

The psychological effects of recidivism amongst male youth in Musina, South Africa

by

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ABSTRACT

Recidivism refers to re-offending behaviour, and recidivists are usually individuals who were arrested repeatedly for the same or different offences. The aim of this study was to explore the psychological effects of recidivism amongst male youth in Musina. This study employed the qualitative research approach because it required elaborated information which this paradigm promotes. This research adopted an exploratory design. The participants were selected through the use of purposive and snowball sampling. Data was gathered using semi-structured face to face interviews. The researcher used a voice recorder and a note pad to record the collected data. The findings of this study indicated that peer pressure, lack of education and unemployment, substance abuse, poverty, child neglect, parenting and supervision were the most common factors contributing to recidivism. The results of this study indicated that recidivists often commit petty crimes. The participants stated that these crimes included pick-pocketing, mugging, shoplifting and house breaking. Serious crimes were not common amongst the recidivists because only few of them committed serious crimes. The participants also reported that recidivism has negative impacts on their own personal lives, their families as well as on their education.

Keywords: Psychological, effects, male youth, recidivism, recidivist,

DECLARATION

I, Sympathy Khuthadzo Mulaudzi (Student No: 14014630), hereby declare that the dissertation for the Master of Arts (Psychology) degree at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other university, that is my own work in design and in execution, and that all reference material has been duly acknowledged.

Signature : _____

Date : _____

DEDICATION

I want to humbly dedicate this study to the providential Almighty God for giving me life of which without that nothing was to be accomplished. This work is dedicated to my parents Paulos and Maresinah Mulaudzi who were true anchors in times of predicaments. Their love and support kept me going throughout the years of my academic and social life. I am humbled to have you, thank you for everything.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- AIDS - Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
- HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
- STIs - Sexually Transmitted Infections
- UNICEF - United Nation International Children Emergency Fund
- UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction and Background of the Study

Recidivism has become one of the most crucial social problems that have gained significant attention from social and behavioural scientists. Recidivism is a process whereby offenders are repeatedly arrested for either the same or different offences within a short space of time (Elderbroom & King, 2014). The consistency of recidivists' behaviour requires addressing since this has an impact on the community in which these recidivists reside. Recidivism points out the existence of a problem which begins when the offender commits an offence for the first time, and is arrested. After his/her release, within few weeks the same offender is arrested again for either repeating the same or for a different type of offence (Schmallenger & Smykla, 2005).

When offenders commit an offence, they are withdrawn from the community and incarcerated as a form of punishment, with the expectation that they will receive corrective treatment which addresses the offence. Once the offenders have been deemed rehabilitated or treated, they are released from prison and back to the community in which they reside. The expectation is that the treatment which the offender received in prison will have corrected the behaviour which led to the offence. The offenders are not expected to repeat the offence or commit any other form of offence. However, these offenders often recommit the same or different offences. This type of behaviour is known as recidivism (Bartol & Bartol, 2005).

According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008), this behaviour shows that there is a problem either on the part of the offenders themselves, who are not receptive to the treatment addressing the behaviour which led to the offence, or the problem might be reinforced by the community which the offender is recommitted to once they have served their punishment and are considered rehabilitated. The problem escalates when an offender repeats the same or a different offence which leads to him/her becoming a recidivist. The recidivists' actions leave traumatic consequences in the community which affect their parents, guardians, siblings, relatives, friends, the community as well as the economy. According to the United Nations (2009), lack of formal education might serve as a contributing factor to having repeat offenders. Most youth recidivists have limited activities and opportunities which can serve as a distraction from criminal activities.

Education is considered as a viable vehicle to overcoming poverty or at the least providing significant opportunities to youth to create successful future. But these recidivists are faced with a challenge in terms of acquiring any form of education. This is the first stumbling block upon arrival in their respective societies/communities. This leads to them to commit an offence for the first time. But once they have been treated, the common factor is still the lack of viable opportunities which can assist them to become productive in their lives. This is exacerbated by the already existing societal employment difficulties. The ex-offender with limited opportunities is inevitably directed back to the same lifestyle as before, re-associating himself or herself with criminal elements. Most recidivists are substance abusers, which influence or contribute to their re-offending and not finding a way to separate themselves from these criminal activities. Recidivists are usually not married and do not have their own family responsibilities as a motivating factor to forgo criminal activities to re-offend (Clear, 2007).

This study will focus on the psychological effects of recidivism amongst youth in Musina area in Limpopo Province. Different factors contribute to the eventual deviant behaviour of affected youth. Due to the non-existence of proper restorative measures after imprisonment, care or guidance, most youth inevitably end up re-engaging in the same behaviours. According to Englander (2007), many young men throw away their future due to lack of guidance and direction. Most young men in Musina are raised by a single parent who is usually the mother. The absence of a father figure in most families of the recidivists leaves them without a proper authoritative figure in their lives. Growing up without a father is one of the circumstances which affect most young men, leading to identity and role confusion problems.

