, friends and families with previous criminal records must be avoided, and

children living family members who were in the criminal justice system are kept from

their paroled mothers (Opsal, 2015).

Parole compliance is difficult for mothers and nonmothers. Some parolees find it

difficult to keep their monthly meetings with the parole officers due to a lack of

transportation. Few of these women have cars or a license to drive (Johnson, 2014).

Financial reasons also prevent some from maintaining mechanical repairs on vehicles.

Many of these women have the financial burden of having to pay friends, or family

members to take them to their meetings (Johnson, 2014), as any violation of parole

conditions could lead to increased supervision or reincarceration (Opsal, 2015).

Research Question 5: Dispositional Self Control Scale

Research Question 5 addressed the DSC questionnaire and the DSC scale. An

independent *t* test was performed to determine if the DV, DSC, was influenced by the IV.

The results of the *t* test revealed no significant difference between the IV motherhood and

the DV DSC. Thus, there was no significant difference between mothers and nonmothers

concerning DSC. The participants did not inhibit behaviors that interfered with their goal

directed behavior, which was to remain crime-free. Therefore, the results confirmed that

mothers and nonmothers lacked self-control, and it was highly probable they would not

comply with the rules of community supervision in the future.

These results relate to the theoretical framework of DSC on self-regulation and

resource depletion. Individuals have a limited supply of resources when they are required

to override, change, or regulate their responses to stimuli (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011).

Most participants recidivated from lack of ability to realize consequences of their actions

and acted to gain immediate gratification. Further, the most prominent dispositional

attribute of self-regulation is self-control, which is the ability to not act on behaviors that

interfere with goals (Ein-Gar & Steinhart, 2011). Lack of self-control is a contributing

factor in recidivism. However, results showed that the DV self-control was not influenced by motherhood.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations is the use of a questionnaire, meaning the participants' information was subjective. The questions on the researcher-generated questionnaire did not allow for the provision of fully detailed information that was needed for this research. The questions could have been specific to the subject to obtain more accurate information. Additionally, an attempt to stay away from sensitive information may have led to less comprehensive answers. Response bias could have also affected the outcome of the research.

Further, participant truthfulness was the basis of the research. Research validity depended on the truthfulness of the participants on the questionnaire and the DSC scale. The participants who did not answer all the questions placed the research in jeopardy of experimental mortality. For instance, five participants did not answer Research Question 3. Answers that were biased would have also skewed the outcome. Reliability of the results of the DSC scale also depended on the truthfulness of the women's answers, though the DSC scale has been shown to be a reliable instrument that was appropriate to measure the behaviors of the offenders. Participants could have also negatively affected the research results if they had answered the questions with what they thought I wanted rather than the truth.

The research was limited to the number of participants available for the study. There were only a sample population of 200 female offenders. One hundred twenty-eight women volunteered to participate. Thirty-five were rejected because they exceeded the age requirement. Ninety-three participants were chosen to remain in the study. The loss of 35 participants meant that the effect size needed to be recalculated to ensure enough power to prevent a type II error. The medium effect size required a total of 128 participants, a smaller effect size required a sample of 580 participants. A calculation of the effect size to a larger size of 0.80 rendered the 93 participants functional (pg. 79). The research would have been much more robust had there been a larger population from which to acquire a sample. This research does not meet the criteria for generalizability because there was only one location that allowed the researcher to work through and only 93 participants in the population sample.

Recommendations

It is important to understand the characteristics of the female offender and their trajectory to criminology. Reentry programs appear to be designed based on behaviors and needs of men. Gender differences were not considered in earlier research. Policies should be based on thorough understanding of the factors that influenced women's effort to reenter the community (Chen & Adams, 2019). Policy makers should understand the trajectories that condemned women to prison in the first place. Policy makers should realize that the current justice system is designed to punish criminals by incarceration (King, 2018). These policies could have an important impact on the female parolees,

their families and communities, labor force, economy, and public safety (Chen & Adams, 2019). Past research has proven that females commit crimes for several reasons. Crimes are committed out of poverty or lack of financial assistance, substance abuse, and those suffering with mental disorders (McCormick, 2015; Rodermond et al., 2016; Spencer et al., 2017; Stone et al., 2016).

One of my research questions asked if any of the women had any mental illnesses, were on psychiatric medication or being treated for psychiatric issues. Very few responded positively to that question. Having worked with mentally ill females, I know that some of them boast about their mental illness when it is to their advantage, while others sit in silence and deny its existence. I recommend, for those quiet sufferers, that education be given to the community for recognition of these issues in our community, so that proper action can be taken to prevent an imminent crime.

