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SUCCESSFUL OUTCOMES OF ADULT EX-OFFENDERS

"CATALYST TO CHANGE"

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Colleen Crowley-Ames
Phyllis Paulette McNeal

June 2003


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Approved by:



Dr. Trang Hoang, Faculty Supervisor
Social Work

Date 6/3/03



Dr. Rosemary McCaslin,
M.S.W. Research Coordinator

ABSTRACT

This descriptive, statistical survey research design sought to identify factors that motivate individuals to stay crime free after serving time in prison. The purpose of this research study was to examine the factors that played a significant role in recidivism. All respondents (n = 79) were asked to complete a survey that measured six independent variables. The independent variables consisted of employment, support system, arrest history, income, treatment services, and facing three-strikes. The dependent variable measured ex-offenders' outcome of successful parole. There were two comparison groups, group one consisted of those ex-offenders who were successfully discharged from parole one to five years. Group two consisted of ex-offenders who were successfully discharged from parole six to fifteen years. The results showed that support system, change of environment, employment, and their parole agent were significant in preventing recidivism. Findings also demonstrated that the ex-offenders develop more informal services rather than formal services in relations to treatment services. Social work implications involve the need for collaboration between law enforcement and the Parole and Community Services Division. Also, there is a need for interagency

collaboration among treatment and support services for parolees. Further, study limitations were discussed and implications for future research were discussed. More research on specific areas of needs for parolees would be beneficial.

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Finally, we would like to thank each other, for personal determination and genuine friendship throughout the years. Both of us showed one another compassion during

our times of crisis. We brought out the best of each other and created this friendship that will last a lifetime.

CCA

Researcher Phyllis P. McNeal first, would like to give honor and praise to my heavenly Father for giving me the strength, perseverance, guidance and determination to attain my Master of Social Work degree. To my devoted, supportive, compassionate, and understanding supervisor, Donald Petway. You have continued to support me throughout my years in the program. Without your supportive help and continued words of encouragement, this dream would not have a happy ending. Rosalind Watford, my dear co-worker and dear friend, you have been there for me, every mountain I had to climb. I truly value your friendship and assistance in this journey.

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PPM

DEDICATION

This research study is dedicated to all the adult ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole, and to The Straight Talk Program.

"GUILTY OF INNOCENCE"

If a child has never been taught...the right way...in which to go...

And, is allowed to choose...whatever path...it wishes to follow...

When that child...reaches the age of accountability...and is held responsible...

for it's reckless behavior...

Often, these poor misguided souls...will be tried...in a court of law...

convicted of their crimes...

& sentenced to jail time...

But, rarely...will any of them...ever be found...

Guilty of Innocence...

Just, ignorance...which is not an

Excusable offense...by the law...

Dorisa1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
Problem Statement	2
Purpose of the Study	6
Significance of the Project for Social Work	9
California Policies	12
California Proposition 36	15
Gun Control Policy in United States	16
Capital Punishment Policy in the United States	16
Hypothesis	17
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	19
Literature Review	19
Theories Guiding Conceptualization	29
Summary	31
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS	
Introduction	33
Study Design	33
Assumptions	38
Limitations	38

Sampling	39
Data Collection and Instruments	39
Operational Definitions	40
Procedures	41
Protection of Human Subjects	42
Data Analysis	44
Summary	45
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	
Introduction	47
Presentation of the Findings	48
Discussion of the Findings	55
Summary	62
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	63
Limitations	66
Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research	66
Conclusions	68
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE	69
APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM	74
APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT	76
REFERENCES	78
ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE	81

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Race of Respondent	48
Table 2. Number of Treatment Services	53
Table 3. Group Statistics for Treatment Services	53
Table 4. t-Test for Number of Treatment Services between 2 Groups	54
Table 5. Contributing Factors of Successful Discharge	56

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Age of Respondent 49

Figure 2. Educational Background of Ex-Offenders 50

Figure 3. What Crime Committed 51

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This study examined both male and female adult ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole. The researchers utilized two comparison groups. The first group examined the ex-offenders that have been discharged from parole from one to five years. The second group examined the ex-offenders that have been discharged from parole from six to fifteen years. In addition, this study focused on the contributing factors, if any, that enhanced the two group's ability to successfully discharge from parole.

This study explored the reasons, attitudes, behavior, and socialization that facilitate adult ex-offenders to lead a positive, criminal-free lifestyle after their prison term. There are ex-offenders who successfully discharge from parole and there are some ex-offenders who continue to go through that revolving door. The researchers examined the ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole to distinguish what dynamics work best. This study determined why and how some adult ex-offenders refuse, or no longer refuse, to become a statistic in the wheel of recidivism.

Problem Statement

Recidivism is defined as a new arrest, conviction, incarceration, parole or probation violation (Gendreau, Goggin, & Little, 1996). Recidivism is a social issue that affects every facet of society. In the researchers own experience, lack of efficiency in this area is costing the economy an exorbitant amount of tax dollars. For example, at Mira Loma prison in Lancaster, CA. it costs approximately \$90 million to run the prison each year. Furthermore, it is estimated that there will be a \$16 million deficit for the year 2003 (Jacob, 2003). Society is losing money because of its inefficiency to rehabilitate the offender to become a law-abiding citizen. Some offenders repeatedly recycle through the criminal justice system.

In the researchers own experience, on one hand, money is being lost when the offender remains in the criminal justice system. As a result of this revolving door, the offender is not contributing to the economy. Communities are paying for shelter, welfare and food. On the other hand, because the offender is not successfully rehabilitated, society loses the value of their production as a positive member of society. The positive talents of these individuals are lying dormant. It is important for

our legislature to be good stewards of society's funds. For example, legislature should allocate funds appropriately in the area towards rehabilitation.

In this study, rehabilitation refers to attempts to reinstate people who have received treatment, back to their level of functioning before their involvement in criminal activity (Germain & Bloom, 1999).

Recently, California lawmakers expressed a genuine interest in reforms that may be successful in reducing the recidivism rate. Many new propositions have been introduced into state law, some laws passing and some laws not making it to the ballot. In the researcher's experience, the trend in the criminal justice system in the 21st century has been geared toward treatment of nonviolent offender's verses incarceration. In the researchers own experience, legislators have exhausted their budget in building more prisons, leaving little money for treatment.

In the researcher's opinion, taxpayers are investing millions of dollars into the criminal justice system and receiving little improvement in the advancement of rehabilitation. From 1980 to mid 1998, the number of prison inmates in the nation increased more than 366%, from 330,000 to 1,210,034 million prisoners (Allen &

Simonsen, 2001). More efficient ways are needed to utilize the tax dollar to get a better return. First, there must be an examination of the core of recidivism and the impact it renders on society. There needs to be more extensive research in the area of rehabilitation and recidivism. Further examination is required of what treatment interventions work, and what theories address the scope of this problem. The primary goal of this study was to identify the best predictors of the ex-offenders who have successfully been discharged from parole. As a result, some ex-offenders become productive, law-abiding members of society.

"In the United States, more money is spent on corrections today than higher education" (Clear & Cole, 1994, p. 76). Budgets for corrections have climbed 13% annually since 1986 and many states have redirected funds from education and health programs to corrections (Clear & Cole, 1994). "The United States has a higher percentage of it is citizens behind bars than any other nation" (Fauteck, 2002, ¶ 7). In a democratic government, there exists a tension between the need to maintain public order and security, and the need to protect values such as individual liberties (Clear & Cole, 1994). The researchers agree that crime is a serious problem, and in their

opinion no one can agree on the approaches to be taken in dealing with this problem.

In the researchers experience, criminal behavior is human behavior. As such, research and data are taken from multi-disciplinary fields such as sociology, psychology, political science, and history. Law and politics play a significant part in making decisions that define criminal behavior. Crime control in this country is a crucial public policy issue.

According to the researchers, incarceration is not working in our society today. Studies show that when comparing groups of offenders who have committed the same type of crime and who have the same risk to re-offend, for every group, the reconviction rate is higher following a jail sanction than it is following a community alternative sanction. Further, for all crime types, longer jail stays are associated with higher rates of recidivism following failure (Martin, 2003). Prisons have become warehouses and schools for developing the criminal mind to a higher negative plane. For example, offenders become institutionalized and offenders learn more sophisticated criminal behaviors. Furthermore, offenders become acquainted with other offenders when they parole and fail to separate their criminal lifestyle and relationships.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the contributing factors that reduce recidivism in male and female adult ex-offenders. The intent is to examine adult ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole, utilizing two groups of comparison. Secondly, the study explored the ex-offenders' profile and their background. The purpose was to assess which contributing factors, if any, impact success rates as it relates to recidivism. In this time of budget crisis, it is critical for sound political decisions to be made based on proven practices. All agencies must work together to achieve common goals and support the missions of all to be successful. In this study the independent variables that were examined included support systems, arrest history, employment, age, income, and treatment services.