The majority of young men grow up in child-headed families where they are faced with a challenge of taking care of their siblings, and making sure that there is a way to generate income as well. These child-headed households are poverty-stricken, and often the offenders compensate for the lack proper income through criminal activities so that they can be able to provide for their and themselves siblings. Through observational learning, they end up learning from other commonly known criminals how to make ends meet (Bandura, 2009). Some young men are raised by their relatives, who are physically, emotionally and sexually abusive. Having to deal with emotional and sexual abusive relatives is another challenge for children growing up in child-headed

households or raised by abusive relatives. This prevents them from developing adequate social skills. As a result, they become withdrawn from people in the communities to which they belong. This leads to these young men growing up with so much anger and rage (USDHHS, 2007). This research also focused on the causes of recidivism. This will be more appropriate with regards to the identification of youth who are at risk of becoming recidivists. It will later also assist in coming up with preventative strategies which will enable these youth to receive proper support or treatment prior to their involvement in criminal behaviour, unlike reacting after they have already got into the wrong side of the law. Preventative measures can be applied successfully if the community unites and works hand in hand with other organisations. What is critical is to identify different stakeholders within each area of concern regarding recidivism, and to align all the relevant stakeholders to apply the necessary measures which can either assist as preventative measures or as supportive measures to those who are already offenders (Seigel & McCormick, 2006).

1.2. Problem Statement

Most youth in Musina are breadwinners because they are either orphans or come from broken families where a single parent is not able to get employment as a result of a non-existing or limited educational background. Therefore, this makes it possible for the youth to choose the crimes that they want to specialise in since there are plenty to choose from. Some of these crimes include drug smuggling, rape, pick pocketing, robbery, house-breaking, murder, helping foreigners to cross from South Africa to Zimbabwe or vice versa through the river, prostitution and many more. In this world, where education is the key to open every door, it becomes very challenging for these youth to get legitimate employment due to lack of qualifications. Therefore, crime becomes their only option to survive and to provide for their siblings. They become recidivists due to their desire to earn respect by being financially independent (United Nations, 2009). The environment itself plays a major role on how these youth turn out to be. Partying, prostitution, stealing and murder are the most common activities most youth engage themselves in. These youths do not have proper role models because they grow up in a society where their role models are themselves criminals (Bartol & Bartol, 2005).

Some of the recidivists grow up in a harsh environment where they do not have much support from their parents or guardians because they live in child-headed families. Some youth are abandoned by their parents, and this could lead to anger, which results in outbursts of violent behaviour. Some youth reside with their relatives who abuse them emotionally, physically and sexually, which results in them displaying the same behaviours to other members of the community (USDHHS, 2007). Some of these youth go through traumatic experiences of losing their parents at an early age, and they hardly receive any form of counselling. Lack of form of counselling could lead to depression and other types of disorders such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Dissociation Disorder etc. However, there are youth in Musina who are under the care of both their parents. However, they are still recidivists due to peer pressure, observational learning or modelled behaviour. Recidivism is a major problem because youth who have the potential to be educated and become successful end up going in and out of prisons endlessly. Their talents are wasted and their future is shattered because they cannot think beyond substance abuse and committing crime (Wortley & Tanner, 2007). Recidivism in Musina is becoming an unbreakable circle that needs to be addressed to protect future generations.

1.3. Significance of the Study

This study brings clarity of what exactly contributes to youth becoming recidivists and how the community can work together with the criminal justice to implement different strategies to prevent recidivism. The whole community will also benefit from this study as it would result in deterrence of crimes in these community. In addition, this study contributes in encouraging community members to create a sensitive and friendly environment where children can be free to communicate their fears and challenges. Furthermore, this study will contribute to the body of knowledge because little research has been conducted on recidivism. Thus, this study has will provide a wide theoretical framework and understanding of the cause and psychological effects of recidivism and its solution. Alternatively, the study will increase knowledge on the nature and extent of the problem, and will draw up conclusions that are key and central in providing solutions to the problem. The youth will also benefit from this study because they will be able to identify proper role models and will learn how to be cautious about the type of friends they associate themselves

with. The study will encourage them to get proper counselling for whatever traumatic experiences or challenges they might face as well as those that they are facing. These youth will be able to empower themselves and others through different empowerment programmes which will be designed specifically to assist them.

1.4. Aim of the Study

The aim of this study was to explore the psychological effects of recidivism amongst male youth in Musina.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

- To identify factors contributing to recidivism amongst male youth discharged from correctional services in Musina.
- To explore crimes often committed by male youth recidivists in Musina.
- To describe the psychological effects of recidivism amongst male youth in Musina.

1.6. Research Questions

- What the factors contributing to male youth recidivism?
- What are the common crimes committed by male youth recidivists?
- What are the psychological effects of recidivism amongst youth in Musina?

1.7. Theoretical Framework

Psychologists usually focus on how individual characteristics and the social environment can interact to produce a violent event or behaviour. Instead of focusing on the biological foundations of delinquency, psychologists mainly focus on how cognitive processes influence individual susceptibilities to violence. Psychologists are frequently attentive to the relationship between learning, intelligence, personality and aggressive behaviour. There are major psychological

perspectives that have attempted to clarify criminal behaviour. These perspectives include the system theory, psychodynamic perspective, behavioural theory, cognitive theory and personality theory (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008).