Recommendations outlined by McCormick et al. (2015) concerning the criminal justice system and mental health are current issues facing our reentry processes today. Past research suggested that mental illness is directly responsible for women's involvement in criminal activity (McCormick, 2015). I recommend that Arizona acquire a better understanding of mental health issues surrounding our community today. I recommend police officers learn to assess individuals for mental illness before trying to make an arrest. There are other measures that can be taken.

Major cities in my state have urgent psychiatric care facilities where severely or acutely mentally ill individuals can be taken for evaluation of mental illness, and a

treatment recommendation can be made. I recommend these facilities be utilized by police officers and first responders if the need arises. I also recommend training for the people most likely to encounter individuals with mental illness as to how to approach them.

In order to prevent recidivism, I recommend extending child-care hours to evenings and nights to help young working mothers who are trying to reenter their communities. Sometimes only night jobs are open and available to these women. This is one area of community support that will be of benefit to female offenders who have custody of their children. If mothers know their children are cared for, they may continue working to provide for their needs instead of returning to criminal activity.

This researcher also recommended community education to assist with ex-offenders gaining access to housing. I recommend that vouchers be given to mothers and non-mothers to assist with suitable living arrangements. Ex-felons in Arizona are not allowed to live in many of the apartment complexes. Education is not only for the community. It is also for the ex-offenders to better prepare the women for seeking and maintaining employment. Education in social-skills and job skills are recommended because it is the most important tool that prevents recidivism among the female offender.

This research has proven that there is no difference between mothers and non-mothers in their trajectory to crime, nor is there a difference in the support with the reentry process. Therefore, a prosocial network through neighborhood programs is recommended to work towards making the transition from incarceration to community

living less challenging. If all facets of the community worked together my recommendations can become a future reality.

Implications

Positive Social Change

This research presented the potential for positive social change for the female offender, their families, and the community. Past research has shown society and policy makers that there has been a large gap in research pertaining to female criminology and reentry into the community (Michalsen & Flavin, 2014). Focus had been on the risk and needs of their male counterparts. It was very important to understand the problems that led to the initial incarceration of the female offender. It was important that information was provided about how to prevent situations that occurred in the past.

Positive social change will arrive from knowledge of what is needed to reduce the risks of recidivism. This is the first step toward social change for the female offender who is returning to her community. Setting obtainable goals and following through are necessary to reduce recidivism. The community must address known issues such as removing housing obstacles, establishing skills training, and jobs for women who are released from prison. This will give them a viable chance of completing the reentry program successfully. Counseling should be provided for women who have been victimized as a child or adult, before they become criminal offenders. It will eliminate any chance that they might ever recidivate, if they were never convicted of a crime.

Research has documented proof that women's challenges were in the areas of substance abuse, mental health disorders, neighborhoods lacking prosocial opportunities and networks, and family members who had broken the law or victimized the women (Stone et al., 2016). Substance abuse may be co-morbid with mental illness. Positive social change will come from learning how the justice system can be of help, rather than a hinderance, for females with co-morbid occurrences. Individuals who suffer from mental illness, in addition to substance abuse, will be recognized and treatment provided for both the pre-offender and ex-offender. Substance use becomes abuse because, in many cases, the user was trying to self-medicate to achieve relief from the internal pain they were experiencing. Helping communities and community supervisors understand that substance abuse treatments and mental health treatments cannot be separated and can be treated together (Bayles & Villalobos, 2015). Female reentry can be less challenging by improving neighborhood relations and community support. The risk of recidivism will be reduced.

Previous research supported the beliefs that many women were primary caregivers of minor children at the time of their arrest and their primary goal was to reunite with their children (Adams et al., 2016). Positive social change will be achieved for the families and the ex-offenders who are able realize their dreams. Whether motherhood is a catalyst for recidivism or desistance has not been totally proven. There are many underlying factors that have not yet been investigated through research. Motherhood is stressful. Resuming motherhood exacerbates that stress for mothers who

have been away from their children for long periods of time. Stress is further increased because the children are also affected by having their mother home, and in a parenting role again. Female offenders returning home to their children should have special parenting classes before resuming custody. Mothers need to relearn coping skills for situations in which they are returning for the first time. Grandmothers and grandfathers will be relieved of the parenting roles they have played for so long. Now they can be present in their grandchildren's lives without becoming primary parents for the second or third time. Mothers would not lose their children to foster care or adoption by someone outside of the family.