Relapse, which is defined as an arrest, conviction or violation of parole, must be known. The risk of relapse is connected to the needs of the ex-offenders. The goal of matching treatment options to specific needs is aimed at reducing the risk of relapse. "A psychological understanding of criminal behavior is essential in modifying risk for recidivism within corrections" (Enos & Southern, 1996, p. 24). Criminogenic factors are thought

to bring about criminal behavior in an individual (Enos & Southern, 1996). Criminogenic factors are attributes of offenders and their circumstances that can be changed over time by intervention in order to reduce risk.

"Up to 70% of people released from prison in the United States are convicted of new crimes within five years" (Fauteck, 2002, ¶ 1). The first year after release is the period of greatest probability for recidivism (Cole, 1992). What divides those who are successful on parole from those who return to prison? In reducing recidivism, treatment and rehabilitation are more likely to be successful than surveillance and enforcement (Martin, 2003).

The researchers examined two groups who have both successfully discharged from parole. The researchers attempted to analyze what keeps parolees from re-offending. In a meta-analysis involving 53,614 subjects, the addition of a treatment component to a community-based sanction produced a ten percent reduction in recidivism (Martin, 2003). According to the researchers, with little preparation, the ex-offender transitions from an intensely structured, authoritarian life to a world that is filled with temptation. Unlike an

institutionalized environment, society offers complicated problems demanding immediate solutions.

According to the researchers, it is extremely important to understand the high rate of recidivism as the numbers of offenders has been increasing due to the rise of crime. The skyrocketing prisoner population has created a crisis with greatly increased costs. There are now over one million offenders in state and federal prisons (Travis, 2000).

According to statistics, there were 743,382 offenders in prison in 1990. In the year 2000, the percentage rose to 1,444,186 (Allen & Simonsen, 2001). It is imperative that society examines some of the reasons for this growth. For example, according to the researchers, thousands of offenders are in prison due to drug related use, yet many prisons do not offer any type of drug treatment. Is there any way to decrease recidivism in society or is society just stuck with a group of criminals who do not have the education and training to function in today's world?

Too many of the 400,000 United States inmates released each year commit still more crimes and end up back in overcrowded prisons (Cypser, n.d.). Parole violators now constitute 34% of all admissions, a figure that has almost doubled since 1980 (Travis, 2000). In

1991, about 140,000 parole violators were returned to prison, seven years later, that number had risen to more than 200,000. This is a 45% increase (Travis, 2000). According to Cypser (n.d.), it costs taxpayers \$28,000 per inmate per year and requires the building of still more prisons at \$100,000 dollars per cell. The United States needs an innovative new direction to reduce crime and cost.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

The findings of this study provided insight that will help social work practice in the Department of Corrections. The data indicated a need to understand specific needs of individuals for successful parole discharge. Through the assessment of each individual case, social workers will have a better understanding in order to better serve the offender. It is believed this positive change in dealing with each offender, as an individual, will produce better results due to the personalization case management interventions and treatment. This methodology would seem to go far in reducing the recidivism rate.

Social workers need to realize each offender is different and has different needs. Social workers can

better provide services to offenders if they know what treatment strategy works and what does not, for each individual offender. For example, the offender with a drug problem will benefit more from a drug and alcohol class, versus an anger management class. Moreso, an offender who batters will benefit more from a domestic violence class rather than a financial management class.

An individualized treatment plan will assist the offender in integrating back into. Once it is determined what the contributing factors are that send the offender back to prison time after time, the reform process can begin. For example, according to the researchers, if the ex-offender can be placed in a halfway house or residential treatment center, this could eliminate some of their problems. Furthermore, if the offender lives in a gang infested neighborhood and his is relocated to a halfway house on the other side of town, this could possibly affect his recidivism. This process would remove the offender out of their old environment to a new productive environment.

Social workers need to consider the person in their environment and be aware of what imitates the offender's criminal lifestyle. The role of social workers is to provide insight and initiate change in the offenders, not

to cure them. In addition, if the offenders recycle back through the revolving door, it is a reflection of the offender's lack of ability to conform. Additionally, it is also possible that the treatment intervention failed.

According to the researchers, social workers must lobby and advocate for treatment for nonviolent offenders because it is more cost effective than the revolving door process. The rehabilitation process for violent offenders appears to be less cost effective because they require a higher range of services. "Offenders convicted of a violent crime returned to prison at a higher rate (32% of releases) than those convicted of a property crime (17%), public order (15%) or drug (13%) offense (Sabol, 2000, ¶ 1). In addition, social workers might assist the offender in requiring them to analyze their own crime and the nature of its origin. The goal would be for the offenders to gain insight into their criminal behavior.

In the field of corrections, social workers can have a greater impact if personnel departments evaluate potential applicants' educational level as a requirement to work with this population. Corrections need to hire degree level individuals with backgrounds related to social services. According to the researchers, corrections

hire non-relevant personnel that do not have an educational background to work with this population.

Furthermore, this creates problems in the department of corrections in relating to this population. For example, some employees are geared more to law enforcement and they have limited skills in dealing with this population. They exhibit the "lock them up and throw away the key" mentality. Whereas, a more rounded educational staff have the skills that balance being a social worker and law enforcer.

Is the treatment of the non-violent offender the solution to the complex problem today? According to the researchers, with no solution to this problem in sight and no funds to address this problem, our society will continue to need more and more "warehouses." Further the wheel of recidivism will continue to roll. This vehicle must stop.

California Policies

According to the researchers, there are numerous policies that have an impact on recidivism in California. First, the three-strikes law, which was implemented in 1994, was designed to deter crime and incarcerate violent

offenders (Hawkins, Kamin, & Zimring, 2001). The basic arguments of this policy are:

1. It will protect the public by incapacitating (removing from society) those chronic offenders who have demonstrated by their acts that they are both dangerous and unwilling to reform.
2. It will deter repeat offenders still on the street from committing further felonies.
3. It will save money by reducing the number of times that career criminals need to be processed by the system.
4. It is the "right thing to do" (Webb, 2000).

Aside from the savings and other effects, justice demands that those who repeatedly cause injury and loss to others have their freedom revoked (Webb, 2000). According to the researchers, if you do the crime you must be held responsible for the consequences of your actions.

According to the researchers, public safety policy planning is too shortsighted. For example, lawmakers assume that if more prisons are built there will be less crime. In addition, how safe can our community be with law enforcement personnel with limited educational background? Furthermore, these law enforcement personnel are not

educated in diverse population and too much discretion is given to them.

On July 4, 1999, California Governor Gray Davis signed a bill authorizing the construction of a mammoth 22,248-bed maximum-security prison just north of Bakersfield. The bill, he said, would "help to ensure that California remains a state that demands safety for its citizens and justice from its criminals" (Downing, 1999, ¶ 1).

"However, just building new prisons has little correlation with public safety and does nothing to reduce the astronomical costs of incarcerating 160,000 California prisoners" (Downing, 1999, ¶ 2). According to this author, it would be more productive to spend more on intensive probation and scientifically based rehabilitation programs now, and less on more and bigger prisons tomorrow.

In addition, Crime Control policies are failing, despite optimistic statistics to the contrary (Fleisher, 1997). Crime control refers to the use of imprisonment as punishment for unlawful acts committed. Further, crime control acts as a deterrent to their commission, as well as rehabilitation programs. These programs include, but are not limited to, education, vocational training, and treatment for alcoholism and drug addiction. Policymakers

who pander for votes by alleging that getting tough on criminals will curb street crime are wrong; these threats have little effect on behavior-hardened street criminals (Fleisher, 1997).

California Proposition 36

Furthermore, another policy that has impacted recidivism is proposition 36. The Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act, also known as Proposition 36, was passed by 61% of California voters on November 7, 2000. This initiative allows first-and second-time, non-violent, simple drug possession offenders the opportunity to receive substance abuse treatment instead of incarceration. Proposition 36 allocates \$120 million annually for five and a half years to pay for treatment services (California Prop 36, 2000).

Since July 1, 2000, Proposition 36, or the Substance Abuse and Crime Prevention Act (SACPA), has been diverting eligible, low-level, non-violent drug offenders convicted solely of possession for personal use, into community-based treatment programs instead of incarceration. While it is too early to determine the ultimate success of this proposition, it has a significant impact on recidivism (California Prop. 36, 2000). In the

first year, 35.5% of the offenders completed treatment program. Out of that 35.5%, 61.1% completed successfully (Harberts, 2000).

Gun Control Policy in United States

"Throughout the history of the United States, many court decisions have limited the right to keep and bear arms" (Gottlieb, n.d., ¶ 6). The article states that the issue with guns is fairly straightforward: they make it easy to kill or injure a person. Further, this article states that approximately 60% of all murder victims in the United States in 1989 were killed with firearms.

The Second amendment of the United States Constitution states, "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed" (Gottlieb, n.d., ¶ 1). According to the researchers, there is obviously much disagreement already about the limitations of the second amendment. One thing is clear, though, it affects prison sentences and recidivism rates.