1.7.1. Systems theory

According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008), systems theory was developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner, to explain how the inherent qualities of a child and his environment interact and influence how he will develop. The Bronfenbrenner Ecological Theory states that it is critical to study a child in the context of multiple environments, also referred to as an ecological systems, in order to understand his development. A child usually finds himself instantaneously enmeshed in various ecosystems from the most intimate one, which is home ecological system moving outward to the larger school system and the most expansive system, which is society and culture. Each of these systems interact with and influence each other in every aspect of the child's life. This theory will be used to understand recidivism in terms of how individuals become recidivists from interactions with family members, peers and other people in the community (Corey, 2012).

1.7.1.1. The Bronfenbrenner Model: Micro-system, Meso-system, Exo-system, Macro-system and Chronosystem

The micro-system refers to the smallest immediate environment which the child resides in. It comprises a child's home, peer group, academic learning institutes or daycare centres as well as the community (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008). It consists of interactions which involve personal relationships with family members, classmates, teachers and caregivers, in which influences go back and forth. How these groups or individuals interact with the child will affect how the child grows. For example a child who interacts with a father who is abusive and is always in and out of prison might influence the child to produce the same behaviour. Similarly, how the child reacts to people in his microsystem will also influence how they treat the child in return. For example if a child lies and steal at a young age parents might not want him near their children. Resulting in feelings of rejection and bitterness which might lead to anger, aggression and lack of remorse. Interaction with more harsh and violent environment might result in the child growing up producing the same harsh and violent behaviour and this might lead to recidivism. Siblings might

experience the same microsystem, however, their development might progress differently as a result of differences in personality traits, such as temperament, which is influenced by unique genetic and biological factors (Corey, 2012).

The meso-system model comprises different micro-systems which the developing child finds himself in. It involves linkages between home and school, between peer group and family, or between family and church (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008). If parents are often involved in the child's life then the child's development is affected positively. However, if they are abusive violent drunkards who openly criticise them, then the child experiences disequilibrium, resulting in conflicting emotions, probably affecting his development negatively. As a result, the child might mistreat other people in future (Corey, 2012). According to Corey (2012), the exo-system refers to the associations that may exist between two or more settings, one of which may not contain the developing child but nonetheless affects him indirectly. Such places and people may include the extended family, parents' workplaces and the neighbourhood. For example, a father who was molested by an extended family member at childhood might continually carry the anger and get flashbacks each time he sees the molester. He may take it out on his wife and children or even molests his own son.

The macro-system is the largest and most distant collection of people and places to the child that still exercises significant influence on the child. It is composed of the child's cultural patterns and values, specifically the child's dominant beliefs and ideas, as well as political and economic systems. Children in high crime rate area or war-torn areas might experience a different kind of development than children in peaceful and crime free communities. Those from harsh environment might show no remorse for other people, and might show anger outbursts and unacceptable behaviour (Corey, 2012). According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008), the chronosystem adds the useful dimension of time, which demonstrates the influence of both change and constancy in the child's environment. The chronosystem may thus include a change in family structure and parent's employment status. By studying the different systems that simultaneously influence a child, the Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory is able to demonstrate the diversity of interrelated influences on the child's development. Awareness of contexts can sensitise us to variations in the way a child may act in different settings. For example, a child who frequently bullies smaller

children at school, steals and lies may portray the role of a terrified victim at home. Due to these variations, adults concerned with the care of a particular child should pay close attention to behaviour in different settings or contexts and to the quality and type of connections that exist between these contexts (Corey, 2012).

1.7.2. Behavioural Theories

Behaviour Theory upholds the fact that all human behaviour as well as violent behaviour is learned through interaction with the social environment. Behaviourists believe that no one is born with a violent disposition. However, individuals learn to reason and act violently as an outcome of what they are exposed to in their everyday lives (Bandura, 2009). These experiences may include observing others being rewarded for criminal behaviour, or observing individuals being praised for violent behaviour in the media. Studies conducted on family life indicate that violent children often imitate violent behaviours displayed by their guardians or parents.

According to a study by Bartol and Bartol (2005), individuals from violent communities learn to imitate aggressive behaviour of their neighbours. In this study the theory will be applied. The researcher will focus on how male youth observe behaviour and later model it, and how recidivists continue to commit crime in order to get certain titles that are viewed as a reward. This theory is applicable in this study because it reveals how recidivism is learned.

1.7.3. The Psychodynamic Perspective

The Psychodynamic Perspective is generally grounded on the ideas of Sigmund Freud (known as the father of Psychology). Freud's theory of psychoanalysis stipulates that criminal behaviour is the product of unconscious forces which are functioning inside a person's mind. Freud's theory states that early childhood experiences have an intense effect on future behaviour either during adolescent or adulthood (Seigel & McCormick, 2006). Freud's theory believes that unresolved conflicts which occur in different psychosexual stages of development might cause conflict, leading to an individual's inability to function normally later on as an adult. Freud's theory states that violent behaviour is a plain (id based) human impulse which is repressed in well-adjusted people who have been exposed to normal childhood. On the other hand, if the aggressive impulse

is not controlled, or is repressed to an unusual degree, some aggression can leak out of the unconscious and a person can engage in random acts of violence. Freud's theory refers to this as displaced aggression (Englander, 2007). Psychoanalysts view recidivists as individuals who cannot control their impulsive pleasure seeking drive known as the id. They are "id dominated", and this is usually caused by unpleasant activities such as childhood neglect or abuse (physical, sexual or emotional). Individuals who are likely to be involved in violent behaviour, usually-prone individuals suffer from weak or damaged egos which affect their ability to cope with stressful situations within conventional society. It has also been disputed that weak egos within the youth make them prone to criminal behaviours as they can easily be manipulated by peers (Seigel & McCormick, 2006). In line with the pronouncements of the psychodynamic perspective, in this study, an attempt is made to examine how individual psychological traits may be seen as influencing one to end up in repeating a criminal behaviour (relapse). Also, the role played by emotional childhood experiences will be probed to determine whether these have a role to play in making an individual study participants in Musina repeat a certain form of behaviour.