Positive social change will benefit the community by increasing a population of productive women. Women accepted into the community can obtain employment. The public attitude of ex-offenders will no longer exist. Nonmothers and mothers will be able to secure safe housing. Communities will increase neighborhood protection. Classes will be taught to prevent domestic and stranger victimization. Overall criminal activity will be reduced, and the risk of recidivism will decrease.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter discussed the quasi experimental design that applied a 2X2 chi-square analysis to this quantitative research. The purpose of this research was to investigate whether the resumption of motherhood increased the risk of recidivism by comparing the post criminal behaviors of mothers to non-mothers. One hundred twenty-eight volunteers applied to participate in the research. Ninety-three participants were

accepted. A questionnaire created by this researcher was given to the participants, along with a DSC questionnaire. The answers to the questionnaire were analyzed using the 2X2 chi-square analysis. The DSC questionnaires were analyzed using the DSC scale.

The implications mentioned in this research is the ideal solution for ex-female offenders reentering the community. Findings from this research identified all the problems that women faced before and after imprisonment. This researcher discovered issues that women endured which led them to criminal activity. The challenges they endured after incarceration were well documented. Ex-female offender reentry into their former communities were met with great difficulty. The women were faced with economic disadvantages, inadequate and unstable housing, few employment opportunities, and lacked prosocial networks. Parole requirements were complicated by community supervision and political rules. Some of the women were attempting to regain custody of their children, while others were prohibited from seeing them.

Findings from this research provided data that revealed motherhood did not influence recidivism, nor did mothers desist from criminal activity. Many ex-offenders reported in previous research that they did not contribute desistance to their children. Three distinct theories contributed to the desistance of female offenders (Adams et al., 2016). Age-graded informal social control theory was one of the theories that contributed to desistance. This theory suggested that women aged out of committing crimes (Adams, et al., 2016). Another theory of desistance was cognitive transition theory. Motherhood was identified as having cognitive shifts involved in change and agency. Identity theory,

fear of being the kind of person one does not want to be, induced the new and positive image of the individual she wanted to be, thus created the potential for change (Adams et al., 2016).

The women in this study presented evidence that as many mothers were incarcerated more than once, just as non-mothers. Findings revealed that throughout this research all questions indicated no significant difference between mothers and non-mothers. The female offenders in this research did not conform with any of the theories mentioned in previous studies. Social change presents a model for a perfect society. This paradigm did not exist throughout the findings in this research. Change needs to be promoted among the members of the communities, but more importantly within the female offenders.

Recommendations were made that could possibly improve female reentry by eliminating some of the challenges. Community supervisors may be encouraged to be less strict and more helpful in keeping their parolees from resorting to criminal activity. Communities should come together and improve hiring practices by eliminating background checks on those who are known ex-felons. Housing authorities should be willing to assist ex-offenders obtain housing by supplying vouchers to those on the lower economic scale. Education is another important factor in the prevention of recidivism. All ex-female offenders should receive assistance with going back to school. The offender, the community, and community supervision would improve if the women were better equipped to be self-sufficient by legal means. I recommend more research on this

matter. There is a lot more to be understood about the challenges of female offender

reentry and elimination of the challenges that affect their returning to a normal life.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

1. What is your age? 18 to 25 _____; 26 to 30_____; 31 to 39_____; 40 to 45 _____; 46+ _____

2. Do you have children living with you under the age of 18?   Yes _____; No _____

3. Are you married or live with a significant other? Yes _____; No _____

4. Do you have income? Yes _____; No _____   If yes, answer question #5.

5. Employment _____; family assistance _____; community assistance _____

6. Do you live in your own home? Yes _____; No _____. If no, answer #7-9.

7. With friends or family? Yes _____; No _____

8. Community shelter? Yes _____; No_____

9. Transitional living or halfway house? Yes _____; No _____

10. Do you have any health problems? Yes _____; No _____

11. Have you ever been victimized as a child, or adult? Yes _____; No _____

12. Were you victimized by family, or friend? Yes _____; No _____

13. Have you ever, or are you currently, in substance abuse treatment? Yes _____; No _____

14. Have you ever, or are you currently, in mental health treatment? Yes _____; No _____

15. How many times have you been incarcerated? Once _____; Twice_____; or more _____

16. Do you find that having custody of your children make it harder to comply with conditions of your parole? Yes _____; No _____

17. Have you ever violated parole because of an issue that occurred with your children?

    Yes _____; No _____

18. If there were an occurrence that involved your children, would you violate your parole?

    Yes _____; No _____

Return of this questionnaire indicates your voluntary participation in this study.