Capital Punishment Policy in the United States

The United States remains in the same company as Iraq, Iran and China as one of the major advocates and

users of capital punishment (Death Penalty Focus, n.d.). Capital punishment policy affects the criminal justice system. According to the researchers, in the state that utilizes capital punishment, recidivism rates for those individuals goes down. This is due to their death sentence. Furthermore, the states that do not use capital punishment, the recidivism rates also goes down. This is due to their sentence to life without a possibility of parole. Debates have been continuing over decades on this topic; however, research does show that Capital punishment does not deter crime (Death Penalty Focus, n.d.). It is an important policy to mention.

Hypothesis

1. Group two (the ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole for six to fifteen years) is more likely to be employed full-time than group one. Group one (the ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole for one to five years) is more likely to be employed part-time.
2. Group two belongs to more supportive systems than group one.

3. The younger the offender is when convicted; the more likely the offender will have subsequent convictions.
4. Group two is more likely to have a greater income than group one.
5. Group two is more likely to receive treatment services than group one.
6. Ex-offenders facing the three-strike law are more likely to succeed on parole.
7. The longer the ex-offender is discharged from parole the more likely the ex-offender will take advantage of resources that are available to improve their level of functioning.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive yet focused review of the research and theory as it relates to the reduction of recidivism rates of adult ex-offenders. The literature in this chapter supports the belief that there are several key factors in society, which reduce the recidivism rate for adult ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole.

Literature Review

According to the researchers, crime has been at the top of important issues on the public agenda for over twenty-five years. Further, the researchers agree that public response has been to increase the rate of criminals' imprisonment and the length of their stay progressively. The 1980's saw the largest growth in the United States prison population since the penitentiary system was implemented (Webb, 2000). Moreso, this author stated that legislatures around the country passed a flurry of new bills establishing mandatory minimum sentences for various crimes. In most states, the number

of prison inmates more than tripled during this period (Webb, 2000).

The researchers believe that prisons do not lock up most offenders and throw away the key. The three-strike law implemented in California in 1994, was designed to deter crime and incarcerate violent offenders (Hawkins, Kamin & Zimring, 2001). Even with the three-strike law and increasing sentences, the California state prisons release about 90,000 people each year into California communities with virtually no follow-up (Downing, 1999). This author believes that this is one reason why roughly two-thirds of state inmates paroled yearly are likely to return to prison. This is due to the inmates committing new crimes and violating their parole (Downing, 1999).

It is recommended that the Department of Corrections in California conduct a public study of cost-effective alternatives to prison building. Taxpayers currently pay \$21,000 a year to incarcerate each of California's 59,000 non-violent drug offenders (Downing, 1999). Most of these drug offenders are addicts who receive no intensive substance abuse treatment in prison and tend to commit crimes again, recycling in and out of prison for decades (Downing, 1999). About 85% of offenders who commit violent

and non-violent crimes are under the influence of some type of mind-altering controlled substance (Kender, 1996).

It is recommended that the Department of Corrections be more innovative when dealing with offenders. For example, an examination of methodologies other states have implemented to address the problem of recidivism may be informative. For example, some southern states such as Texas, Alabama and Mississippi require offenders to get treatment, get jobs and pay part of their salaries back to the state to fund the drug treatment programs they attend (Downing, 1999).

The purpose of prison in the penal code was previously prevention, rehabilitation and punishment (Clear & Cole, 1994). These authors state that twenty years ago, the state removed the term "rehabilitation" from its penal code, making punishment the sole official purpose of its prisons. If offenders are to successfully reintegrate into society, punishment alone is not enough (Clear & Cole 1994).

The United States has a higher percentage of its citizens behind bars than any other country (Fauteck, 2002). According to Fauteck, "Our crime rate is also higher than that of any other advanced nation. Among the leading industrialized nations, our murder rate is 3-1/2

times the second place nation, Italy" (Fauteck, 2002, ¶ 1). It is estimated that 70% of people released from prison in the United States are convicted of new crimes within five years (Fauteck, 2002).

According to the researchers, some of the reasons why the recidivism rate is high in California are due to lack of jobs, education, and drug addiction. Furthermore, too few effective drug treatment programs, and lack of resources for offender's re-entry into society play a role. Sentencing policies are inconsistent, often too lenient for violent crime and too harsh for non-violent crime. Too many people including decision-makers believe "rehabilitation does not work" (Kender, 1996).

According to the researchers, the criminal justice system overall is partial and biased. This is due to inconsistencies in the courts adjudicating cases. Furthermore, the laws are too lenient for certain crimes and certain affluent individuals.

According to the researchers personal knowledge, California Department of Corrections is aware of the problem and there is ongoing research study in the different areas of recidivism. If more studies continue to take place and the research findings and recommendations are submitted to the department, a positive change might

take place that can benefit society and offenders. For example the millions dollars that are spent in the corrections budget can be channeled to other institutions such as schools and health care systems. Further, a study conducted in Kentucky showed that young people under the age of thirty returned at a higher rate than any group over that age (Kender, 2002). Department of Corrections can learn from past research.

More public research and ex-offenders studies are needed. Research studies, which examine offenders who have successfully discharged themselves from the criminal justice system, should be analyzed more often. For example, regarding ex-offenders, what were the contributing factors that impacted their life to successfully discharge from parole? In doing so, the predictors of success will become apparent. It is necessary to identify the successful ex-offender compared to the offender who continues to go through the "revolving door."

Events of the mid-1960's caused the American public to acknowledge not only that crime was increasing but also that law and justice were creating many barriers in achieving their goals (Cole, 1992). Many reasons for this acknowledgement was the Vietnam War, the civil rights

movement, the sexual revolution, the visible introductory of drug use, and the onset on gangs. This was a colossal political era. Crime control in this country is a crucial public policy issue.

The most commonly used measure of the effectiveness of corrections is measured by rate of recidivism. Recidivism is the percentage of former offenders who return to criminal behavior either by committing new crimes or parole violations after release from prison. Reduction of risk for recidivism is the ultimate goal of any correctional intervention.

According to the researchers, part of the problem in conducting research lies in the inability of researchers to agree on how to define and measure "effectiveness." There have been many studies over the years on recidivism. Different studies have defined recidivism in a different way. Some view it as a new arrest, a new conviction, or a new prison term. As a result, it is difficult and complex to make comparisons about their results.

"Each year, United States prisons release more than 400,000 criminal offenders to their communities. Most of those released will not remain crime free" (Travis, 1996, ¶ 11). Travis states experts debate the reasons for such high recidivism rates, but all agree that the lack of

adequate job training and work opportunities is a critical factor. "However, prison programs should not assume the goals and functions of other social institutions such as schools and welfare agencies" (Travis, 1996, ¶ 82)

"Despite an enormous investment of time, energy, and money, no approach, treatment, or rehabilitative framework has been demonstrably successful in preventing, reducing and controlling recidivism" (Reid, 1988, p. 508). A study done by the Rand Corporation with a sample size of 16,000 California felony offenders reported that 65% of a sample of California probationers was arrested within a 40-month follow-up period after their conviction, and that 51% were convicted during that period (Cromwell & Killinger, 1994).

Furthermore, the same authors analyzed another study of 3,995 parolees in 22 states found that within six years of their release from prison, 69% were rearrested, 53% were convicted for a new offense, and 49% were incarcerated. After a closer look at this study, it reveals that 37% of the sample was re-arrested while still on parole (Cromwell & Killinger, 1994).

The fact that many parolees are re-arrested soon after their release speaks to their re-entry adjustment difficulties. A study done on 215,263 federal prisoners between 1986 and 1997 showed that 16% of the offenders

returned to prison within three years. Of the 33,855 offenders returning to prison showed that 54% returned within one year of being released; an additional 34% returned within two years and about 12% returned after two to three years (Sabel, 2000).

According to the researchers, persistent criminals see an unlawful lifestyle as relatively carefree and morally acceptable. "Living a lawful lifestyle, however, would force them to relinquish the freedom of social irresponsibility" (Fleisher, 1997, p. 21). According to Fleisher, these criminals have little interest in society's rules and have become educated in using the criminal justice system to their advantage. To them, prisons are a retreat that delivers social, medical and recreational services. "A system of effective crime control measures can be developed, but to do that, policymakers must learn more about the lives of street criminals" (Fleisher, 1997, p. 22). Research shows that most inmates leave prison healthier than when they entered (Fleisher, 1997).

As inmates age, they return home to find that social ties have been broken by years away in prison. Going home gets harder. They must compete with younger, more active criminals for the street's control. Research shows that it

is less costly to house persistent criminals in prison than it is to release them every few years, then to arrest and convict them again and to pay for the damage they left behind (Fleiser, 1997). "State expenditures on adult correctional facilities nearly always are less than 4% of total budgetary expenditures" (Fleisher, 1997, p. 22). Ironically, spending more money on prisons boosts the economy (Fleisher, 1997).

According to the researchers, education in prison as an antidote for a criminal lifestyle in general has failed. However, despite its lack of success, it still remains popular with government administrators. Bureaucrats report modest success and ask for still more funds for improved and intensified initiatives (Fleisher, 1997).