1.7.4. Personality and Violence

The psychological concept of "personality" has been defined as stable patterns of behaviour, thoughts or actions that distinguish one person from another (Seigel & McCormick, 2006, P180). Various criminologists and psychologists argue that some personality traits make other individuals more prone to criminal behaviour compared to others. Personality traits associated with criminal behaviour include narcissism, self-assertiveness, defiance, suspicion and extroversion (Boyle, Matthews & Daklofske, 2008). Researchers have recently connected violent behaviours to traits such as hostility, egoism, self-centredness, spitefulness, jealousy and indifference to lack of empathy for others (Butcher, 2009). Criminals have also been found to lack ambition and perseverance and to have difficulty controlling their tempers and other impulses (Atkins, 2007; Capara, Paciello, Gerbino & Cugini, 2007). In the context of this study, behavioural theories on personality will be applied to interrogate how criminality and recidivism are seen as outcomes of certain individual personality traits.

The theory will guide the researcher's analysis and understanding on the interplay between individual belief or value systems and recidivism. Using behavioural theories as theoretical lenses, the study will thus examine the role played by human behaviour in shaping recidivism in the context of Musina.

1.8. Delimitation of the Study

The researcher only focused on male youth who have experienced recidivism. The study focused on males between the ages of 13 and 25 who reside in Musina. Musina is a township which is located next to the boarder to Zimbabwe, in Limpopo Province.

1.9. Conceptual and Operational Definitions

1.9.1. Psychological

Affecting or arising in the mind, related to the mental and emotional state of a person (Turnbull, 2010).

1.9.2. Effects

According to Turnbull (2010), effects are defined as “a change which is a result or consequence of an action or another cause”. In this study effects refer to the results or outcomes of recidivism amongst youth.

1.9.3. Recidivism

Recidivism refers to “reengaging in criminal behaviour after receiving a sanction or an intervention” (Elderbroom & King, 2014). However, in this study, recidivism refers to individuals who have been arrested twice or more for either the same or different offences.

1.9.4. Youth

According to the United Nations General Assembly (2009), youth are defined as those persons falling between the ages of 15 and 24 years inclusive. In this study youth refers to individuals between the ages of 15 and 35.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Literature review is a process which focuses on reading and understanding data, analysing, evaluating and summarising discovered data which by now has been explored by various scholars (Baglione, 2012). The review serves to describe, summarise, evaluate and shed light on various aspects associated with the study of recidivism. This correspondingly contributes a theoretical base of the research. This section presents understanding of recidivism, different theoretical perspectives in Psychology, Psychological Theories, the definition of recidivism, effects of recidivism, world trends, factors contributing to recidivism and policy implications.

2.2. Description of Recidivism

Recidivism is one of the major social problems worldwide. The majority of youth become recidivist due to various factors which this study intends to investigate. It is worrisome how recidivists would be punished through incarceration and still continue to reengage in certain behaviour that could lead them back in prison. Sometimes community members are often too quick to judge and conclude as to why some youths are recidivists, but the truth is the roots (causes) of recidivists' behaviour are unknown. Usually, people draw conclusions based on the fruits (effects) of recidivism. Some recidivists end up going back to prison because they struggle to fit into their societies after they have been released (Williams, McShane & Dolny, 2006).

According to the United Nations (2009), recidivists are expected to rebuild broken family ties, go back to high-risk places and secure formal identification. Mostly, they have poor employment records, and currently they are faced with criminal records which they have to deal with. In order to appropriately assess recidivism, several variables which highlight challenging characteristics of youth who relapse in criminal activities should be considered. As a result, recidivism can be used as an element to measure the success of educational activity. This means that the absence of recidivism shows productive outcomes of the rehabilitation process, while relapse into crime should indicate the failure of the rehabilitation process. The main goal of this study is to discover

and investigate factors which lead former prisoners to relapse into crimes after having been punished. In Estonia, recidivism is defined as interrogation of a person as a suspect in a given time (1-3 years) after: 1) his or her release from prison; 2) conviction in a court; or 3) termination of proceedings. In South Africa recidivism is defined as falling back or relapsing into previous criminal ways specifically after an individual has been given punishment. In other words, recidivism is a process of an individual repeating an unwanted behaviour even when they have received treatment or training for their behaviour, or even after being exposed to negative stimuli for their behaviour. Recidivism simply refers to re-incarceration of previous convicts. Recidivism is not considered to have occurred when convicts have not relapsed into their old criminal behaviour especially within a specific period of time. Recidivism rates vary greatly from place to place depending on the amount and quality of intervention, surveillance and enforcement. A recidivist is an individual who repetitively commits crime (Schmallenger & Smykla, 2005).