According to the researchers, the education model of social change believes inmates will meet society's expectations once given a chance to do so. Before redirecting any more tax revenue to education-based programs, taxpayers should insist on proof of fiscal value. "America must be intolerant of interpersonal violence by keeping offenders in prisons for very long terms. Discontinuing second chances and keeping violent inmates incarcerated will reduce the number of victims and

lower the cost of street crime" (Fleisher, 1997, p. 23). According to the researchers, by not allowing second chances offenders this will eliminate their chances of recidivism.

According to the researchers, in the United States, many prison and probation settings are stretched to capacity. The essential goal is to protect the public in the most cost-effective approach possible. Correctional authorities must focus their resources on higher-risk offenders. Research shows that higher risk offenders continue through the "revolving door" costing society more money for the same offender.

In order to accomplish these goals, it is imperative that precise estimations of recidivism are obtained regarding the ability of various predictors and actuarial measures to predict recidivism (Gendreau, 1996). The best individual predictors are criminogenic variables (attitudes, values, and behaviors that support a criminal lifestyle such as criminal history, social achievement, and employment (Gendreau, 1996). According to the researchers, those offenders who have an extensive arrest history, have not obtained employment, nor have they advanced in society, will be the best predictors of re-offending.

Many of the same factors that cause a person to originally commit crime are common to repeat offenders (Recidivism in Kentucky, n.d.). According to this same article, past research varies on which detailed characteristics are the best predictors of recidivism; there is a consensus that some factors have significance. For example, employment, arrest history, and drug use.

The growing need for effective remedial education shines through in a study done in New York's state inmate population. Nineteen percent of state prison inmates have less than an eighth grade education, 78% have not completed High School and 40% cannot read. One half of New York's inmate population comes from an area served by eleven of New York's poorest performing schools (Cypser, n.d.).

Theories Guiding Conceptualization

In this study, the social ecological perspective theoretical framework was examined. In addition, person in the environment theory. Ecology studies the relations between organisms and their environments. "Social ecology is used to assist in taking a holistic view of people and their environments, neither of which can be fully

understood except in the context of it's relationship with the other" (Germain & Bloom, 1999, p. 9).

The ecological perspective has a focus that employs the person in environment, which includes the structural concepts, the life course development which is the developmental concepts and finally, the functioning concepts. This theoretical model suggests that, "human development is lifelong occurrence and varies with all kinds of social, cultural, and personal changes as they interact with one another" (Germain & Bloom, 1999, p. 22).

The person in environment discusses human behavior in the social circumstances. If there is an understanding of human behavior of the ex-offender in certain situations, then there is knowledge of their social reality (Germain & Bloom, 1999). There has been research in the area of ex-offenders who have adequate support systems and have adapted and reintegrated back into society in a positive goodness of fit. Productivity and satisfaction are two major factors to be examined of the person and environment work situation. Furthermore, coping skills and problem solving techniques assist the ex-offender in dealing with their stressful environment.

There has been research in the area of flight-or fight responses in ex-offenders. The boundaries of this

population is diminutive, their internal, emotional functioning is not intact. They misperceive intrusions by others in unwelcome ways.

Summary

The successful outcomes of adult ex-offenders at the state level in the United States are obtained through a variety of variables. The predicting factors to be examined in the current study include support systems, arrest history, employment, age, income and treatment services. Fauteck (2002) showed that the United States has a higher percentage of its citizens behind bars than any other nation. Research by Enos and Southern (1996) found that criminogenic factors are thought to bring about criminal behavior in an individual.

Enos and Southern (1996) defined criminogenic needs as the attributes of offenders and their circumstances that can be changed over time by intervention in order to reduce risk. Downing (1999) found that two-thirds of state inmates paroled yearly are likely to return to prison. Travis (1996) suggested that lack of adequate job training and work opportunities is a critical factor. Cypser (n.d.) stated in his research that 78% of New York's inmate population has not completed High School. Furthermore,

Fleisher (1997) suggested that crime control measures can be developed but in order to do that, policymakers must learn more about the lives of street criminals.

According to the researchers personal knowledge, in spite of skyrocketing prison populations, researchers continue to find that adult ex-offenders who successfully discharge from parole eventually come to terms with social responsibility. According to the researchers, ex-offenders who successfully discharge from parole gain insight into their criminal behavior and accept responsibility for their actions. Thus, this process initiates change and their goodness of fit become more stable in their person in environment perspective.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This chapter highlights the methods and procedures applied to obtain data necessary to address the research hypothesis and questions covered in Chapter one. Furthermore, this research was planned as follows: study the design, describe the sample population, give means of data collection, instruments and procedures, provide protection of human subjects, indicate data analyses, and conclude with summary.

Study Design

This research study examined adult ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole. The researchers utilized two comparison groups. The first group examined the ex-offenders that have been discharged from parole from one to five years. The second group examined the ex-offenders that have been discharged from parole from six to fifteen years. This task was accomplished through analysis of data collected in Southern California. Though many studies have examined recidivism, society has a preoccupation with stigmatizing individuals who commit crime and tend to gear strategies toward the individual.

Solutions should be directed at altering society's structure, climate, values, programs and ideologies.

Some individuals stay out of the criminal justice system and others have not been successful. The recidivism occurrence needs to be studied and the understanding of why it occurs at great rates is a necessity if society is to learn. To learn is to predict, and if prediction can occur, then possibly this is a first step in dealing with recidivism. The research question that is: what are the contributing factors that ex-offenders encounter who successfully discharge from parole? The following are the hypotheses for group one and two. Group one consists of ex-offenders successfully discharged from parole one to five years. Group two consists of ex-offenders successfully discharged from parole six to fifteen years.

1. Group two is more likely to be employed full-time than group one. Group one is more likely to be employed part-time.
2. Group two belongs to more supportive systems than group one.
3. The younger the offender is when first convicted; the more likely the offender will have subsequent convictions.

4. Group two is more likely to have a greater income than group one.
5. Group two is more likely to receive treatment services than group one.
6. Ex-offenders facing the three-strike law are more likely to succeed on parole.
7. The longer the ex-offender is discharged from parole the more likely the ex-offender will take advantage of resources that are available to improve their level of functioning.

In-depth, face-to-face interviews and mailed questionnaires were utilized with participants. There was an interview schedule consisting of a specific outline of questions. This type of measurement is recommended for obtaining identity-related information with offenders because it gives respondents the opportunity to provide authentic and comprehensive accounts and to invoke their respective discourses.

The selection of participants was purposive and based on characteristics such as income, treatment services, support systems, arrest history, employment and age. Previous research deemed these variables theoretically important. This survey data study used multiple indicators, which was based solely on the self-report of

the ex-offender. Some of the participants were selected by the use of The Straight Talk Program, which is owned and operated by researcher Phyllis Paulette McNeal. Researcher Colleen Crowley-Ames was designated to obtain all surveys from the Straight Talk Program. This was done to make sure there was no conflict of interest. Additionally, willing participants were solicited from several community programs.

Furthermore, no other agencies were involved. The researchers utilized convenient and snowball sampling. The researchers, through their community involvement, contacted the participants where the participants congregate. The topic of this research contained sensitive themes where actually talking with participants and answering questions was beneficial. A big disadvantage was time; the interviews were involved and long. However, the answers were complete. Furthermore, this type of study is the least costly.

This type of research is survey research, for this study received feedback from individuals. It was exploratory in that the researchers seek to determine what, if any, behavioral patterns exist with the ex-offenders. The general purpose of this research was explanatory, to answer the question of "why." This type of

research is the discovery and reporting of relationships among different aspects of the occurrence under study.

This study used face-to-face interview surveys and read the surveys to non-readers. The researchers selected these types of survey to attain higher response rates. Due to geographical areas, it was necessary to do some mail questionnaires. "A properly designed and executed interview survey ought to achieve a completion rate of at least 80 to 85 percent" (Babbie, 1992, p. 159). In addition, within the context of the questionnaire, the presence of an interviewer probably reduced the number of "I don't know" and "no answers" (Babbie, 1992). Another incentive of why this type of research was used is that if the participants did not understand the question, the interviewer could elucidate matters. Finally, the interviewers observed, as well as asked questions.

The data is quantitative and statistical analysis was used. Identification of any trends and or patterns and associations were examined. Participants included individuals over the age of eighteen who have been successfully discharged from parole after serving their prison term/s and who are remaining crime-free.

Assumptions

1. The measuring instrument was implemented in a manner consistent with the nature and intent of the approach.
2. All ex-offenders put forth a sincere effort to complete the measure in a genuine and honest manner.

Limitations

This study was limited to analyzing the effects of certain contributing factors on ex-offenders who successfully discharge from parole. No attempt was made to make comparisons between genders or certain regions of the United States. Support systems, arrest history, employment, age, income and treatment services are the only variables that were studied. Other possible outcomes and social problems were not examined.