Recidivists usually repeat an unwanted behaviour regardless of how many times they have been punished. These individuals are not afraid of the negative consequences of their behaviour. There are reasons why offenders relapse into criminal behaviour. These reasons are also referred to as risk factors. They include traits of an individual's character as well as life experiences which were highlighted as strongly related to criminal behaviours. Some of these factors include criminal peers, criminal history, social achievement, situational, personal, interpersonal, familial, structural, cultural and economic factors which contribute to repetitive involvement in criminal conduct which leads to individuals being re-incarcerated (Schmallenger & Smykla, 2005).

2.3. World Trends of Recidivism

Recidivism is one of the social problems worldwide. Some of the countries which are also severely affected by recidivism include Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland, Norway and New Zealand. The degrees of reoffending differ as a result of various variables such as age, gender, race neglect, previous involvement with the criminal justice system, etc. In all these countries, it has been confirmed that younger people seem to have higher rates of reoffending compared to older people. Men have higher reoffending rates than women (O'Donnell, Baumer & Hughes, 2008). Individuals serving longer sentences have higher rates of recidivism compared to those who serve shorter

sentences (community service). Theft offences seem to be a specialty to most recidivists as they have the highest rates of reconviction generally. Those who have a long history within the criminal justice system (incarceration at an early age and more experiences) have a high rate of reconviction rates compared to those individuals with little or with no later involvement in the criminal justice system. Most reconvictions take place within a period of one year with a gradual rise, later on levelling off in the coming years (Skardhamar & Telle, 2012). The above mentioned information is almost universal findings of reoffending behaviour. Additionally, recidivism is also determined by marital status, employment and educational attainment. Individuals who are married or employed or educated usually have low rates of recidivism (O'Donnell et al., 2008).

2.4. Factors Contributing to Recidivism

Factors contributing to crime can also be described as causes of crime. These factors vary from one individual to another and the differences in these factors can also be determined by different geographical locations. These factors include family background, broken/dysfunctional families, child maltreatment, child neglect, lack of adequate supervision, the environment, poverty and unemployment, peer pressure, substance abuse and lack of education.

2.4.1. Family background

Families are known as the most important social structures. The purpose of a family is to provide love, support, intimacy and comfort. A family is capable of either building or breaking a child. Children who are born and raised in broken families are more likely to show deviant behaviour. This is because of the lack of support from both sides of the parents, which may result in breakouts in the behaviour of the child in the sense that the child may instil actions that suit himself due to such breakouts. They usually have identity problems. Families play a huge role in a child's life. How one is treated in terms of punishment and reinforcing behaviour determines how they will interact with others (Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, Van der Laan, Smeenk & Gerris, 2009).

According to Bandura (2009), children imitate what their role models do and they learn through observation. Therefore, a child who is beaten up all the time at home is most likely to resolve conflicts through beating others up. This type of behaviour is to be applied even when the individual starts their own family. According to the social learning theory, behaviour that one was exposed to while growing up is the same behaviour which will be displayed towards others later in life, meaning parents treat us the same way they were treated by their parents. They cannot offer what they were not taught. Therefore, sometimes abusive parents are also victims of abuse (Bandura, 2009).

2.4.2. Broken/dysfunctional families

Youth who are raised in families with a history of criminal behaviour are most likely to commit crimes as opposed to those youth who are from families without any criminal behaviour. “Broken families” are families that have either an absent parent as a result of separation, death and family rivals. These families increase the risk of youth becoming recidivists, especially those from a bad environment such as physical violence, parental alcohol and drug abuse. Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalytical theory states that appropriate background is extremely important for every child’s moral code, further emphasising that through parenting, children adopt a particular moral standard of living (Englander, 2007).

A broken family might not be able to be responsible for all the emotional, physical and financial needs of each and every individual within the family. As a result, lack of support could affect family members, resulting in feelings of shame and unworthiness, including low self-esteem. Family members could also start looking elsewhere for emotional support or any other way to gratify their needs, which could result in youth searching for support somewhere else (Bean, Barber & Crane, 2006). This could result in negative outcomes that could affect the youth’s standard of living, tempering with their decision-making abilities which could leave the youth in a position that makes them susceptible to a lifecycle of crime and recidivism. Children who are raised by both parents also become recidivists depending on the parenting style. A parenting style is basically a way in which parents interact with their children, and how they present and respond to their children. This includes beliefs, norms and values (Hoeve et al., 2009). Being raised by both

parents does not always mean that one receives love, care and support one deserves, because sometimes parents might be too busy with work or businesses, resulting in their inability to make time for their children. Such children tend to feel lonely and unwanted, start filling the void by indulging in deviant behaviour and spending time with friends who are bad company. These children imitate their crew members because they desire to be recognised, accepted and belong somewhere where they feel appreciated. Children who have a good relationship with their parents, which is based on good communication, are likely to be discovered early if they start spending time with bad company. It is lack of awareness and communication that such children end up in the midst of bad company (Bowman, Prelow & Weaver, 2007).

2.4.3. Child maltreatment

Criminal behaviour does not only occur as a result of child abuse, but it is determined by the severity of the abuse (USDHHS, 2007). Child maltreatment draws heavily on a range of developmental theories such as Erikson's theory of psychosocial development (Erikson, 1963). There is significant confirmation that maltreated children are more likely to engage in delinquency and juvenile offending, resulting in recidivism compared with children to whom there is no evidence of maltreatment (Dennison, Stewart & Hurren, 2006). This association is apparent irrespective of the ways and means used to measure maltreatment and delinquency.

2.4.4. Child neglect

Neglect refers to the caregivers' inability to meet the physical, financial, psychological and social needs where the individual has all the resources needed to provide for the child's needs (USDHHS, 2007). According to The Department of Health and Human Services (2011), neglect is "the failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety, and wellbeing is threatened with harm." Child neglect results in the child feeling unloved and rejected by their parents or guardians. This results in young people fully depending on themselves or in those who seem to be there for them, leading to individuals to join a gang in order to belong somewhere. Once one is here, they will do everything they are told so that they are accepted by other members of the gang.

2.4.5. Lack of adequate supervision

Lack of adequate supervision is one of the major contributing factors of child neglect. Inadequate supervision refers to parents/guardians not knowing or trying to find out the child's whereabouts overnight. Lack of parental supervision in early childhood frequently results in traumatic injuries as well as the consumption of harmful substances (Hymel, 2006; Kerr, Stattin & Burk, 2010). Parental monitoring is very crucial because it is one of the determinants of juvenile behavioural problems and criminal behaviour, and is more effective in causing criminal behaviour more than the absence of parents, parents with criminal behaviour, matrimonial affairs and parental discipline (Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, Van der Laan, Smeenk & Gerris, 2009).

A child's healthy development is determined by their parents as well as other socialising agents who make stable investments on the child's well-being and academics. Stable investments implant a sense of affection and guarantee a bond between a child and members of their family as well as conventional role models. According to Social control theorists, these investments and social bonds restrict children from any criminal involvement. When faced with occasions suitable for them to engage in criminal activities, children with an embracing and solid social bond have a better stake in conformity, and will less likely partake in deviant behaviour that might ruin those relationships (Herz, Ryan & Bilchik, 2010).

Teenagers must be able to freely approach adults for guidance. If youth feel like they are going to be judged or get a bad reaction for opening up, they would not open up to anyone about their challenges. Early involvement in criminal behaviour might increase unlawful human capital by raising experience in criminal activities, and a decrease in the youth's human capital in appropriate activities tend to decrease. For example, their academic work and recreational activities (sports, drama, debate) and their ability to attain and keep employment. This additionally promotes criminal tendencies (Bowman, Prelow & Weaver, 2007).

2.4.6. The environment

The environment is one of the major factors contributing to recidivism. Individuals from an environment which bears a high rate of criminal activities are expected to be more likely or repeatedly partake in criminal activities, possibly as a symptom and not as an outcome of the environment. However, this does not mean that individuals from a high crime rate area are recidivists, but individuals who are released from prison and return to environments which expose them to situations that influenced them to commit crime prior to their arrest are more likely to produce the same criminal behaviour. If factors such as family background, arrogance, status or general low morale standards can influence an individual to their first criminal activity, it is foreseeable that the individual will further continue to commit crime (Williams, McShane & Dolny, 2006).

2.4.7. Poverty and unemployment

According to News24 (2008), “Poverty is regarded as a major problem that contributes largely to the commission of repeated crimes”. Most recidivists commit crimes based on lack of resources such as money, food and proper clothing. It is normal that a person who is needy might be tempted to commit crime than the one who is well-off. Various experts from various fields have confirmed that poverty and crime are interconnected to such an extent that they are inseparable. Poverty is capable of corrupting the heart and breaking a person's spirit. Some deprived people remain honest and hard-working. When they cannot find a way to escape poverty, they are most likely to commit crime because crime is an easy and quick way to make money. Some of the organisations such as the UN and the World Bank rank crime as one above on their list of obstacles in the development any of country (United Nations, 2009). In order for any country to develop its economy, dealing with poverty would also mean having to address the issue of crime. International organisations believe that crime, especially corruption, prevents growth within a country (Williams, McShane & Dolny, 2006).

Crime has the ability to create vicious cycles, resulting in unemployment, economic downturns as well as unsteadiness. The combination of poverty and crime provide people with two choices: either to partake in unlawful activities or finding lawful jobs with quite limited sources of income. Studies conducted in the United States (US) point to a connection between unemployment, poverty and crime. However, this particular connection between poverty and crime is that they are both geographically concentrated in a blindingly constant manner. This means that crime is often found where poverty is. Unquestionably, this does not include "undemanding" crimes like corruption, for instance, which leads to great loss in people's lives but in a secondary kind of violence (USDHHS, 2007).

Upholding quality social facilities as well as a proper-functioning social hierarchy is significant to constructing a fair society where every individual can grow and reach their full potential when given a fair opportunity. Although poverty is defined as lack of resources, one may choose to take it further and view it as a state of mind that causes one to always feel unsatisfied with what they have. They can do whatever it takes to quench their needs even if it means breaking the law repeatedly (United Nations, 2009).