This study only examined six specific variables of successful discharge from parole in Los Angeles and it's surrounding vicinity. No generalizations were made to other social problems, subjects or geographic locations. No generalizations were made to any other age group but eighteen year olds and above.

Sampling

The data was obtained from adult ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole. Sample size was seventy-nine adult ex-offenders. The adult ex-offenders were selected using the following criteria: these adult ex-offenders have been discharged from parole between one and fifteen years. The sample included males and females of diverse ethnicity, representative of economic, and educational levels.

Data Collection and Instruments

The data was collected by the use of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the participating seventy-nine adult ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole. The researchers administered the survey questionnaire to the participants through the mail, in the office, and out in the community (see Appendix A Survey Questionnaire).

The survey questionnaire was created by the researchers to evaluate the contributing factors that reduce recidivism in adult ex-offenders. The researchers had two comparison groups of adult ex-offenders as previously mentioned. The study's dependent and

independent variables were defined by the researchers following existing findings from the literature.

The independent variables in the research are employment, support system, age, income, treatment services, and arrest history. These variables were measured by ordinal (support system and treatment services) nominal (employment, and arrest history), and ratio (age and income), levels of measurement. Secondary independent variables are gender and ethnicity (nominal).

The dependent variable is successful outcomes of adult ex-offenders, based on the number of years of successful discharge. The dependent variable's level of measurement was evaluated by using chi-square and t-test.

The limitation of data collection method is that the researchers had to limit their sample participants. Also, the geographic area limited the researchers a small radius. Furthermore, the researchers were limited to adult ex-offenders.

Operational Definitions

Employment - is defined as full-time: thirty-six hours a week or more; and part-time: less than thirty-six hours per week (Webb, 2000).

Support system - is defined as family member, peer, friend, agency, program, or support group that assist an individual with financial, emotional, and social assistance, which improve the level of functioning.

Age - is defined, as the number of years since the person was born (Engle & Snellgrove, 1984).

Income - is defined as any money or other gain periodically received by an individual, corporation, for labor or services, or from property, or government assistance or investments (Neufelzt, 1969).

Treatment Services - is defined as any type of treatment program such as support groups, church, mental health referrals, drug and alcohol programs, anger management, domestic violence services, and parenting classes could be included.

Arrest History - is defined as prison terms, number of arrests, and convictions.

Procedures

The participants were selected by the use of The Straight Talk Program, which is owned and operated by researcher Phyllis Paulette McNeal. Additionally, willing participants were solicited from several community

programs. The researchers utilized convenient and snowball sampling. The researchers, through their community involvement, contacted the participants where the participants congregate.

The researchers distributed the survey questionnaire to the participants via mail and in person. Some of the participant's addresses were taken from the Straight Talk Program roster. The researchers provided self-addressed envelopes to the participants to mail to the researchers. The participants were instructed to return their questionnaires to the Straight Talk Program Post Office Box. This data was gathered over a five-month period, beginning in October 2002, and ending March 2003.

Protection of Human Subjects

Confidentiality was utilized in this study. The researchers saw the participants, however, they are bound not to reveal his/her identity. They know which data describes which participants, but agree to keep that information confidential. The questionnaires were signed by the participants with a simple mark of an X. Files were treated with the utmost of care and no subject identifying information appeared on data. This file is not available,

except for legitimate purposes. This was made clear to the participants.

The informed consent was established in such a way that was easily understood. The participants were accurately informed as to the nature of the research. However, they were not told the true purpose of the study prior to their participation. However, there was no reason they cannot know afterward. This was done with care, making sure the participants did not leave with bad feelings or doubts about themselves, based on their answers.

The informed consent and the participant's verbal and written consent were taken. Coercion was not used to force participation and participants could terminate their involvement in the research at any time. It was known to the participants that this was a voluntary participation. The researchers were aware of the subtle dangers and harm to the participants and guarded against them. The researchers were cognizant of the fact that certain past behaviors of the participants may have appeared unjust or immoral. The researchers did not initiate any personal agony on the participants. For example, emotional regression could have been experienced through flashbacks by answering certain questions. There was protection from

harm, whether that was emotional or psychological distress as well as physical harm (see Appendix B for Informed Consent).

Data Analysis

Included in this proposed study there are two constructs. The first construct is that of support systems. Included in this construct are eight items. They are as follows: family, religion, groups, friends, and peers. The second construct is treatment services, which include seven items. They include alcohol/drug programs, mental health services, anger management, domestic violence, parenting, and support groups.

The execution of the proposed research study consisted of collecting and gathering the data, analyzing the data, interpreting and finally, the researchers drew conclusions and made recommendations. In this study, explanatory and exploratory descriptive research was utilized. Hypotheses 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 were analyzed using the chi-square. Hypotheses 2 and 5 were analyzed using the t-test. Furthermore, the statistical procedures were applied and there was no manipulation of independent variables.

Univariate frequencies presented general information about sample demographics. There were bi-variate and multivariate analysis for each independent variable. Both chi-square and t-test were used for ratios.

This study allows for analyzing the simultaneous relationships among several variables that may be useful in understanding more fully the relationship between the variables. The independent variables that were used are support systems, arrest history, employment, age, and income and treatment services. The concept used is whether or not there is an influence on the dependent variable. The independent variables were correlation variables, which are presumed to affect the dependent variable. Contingency tables were used and they were read across the columns to determine the direction of the relationships.

Summary

In Chapter three, methods and procedures were analyzed for the proposed study. Interviews were conducted utilizing seventy-five participants. This type of research is explanatory and exploratory. Participants were ex-offenders over the age of eighteen. Further, this proposed study was a quantitative study, which examined a homogeneous group, which consisted of two constructs. The

first construct was support systems, and the second was treatment services. The six independent variables were investigated for correlational relationships.

In this study, univariate, bi-variate and multivariate frequencies were employed depending on the variables studied. Further, both chi-square and t-tests were applied. The levels of measurements included nominal, ordinal, ratio and interval. Contingency tables and cross tabulations were also applied. More so, confidentiality was practiced. The comparison groups of the study consisted of two groups. The first group included those ex-offenders who have one to five years of successful discharge. The second group included those with six to fifteen years of successful discharge. This was done to study the contributing factors that had a positive impact and that are fundamental.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

Data were statistically analyzed by comparisons between and within the two samples of participants. This chapter presents the data from the survey respondents, the analysis of the data, and the findings. The survey respondents consisted of ex-offenders who have successfully discharged from parole. Group one consisted of ex-offenders who have been successfully discharged from parole for one to five years. Group two consisted of ex-offenders who have been successfully discharged from parole for six to fifteen years. The respondents were chosen from the Straight Talk Program and throughout the community.

The process used to interview the ex-offenders consisted of obtaining surveys that provided the researchers with a background of the ex-offender. Included in this background was the ex-offenders support systems, arrest history, employment, age income, and treatment services. The researchers examined all these variables in relation to recidivism.

The ex-offenders were contacted by telephone, mail or a personal interview. Self-addressed stamped envelopes were provided to the respondents. The researchers received their surveys at the researchers post office box.

Presentation of the Findings

The demographic data for the respondents in the study are provided in the following tables. The ex-offender response rate for the study was collected from 54 males (68.4%) and 25 females (31.6%). There were 49 respondents in group 1 and 30 respondents in group 2. The data included a large African American ex-offender population at 72.2% of the total sample. Table 1 shows the percentage of ethnicity of the total sample. There were three major ethnic groups, African American, Caucasian and Hispanic. There were 69.4% of African Americans respondents in group 1, and 76.7% of African Americans respondents in group 2.

Table 1. Race of Respondent

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	African-American	57	72.2	72.2	72.2
	Caucasian	7	8.9	8.9	81.0
	Hispanic, Latino	11	13.9	13.9	94.9
	other	4	5.1	5.1	100.0
	Total	79	100.0	100.0	

The age of the ex-offenders in the survey is provided in figure 1. From the data in figure 1, it is evident that the distribution of ex-offenders by age group is somewhat balanced between the age of twenty and sixty-five, with the median age at forty-five.

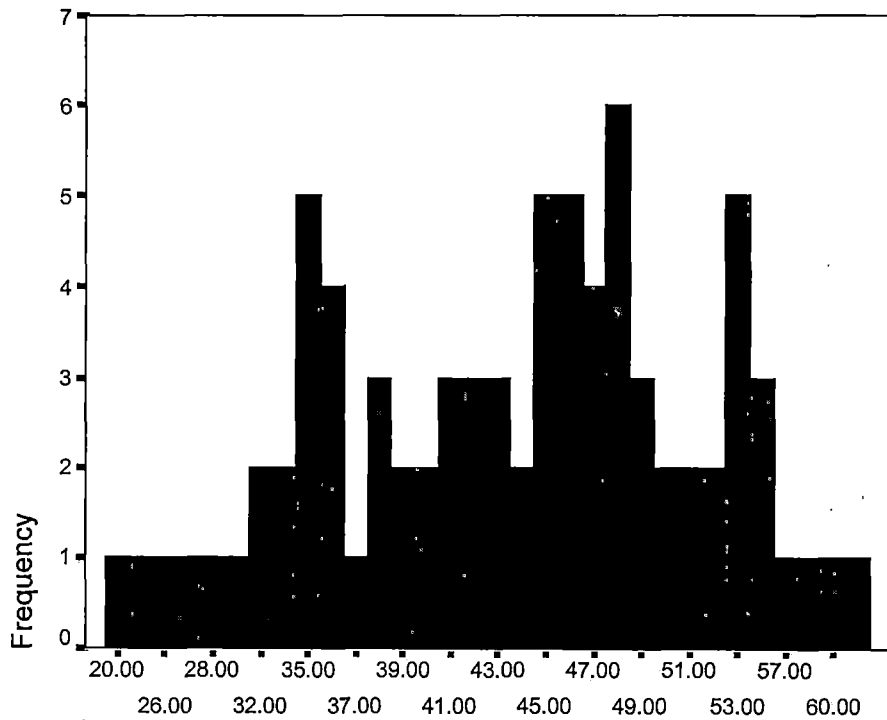


Figure 1. Age of Respondent

Figure 2 provides a summary of the educational backgrounds of the ex-offenders included in the study.

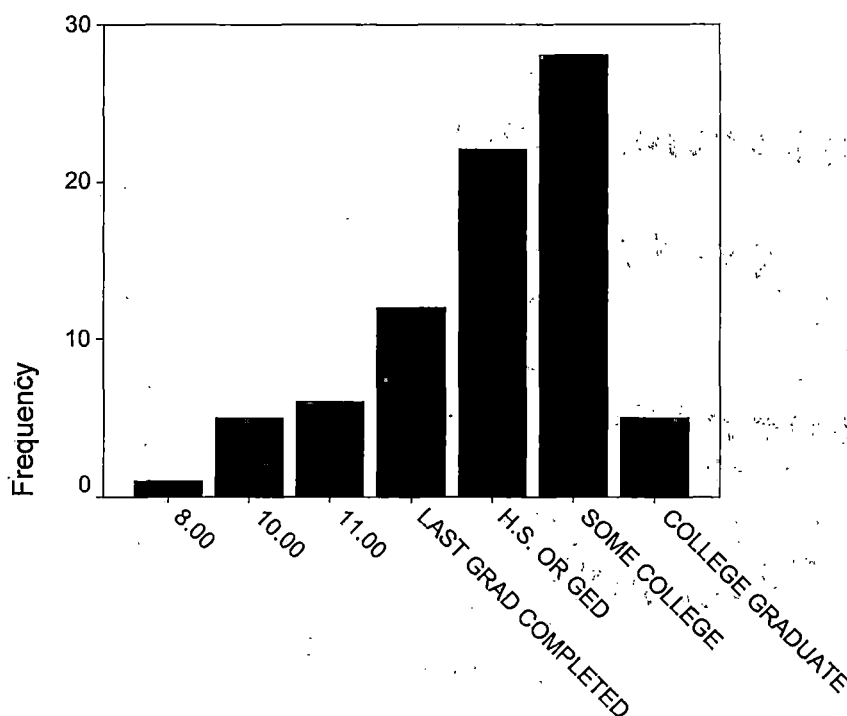


Figure 2. Educational Background of Ex-Offenders

In reviewing the literature involving education, there was some difference in the amount of education the study's ex-offenders had achieved. According to the data collected, 49 percent of the ex-offenders surveyed have between an eighth grade and high school level education. Of interest is that twenty seven percent of the respondents had some college education and five percent were college graduates.

From the data in Figure 3, it is evident that the majority (32 percent) of the ex-offenders were convicted of drug related crimes.

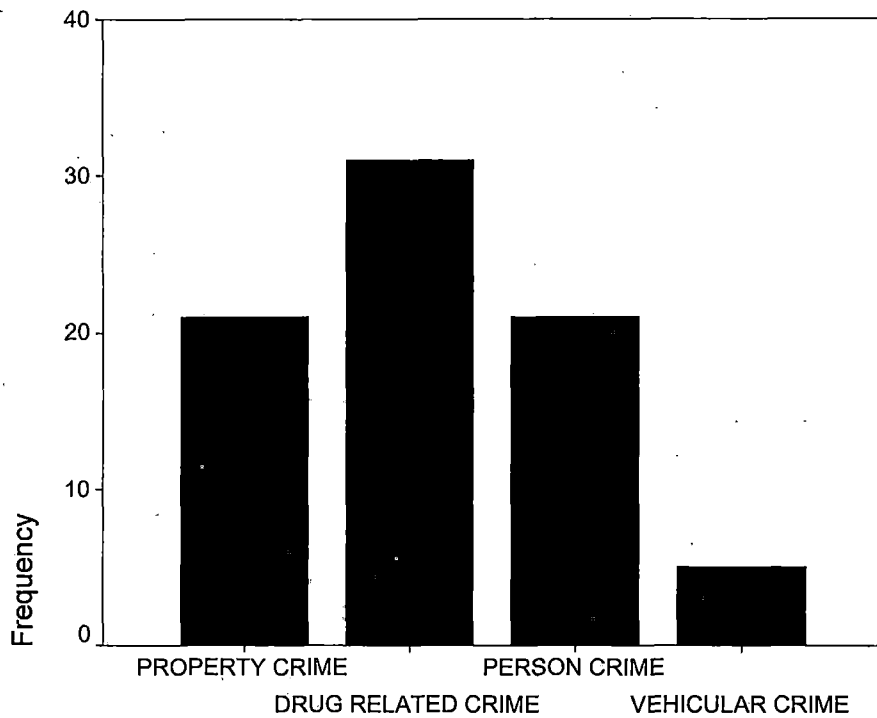


Figure 3. What Crime Committed

The next section relates the findings to the research questions and hypotheses presented in chapter one.

Hypothesis 1 examined employment. An independent t-test was run and showed no statistical significance between group 1 and group 2. Also, a cross tab chi-square test was run and showed no statistical significance on employment. Therefore, the findings from this study do not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 analyzed support systems. The hypothesis related to this question suggested that group 2 belongs to more supportive systems than group 1. Group 1 consisted of

49 respondents and the mean was 1.8367. Group 2 consisted of 30 respondents with the mean of 1.9333. An independent t-test was run and showed no significant difference in support systems, comparing group 1 and group 2. Therefore, the findings do not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3 proposed that the younger the offender is when convicted, the more likely the offender will have subsequent convictions. A correlation test was run for group 1 and group 2, and there was no statistical difference found. Therefore, the findings do not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4 suggested that group 2 is more likely to have a greater income than group 1. An independent t-test was run and there was no statistical difference. Therefore, these findings do not support the hypothesis.

Hypothesis 5 suggested that group 2 is more likely to receive treatment services than group one. An independent t-test was run which compared group 1 and group 2 on the number of treatment services. The data seems to indicate that group 1 received more treatment services (see Table 2).

Table 2. Number of Treatment Services

Parole discharge group 1 or 2		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
1 to 5 years discharged					
Valid	.00	12	24.5	24.5	24.5
	1.00	11	22.4	22.4	46.9
	2.00	9	18.4	18.4	65.3
	3.00	9	18.4	18.4	83.7
	4.00	4	8.2	8.2	91.8
	5.00	4	8.2	8.2	100.0
	Total	49	100.0	100.0	
6 to 15 years discharged					
Valid	.00	15	50.0	50.0	50.0
	1.00	7	23.3	23.3	73.3
	2.00	3	10.0	10.0	83.3
	3.00	1	3.3	3.3	86.7
	4.00	4	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	30	100.0	100.0	

The t-test showed significant difference in group one and group two, however, the significance was shown in the opposite direction, $p \leq .024$ (see Table 4). The data in table 2 indicates that the mean of treatment services in group 2 (1.0667) is considerably below the mean of group 1 (1.8776).

Table 3. Group Statistics for Treatment Services

	Parole Discharge Group 1 or 2	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Number of Treatment Services	1 to 5 Years Discharged	49	1.8776	1.5763	.2252
	6 to 15 Years Discharged	30	1.0667	1.4126	.2579

Treatment services, as assessed by the statistical information, indicates group one received more treatment

services. The t-test did not support the hypothesis, however it proved the opposite. Table 4 presents the t-test. The test was a two-tailed test at 95% confidence interval. This particular test showed no significant difference.

Table 4. t-Test for Number of Treatment Services between 2 Groups

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
NUMBER OF TREATMENT SERVICES	Equal variances assumed	1.183	.280	2.306	77	.024	.8109	.3516	.1107	1.5110
	Equal variances not assumed			2.368	66.664	.021	.8109	.3424	.1274	1.4943

Hypothesis 6 suggested that ex-offenders facing the three-strike law are more likely to succeed on parole. The findings of this study were inconclusive because there were only 15 who responded to this question.

The chi-square test was run for group 1 and group 2 and there was no significant statistical difference. All the respondents that were facing the three-strike law stated it was a factor in their successful discharge of parole.