This is to raise a point that even when an individual has enough resources to use, greed might make one to commit crime because their desire is to have more, and that "more" is never enough. His poor state of mind may turn to commit the same crime again and again. For example, directors of companies who always commit fraud. Poverty is more of a psychological, than a social, problem. This is because even when one looks at first world countries like the US, which according to social standards is regarded as not being poor, recidivism is still dominant. This is because even when they have enough resources socially, they still think they are poor and feel the need to do whatever it takes to get what they want even if it means committing the same offences like theft (USDHHS, 2007).

2.4.8. Peer pressure

Peer pressure refers to people's ability to have influence in the lives of other people. It means adapting to behaviours that one usually would not adapt (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008). Members of the same group usually feel pressurised to conform to a curtailed valued behaviour within the group in order to fit in. If members of the group value criminal behaviour, it would be very hard for members of the group to fit in without demonstrating criminal behaviour. According to the Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008), social learning theory ascertains that individuals learn behaviour through observing others. This is usually an advantage for the youth because they do not have to do things for the first time which they are not familiar with. Young people are usually tempted to imitate behaviours which they have seen someone being rewarded for. For example, if they see someone who is considered wealthy through partaking in criminal activities, they are most likely to partake in criminal behaviours in order to get money.

In Musina, there are criminals who are praised for being the best thieves or house breakers. They never really stay long in prison, though the majority of the community members can prove that they are criminals. According to Bandura (2009), Social learning is critical for human survival but sometimes it can go wrong if the behaviour being imitated is self-destructive. As much as it is possible to learn bad behaviours through observing other individuals, it is also possible to unlearn those behaviours. Unlearning certain behaviour can be achieved through an individual choosing to associate themselves with positive role models who can motivate them to be able to make sound decisions in their lives.

On the other hand, these youth should avoid being in the company of individuals who encourage them to partake in negative activities. It is easy for the youth to be influenced by their peers when the norms and values instilled by their parents are weak. It is even worse when these norms and values are not instilled at all. Peers with strong characters have a very strong hold on their peers, and they are the ones who determine how others should behave (Bowman, Prelow & Weaver, 2007). Therefore, the youth feel the need to do what is expected of them by their influencers in order to fit in to whichever group they want to be part of.

There is a saying that "birds of a feather flock together", implying that one cannot walk around with criminals and not feel pressurised to become a criminal too. Therefore, in terms of recidivism, individuals who end up in the company of criminals are most likely to produce the same behaviour (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 2008). The environment also plays an important role in a sense that if one grows up in a community where crime is encouraged, the individual is most likely to develop the same behaviour. According to Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008), individuals with a high self-esteem will be less likely to give in to negative peer pressure. Individuals gain self-esteem through setting their own goals and by achieving them. The process of gaining self-esteem includes how to handle critics and accepting compliments. Those individuals who are most likely to partake in criminal activities turn out to have low self-esteem. Youth should feel free to consult adults for advice when they feel pressurised by their peers into criminal activities.

2.4.9. Substance abuse

Substance abuse and alcoholism are currently officially regarded as a mental disorder. Research has also discovered that there is a solid positive connection between levels of substance abuse and violence. For instance, a Correctional Service Survey conducted in Canada indicates that over 48 per cent of 6,000 convicts, mostly violent offenders, admitted to using substances when committing offences (Seigel & McCormick, 2006). Similarly, a recent US study discovered that over 80 per cent of convicts arrested for violent crimes tested positive for alcohol and drugs during the time they were apprehended. Moreover, several cross-national prison inmates' surveys disclosed the same results. Alcohol and drugs serve as catalysts of violence because these substances contain psychopharmacological effects that impair cognition and subsequently increase the possibility of aggressive behaviour (Wortley and Tanner, 2007).

2.4.10. Lack of education

Various studies have revealed that most recidivists have low levels of educational attainments. The findings indicate that educational attainments as well as peer group influence are predictors of recidivism. These findings led to the recommendations of life skills, literacy, employment and vocational programmes that should be incorporated into prisons as a strategy to reduce recidivism. Correctional education in prisons was implemented because of the belief that criminals lack

academic, vocational and social skills needed to be effective in society. The absence of these skills results in individuals repeatedly committing crime as a way to survive (Tenibiaj & Owuamanam, 2010). According to Tenibiaj & Owuamanam (2010), the majority of prisons in South-West Nigeria have inmates that could not read or write in vernacular or English. The accomplishment of criminals basic education and social needs should enable South Africa as a nation to rectify criminal behaviour by coming up with various ways of opening up employment and social opportunities which enable recidivists to achieve these goals legally. According to the United Nations (2009), the youth are encouraged to get educated because education is the most important tool that can help break the cycle of poverty.

It is believed that young people who invest their time on school activities are less likely to be involved in criminal activities. Schools do not only teach how to read and write, but also how to live in society by instilling discipline. The main problem is that the school as a social institute cannot successfully achieve its purpose of instilling social norms and life skills because young people are dropping out of school. One of the problems that arise in educated youth is lack of employment. Some young people do not see the need to be educated, and end up being cashiers or domestic workers in order to survive as a result of lack of employment. Therefore, as much as young people want to get educated, sometimes it is just discouraging (Clear, 2007). Various research works indicate that recidivism occurs as result of lack of intellectual and social maturity required to make appropriate choices. Citizens who abide by the law are able to calculate the risks and outcomes of being involved in criminal behaviour. The significance of education is to improve cognitive thinking. It is believed that by improving cognitive thinking, recidivists will be able to make socially accepted law-abiding decisions (Tenibiaj & Owuamanam, 2010).