Hypothesis 7 suggested the longer the ex-offender is discharged from parole, the more likely the ex-offender will take advantage of resources that are available to improve their level of functioning. The chi-square was run and did not support the hypothesis. There was no statistical significance in the two groups.

The most interesting data of this research is provided in table 5. The contributing factors that led to the ex-offenders' success are ranked in order, from highest to lowest. The factors with the most significance are as follows: support systems 60.8 percent, change of environment 54.4 percent, employment 51.9 percent, parole agent 50.6 percent, treatment services 34.2 percent, age 30.4 percent, other 27.8 percent, religion 24.1 percent and earning 21.5 percent.

The "other" category that scored at 27.8 percent, consisted of New Directions Dual Diagnosis program, the Straight Talk Program, "tired of being tired," "grew up," and "God."

Discussion of the Findings

This final section relates the findings discussed above to the hypotheses presented in chapter 1. As seen in this sample, African American males were over represented.

Table 5. Contributing Factors of Successful Discharge

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Support System				
Valid YES	48	60.8	60.8	60.8
NO	31	39.2	39.2	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	
Change of Environment				
Valid YES	43	54.4	55.1	55.1
NO	35	44.3	44.9	100.0
Total	78	98.7	100.0	
Missing System	1	1.3		
Total	79	100.0		
Employment				
Valid YES	41	51.9	51.9	51.9
NO	38	48.1	48.1	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	
Parole Agent				
Valid YES	40	50.6	50.6	50.6
NO	39	49.4	49.4	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	
Treatment Services				
Valid YES	27	34.2	34.2	34.2
NO	52	65.8	65.8	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	
Contributing Factor Age				
Valid YES	24	30.4	30.4	30.4
NO	55	69.6	69.6	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	
Other Explain				
Valid YES	22	27.8	28.6	28.6
NO	55	69.6	71.4	100.0
Total	77	97.5	100.0	
Missing System	2	2.5		
Total	79	100.0		
Religion				
Valid YES	19	24.1	24.4	24.4
NO	59	74.7	75.6	100.0
Total	78	98.7	100.0	
Missing System	1	1.3		
Total	79	100.0		
Earning				
Valid YES	17	21.5	21.5	21.5
NO	62	78.5	78.5	100.0
Total	79	100.0	100.0	

The respondent rate was 79, with African Americans representing 72.2 percent of the total sample. A high population of African Americans live in the Los Angeles area. Further, the crime rate is high for people of color in this area, where perhaps, there is a higher percentage of harsher punishment. Also, demographics showed that 25 females responded which is quite small, making up 31.6 percent of the sample. This is due to the fact that most crimes are committed by males. Further, contacts were made in places such as the Veteran's Administration which usually treats only men.

There was a high percentage of drug related first prison terms. 35.4 percent committed drug related crimes, crimes against person were 31.6 percent and property crimes were 26.6 percent. Perhaps these high crime statistics showed that addicts steal to support their drug habits.

In this next section, each hypothesis will be restated and followed by a brief presentation of the findings that support or refute that aspect of the research.

Hypothesis 1 states that Group two is more likely to be employed full-time than group one. Group one is more likely to be employed part-time.

Findings do not support this hypothesis. The majority of group one was employed full time at 61.2 percent. The majority of group 2 was employed full time at 53.3 percent. There was a high amount of missing data in this question. Perhaps this should have been a two-part question to make it less confusing. Perhaps it was an oversight on the part of the respondents. Overall, 65.8 percent are currently employed and 31.6 percent are not employed.

Hypothesis 2 states group two belongs to more supportive systems than group one.

The hypothesis related to these questions suggested that group two had a higher support system concerning Alcoholics Anonymous. Out of 30 respondents, 43.3 percent attended Alcoholics Anonymous. A large amount of respondents answered No in both groups concerning all support systems. Perhaps this high amount of No's reflect the African American's attitude that they can fix their own problems.

Hypothesis 3 stated that the younger the offender is when convicted; the more likely the offender will have subsequent convictions.

The hypothesis related to this question proposed that the potential for an offender to return to criminal

behavior, is greater when he/she commits their first crime and is convicted at an early age. The findings do not support this hypothesis. Perhaps if the sample size would have been bigger this might have been significant. There was no statistical difference. There were 79 respondents and 33 were arrested under the age of eighteen. Group one had 20 respondents under eighteen at 40.8 percent. Group two there were 13 respondents under the age of eighteen at 43.3 percent.

Hypothesis 4 stated group two is more likely to have a greater income than group one.

The hypothesis related to this question proposed that group two has a greater income. The findings did not support this hypothesis. The overall average income was \$11,000 to \$20,000 per year. Missing data were three. Perhaps some respondents did not feel comfortable in answering this personal question.

Hypothesis 5 stated group two is more likely to receive treatment services than group one.

The hypothesis related to this question proposed that more treatment services would be utilized by group two. The findings did not support this hypothesis. There were no statistical significant differences. Perhaps this should have been a two-part question. The researchers

eliminated the question that referred to how long services were rendered. This was due to only ten responses. Perhaps the question was somewhat confusing. The study revealed that more informal services were utilized rather than formal services.

The research study revealed that crime was related to drug and alcohol abuse. In group one (n = 49), 24.5 percent received some type of treatment services. In group two (n = 30), 50 percent of these respondents received some type of treatment services. This could be attributed to the fact that group one is still in the correctional system, and they are still connected with services. Perhaps this is due to the offenders being mandated to participate in treatment services while on parole. Furthermore, the offenders could be expected to participate in some type of aftercare treatment services.

The responses for this category exceed the size of the population since each ex-offender was permitted to select as many categories of support as were appropriate to their individual circumstances.

Hypothesis 6 stated that ex-offenders facing the three-strike law are more likely to succeed on parole.

The hypothesis related to this question suggested that the three-strike law would be a deterrent in reducing

crime. The findings were inconclusive however, due to only 15 respondents answering this question. Perhaps there was a low response rate due to demographics. Further, this law did not go into effect until 1994.

There were not enough responses to run inferential statistics. However, these are first and second offenders. Furthermore, descriptive statistics showed a high percentage of property and drug crime. This could be due to the fact that these people steal to support their habit.

Hypothesis 7 stated the longer the ex-offender is discharged from parole, the more likely the ex-offender will take advantage of resources that are available to improve their level of functioning.

The hypothesis related to this question suggested that the ex-offenders will utilize more resources the longer they are off parole. The hypothesis was not supported. Group one had 48 respondents with 20 still currently receiving treatment services. Group two had 28 respondents with 10 still currently receiving treatment services. Missing data were three. Perhaps if there were a bigger geographical area the sample size would have been larger and more diverse.

Summary

In an effort to understand why some adult ex-offenders stop going through the "revolving door," we must first understand what some of the contributing factors are that impacts the ex-offenders life. Although, only one hypothesis had any significance, the researchers' study did reveal some important contributing factors of these ex-offenders that contributed to their success. Implications suggest the ex-offenders who have a solid support system, a change of environment, employment, and who have a supportive parole agent, have a better opportunity in becoming productive, law abiding citizens.

Overall, the contributing aspects were the highlight of our research study.

This concludes the presentation, discussion, and interpretations of the data revealed in the research study. Chapter five presents several recommendations and suggestions for future policy implementation and social work practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

The objective of this research was to determine what contributing factors, if any, had an impact on adult ex-offenders' ability to successfully discharge from parole. The model used in this research resulted from the person in environment theory and the ecological perspective.

Productivity and satisfaction are two core aspects to be examined of the person: environment-work situation. Social ecology entails a holistic view including all kinds of social, cultural, and personal changes as the individual interacts with others. These models were derived from interpersonal support such as family, treatment services and employment. Another aspect derived from the models is the system factors which relate to the members of the criminal justice system. This group includes the parole agents.

The key elements of focus in determining successful outcomes of ex-offenders in this study, dealt with (1) support system, (2) change in environment, (3) employment, and (4) parole agent. These four contributing factors received a high percentage in the

data analysis. Although several of the hypotheses were not shown to be significant, treatment services was shown to be an indicator in decreasing recidivism. The ultimate goal is to find an effective method to decrease recidivism and to produce a positive change.

Group one had more treatment services than group two. Perhaps this could be because twenty years ago, the trend of the criminal justice system was more punitive. Today, the pendulum has fluctuated to the opposite direction, resulting in various treatment approaches. The reason for this finding could be explored by further researchers looking at societal comparisons in racial demographics, surveys measuring attitudes between samples, and social perceptions of repeat offenders.

In California, development of data on specific populations, such as three strike candidates, is an opportunity for community social service agencies, the courts, and parole agents to collaborate in program development. These programs would strive for goals and objectives attained through analysis of information modified to the local demographics.

According to the literature reviewed, 85 percent of offenders commit their crimes under the influence of some mind altering drug. Punishment alone is not a deterrent.

Public safety is a huge issue across the nation and there is an urgency to develop successful programs to provide adequate assistance in reducing recidivism rates. Treatment services are attempts to reduce recidivism rates and to provide adequate services to offenders.

In this study, the majority of respondents committed drug related offenses. There was a high percentage of respondents who utilized drug and alcohol treatment services. This was evident by the data analysis results. The question remains as to whether community and governmental resources can be developed in specific ways to proficiently provide effective intervention and prevention for the drug-abusing offenders. This would result in the increase of public safety in our community.

In the literature review, lack of employment is one of the best predictors of re-offending. In both comparison groups in this study, there was a high percentage of respondents that were employed. In group one, there were 62 percent of respondents employed. In group two, there were 53 percent of respondents employed. This is important to note because one of the contributing factors in this study was employment.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study was the restriction of the sample sizes and geographical location of the population. The survey respondents were predominantly African American and from the Los Angeles area. Perhaps if the researchers would have branched out their geographical area, there would have been more of a diversity. Also, there was some confusion on the question pertaining to treatment services. This should have been a two part question. Only ten respondents fully answered the question. Therefore, the researchers made a conscious decision to delete the duration part of the treatment services question.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy and Research

In terms of future study, follow-up on the histories of the respondents could be done in five years, through self-report surveys and their involvement in the Straight Talk Program. This would provide a comprehensive picture of this segment of the local community.

Parole agents with social work backgrounds are more qualified to work with this population. They are offered the opportunity to focus on substance abuse at the time of release from prison. Research shows that there is

convincing information that a large portion of certain classes of offenders, abuse drugs.

The Department of Corrections should evaluate their hiring practices and recruit more applicants with social work backgrounds. This could make a smoother and more productive transition for a parolee re-integrating back into the community.

Parole agents and social workers could be provided training for handling high-risk offenders who abuse drugs. Parole agents should have on-going training in assisting this population to improve their level of functioning. The goal is to help these ex-offenders become law-abiding citizens. This could possibly reduce the recidivism rate. This exploratory study is important for social worker's to know, for person in environment is a critical model in recidivism.

A comprehensive strategy to gain a more realistic picture of recidivism is needed. The initiative should include larger populations within the United States and data collection that allows accurate recidivism information to be released.

The literature review strongly suggests that education, as an antidote for a criminal lifestyle, in general, has failed. Policy makers need to learn more

about the lives of street criminals and quit dumping millions of tax revenue in education based programs when research shows, they are not effective.

Continuing with the development of the interagency collaboration between law enforcement and the Parole and Community Services Division, is strongly recommended.

Conclusions

It is almost impossible to predict human behavior, let alone the behavior of an individual with a criminal background. Based on the information gathered and the literature reviewed, ex-offenders who receive support and treatment services have a better chance to be successful in society.

While the factors being studied lack predictive competence, it is apparent that they do offer better opportunity for ex-offenders to experience success. This was the intention of the research and positions the foundation for future research.

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey in which you are about to participate is designed to measure the contributing factors that assisted you in becoming successfully discharged from parole. First, the researchers would like to ask you some questions about who you are.

I. Demographic

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your sex?
(Please circle one)
 - (a) Male
 - (b) Female
3. Which best describes your race or ethnicity?
(Please circle one)
 - (a) African-American
 - (b) Caucasian, White
 - (c) Hispanic, Latino, Mexican
 - (d) Native American, American Indian
 - (e) Asian
 - (f) Pacific Islander
 - (g) Other (Please specify)
4. What was the highest-grade level you completed?
(Check only one answer)
 - ___ (a) Last grade completed in School
 - ___ (b) Completed High School or G.E.D
 - ___ (c) Some College
 - ___ (d) College Graduate
 - ___ (e) Postgraduate

II. Employment

5. Are you currently employed?
(Please circle)
 - (a) Yes
 - (b) No

If yes, please answer the next two questions.
6. How long have you been on your current job? _____

7. Are you employed full-time (40 hours or more per week) or part-time (20 hours or less per week)?
(Please circle)
- (a) Full-time
 - (b) Part-time
8. Were you employed while on parole?
(Please circle)
- (a) Yes
 - (b) No
9. If not employed while on parole, how did you receive your income? (Please check all that apply)
- (a) Social security Benefits (SSI)
 - (b) General Relief (GR)
 - (c) Welfare/AFDC
 - (d) Veteran Benefits (VA)
 - (e) Alimony
 - (f) Other

III. Support System

10. While on parole, did you belong to any support groups?
(If so please circle)
- (a) Alcoholic Anonymous (AA)
 - (b) Narcotics Anonymous (NA)
 - (c) Cocaine Anonymous (CA)
 - (d) Counseling
 - (e) Church
 - (f) Other _____

IV. ARREST HISTORY

11. At what age was your first conviction?
_____ Years old
12. What crime did you commit?

13. At what age was your first prison term?
_____ Years old

14. What crime did you commit?

15. How many prison terms have you served?

16. When were you last discharged? (Give month and year)
Month _____ Year _____
17. From your last prison term, were you supervised on parole for:
(Please check one)
 (a) One year
 (b) Two years
 (c) Three years
18. Were you facing the three-strike law?
(Please circle)
 (a) Yes
 (b) No
19. If yes, was this a factor in your success?
(Please circle)
 (a) Yes
 (b) No
20. What contributed to your successful discharge off parole?
(Please check all that apply)
 (a) Support System
 (b) Treatment Services
 (c) Employment
 (d) Income
 (e) Age
 (f) Arrest History/Three-Strike Candidate
 (g) Religion
 (h) Parole Agent
 (i) Change of Environment
 (j) Other (please explain)

V. INCOME:

21. What is your annual income? (Please check appropriate box)

- (a) \$5,000 or less
- (b) \$6,000-\$10,000
- (c) \$11,00-\$20,000
- (d) \$21,000-\$30,000
- (e) \$31,000-\$40,000
- (f) \$41,000-\$50,000
- (g) \$51,000 or more

VI. TREATMENT SERVICES

22. Have you ever received any kind of treatment services while on parole? (Please circle).

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

23. If yes, what kind of treatment services and how long?

- (a) Drug/Alcohol Treatment _____
- (b) Mental Health Services _____
- (c) Anger Management _____
- (d) Parenting Classes _____
- (e) Domestic Violence _____
- (f) Employment Services _____
- (g) Other _____

24. Are you currently receiving any treatment services since discharged from parole? (Please circle)

- (a) Yes
- (b) No

25. If yes, please indicate what services and how long.

APPENDIX B
CONSENT FORM

CONSENT FORM

The study in which you are about to participate is designed to measure the contributing factors that assisted you in becoming successfully discharged from parole. Mrs. Colleen Crowley-Ames and Ms. Phyllis P. McNeal are Master of Social Work students at California State University, San Bernardino. The researchers are conducting this study under the supervision of Dr. Trang Hoang.

The Department of Social Work Sub-Committee of the Institutional Review Board of California State University, San Bernardino, has approved this study. In this study you will be asked several questions about your support systems, arrest history, employment, age, income and treatment services you might have utilized. The entire interview should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

If you are not comfortable answering questions of this nature, please do not give your consent, nor volunteer to assist us. There will be no consequences to you if you do not wish to participate. Please be assured that any information you provide will be anonymous. Please understand your participation is strictly voluntary. If you have any concerns before or after completing the study, or about your participation, please contact Dr. Trang Hoang at (909) 880-5559.

My mark below indicates that I have been informed of, and understand the nature of this study. I freely consent to participate as indicated by my check mark. I acknowledge I am at least 18 years old.

Check Mark

Date

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

Thank you for completing this study. Your participation and contribution to this study is greatly appreciated. The results of this study will be reported in group form only. Your individual responses will not be identified in order to preserve anonymity. Please do not put your name on the survey. The findings of this study will be available at Pfau Library during the summer of 2003.

The questions asked in this study are of a personal nature and some participants may have found them to be upsetting. If you feel the need to talk about any emotions or concerns that may have occurred during your participation, you may contact the California State University, San Bernardino Counseling Center at (909) 880-5040. In addition, you may contact the Info Line of the Los Angeles area at 1-(800) 339-6993. Furthermore, if you have any questions and/or concerns, please feel free to contact Dr. Trang Hoang at (909) 880-5559.

To finish this survey simply place it in the mail with the provided pre-stamped envelope or give this survey to the researchers at the time of completing this survey. Thank you for your time and patience.

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This is a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, each author took primary responsibility in the entire portion of this research study. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:

Team Effort: Colleen Crowley-Ames & Phyllis
McNeal

2. Data Entry and Analysis:

Team Effort: Colleen Crowley-Ames & Phyllis
McNeal

3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:

a. Introduction and Literature

Team Effort: Colleen Crowley-Ames &
Phyllis McNeal

b. Methods

Team Effort: Colleen Crowley-Ames &
Phyllis McNeal

c. Results

Team Effort: Colleen Crowley-Ames &
Phyllis McNeal

d. Discussion

Team Effort: Colleen Crowley-Ames &
Phyllis McNeal