2.5. Psychological Effects of Recidivism

One of the major issues facing societies is crime. High rates of crime in communities deprive people the tranquillity and a sense of security and safety. Living in fear causes psychological harm even to those individuals who have never been exposed to crime. This makes individuals live in fear for their property and their lives. When people cannot afford to meet their major needs such as housing, education, healthcare and employment, they will commit crime to survive (United Nations, 2009).

2.5.1. Unemployment and poverty

In the United States of America individuals with a criminal record have completely ruined their opportunities of attaining employment. (So when an individual cannot get a job because of their criminal record, eventually unemployment leads to poverty and crime). This means that the cycle of crime becomes even more difficult to break because the longer a criminal remains in prison, the more corrupted they become because they share ideas which they are prepared to execute as soon as they are out of prison. As a result, the effects of imprisonment on criminals are not really productive. Criminals cannot learn social values as well as the intrinsic worth of universal love through imprisonment (Williams, McShane & Dolny, 2006). Poverty-stricken communities have an adverse impact on recidivists regarding the overcoming of addictions and finding impactful employment, thereby allowing recidivists to re-associate themselves with criminal elements. The inability of communities to offer employment prospects which can provide sustainability for recidivists due to their lack of marketable skills becomes an added hindrance to the pressures associated with that of the families (Williams, McShane & Dolny, 2006).

Recidivists are then eventually forced back into their former habits. Lack of needed resources, support and improper integration back to societies opens the door again for recidivists to be re-committed to prison systems because of technicalities such as not adhering to curfew restrictions or testing positive for alcohol or drugs that are prohibited. There is an eventual outcome of recidivists re-committing the same type of crime and new crimes (United Nations, 2009). The inability to obtain employment and poverty can result in depression, isolation and pessimism. Recidivism results in recidivists believing that they can never get employed because they have a criminal record. After their release, even when they want to change, recidivists end up believing that crime is their only way of survival. They develop negative schemas which lead to low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness. They feel that it is better for them to just continue committing crime especially if the community is negative towards them. They believe that they are strong enough to survive prison. However, these individuals often suffer from depression, and would rather stay in prison trying to provide for their families than doing nothing (Williams, McShane & Dolny, 2006).

2.5.2. Family dynamics

According to Clear (2007), mass incarceration is one of the major contributing factors of recidivism. This is due to the fact that communities are now biased and have accepted that imprisonment is a normal phase in the lives of young males which is un-escapable. To add on this, when parents are arrested and kept in prison even for petty crimes, this deprives some children to grow up like other children. This will definitely affect their livelihood. Lack of parental supervision will eventually lead to children dropping out of school. This increases the possibility of unemployment, excluding the fact that this time, poverty and law-breaking are distinguished by violence since these children do not have an adequate sense of the most basic social norms and behaviours (Hoeve et al., 2009). Growing up, these children might be insulted by others and constantly be reminded about their parent who is in prison and how they will also turn out like them. Emotionally, this can damage the child, resulting in anger outbursts and aggressive behaviour, leading to worse pathology such as oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder and eventually, antisocial disorder. This is how an individual might end up being arrested repeatedly.

2.5.3. Social reintegration and isolation

According to Borzycki and Makkai (2007), lack of needed resources within the Justice System leads to inability to assist recidivists to be effectively re-integrated into society after serving their time, which is an added grievance to their families and the community at large due also to the existing effects of the crime committed by recidivists (Squires & Plecas, 2014). The re-integration of recidivists back to society has the potential of uneasiness and unsuitability on behalf of the individuals directly impacted by the crimes committed, especially since they are to be integrated back to the same community as the individuals directly impacted by the crime committed (Darroch & Mazerolle, 2013).

According to Borzycki and Makkai (2007), recidivists indicate that the stigma of having a criminal record can have lifetime psychological effects. The majority of criminals become very positive and energised and look forward to doing the right thing when they are released from prison. However, what they face after being released is called reality (lifetime consequences). Recidivists are ridiculed, insulted and rejected by their communities, and the only thing they find easy to go

back to is crime. They end up embracing the title of being a criminal, which becomes their identity. In some states such as in the United States of America, recidivists and ex-convicts are banned from public housing and public assistance (Squires & Plecas, 2014). The use of electronic criminal background checks makes it easier for employers and employees to discriminate individuals with criminal records. It becomes very easy for offenders to commit crimes again when they feel isolated, discriminated and undermined that they can never change. They end up failing to prove to society that their rehabilitation was successful because they are not given a chance to blend in society. This could lead to stress which might be managed through maladaptive coping behaviours such as increasing alcohol intake, engaging in criminal activities or converting stress into anger, potentially leading to depression, which results further negative relationship impact.

A combination of maladaptive coping strategies and depression results in poor insight and judgement. Recidivists get smacked in the face in a sense that they are out of prison but still remain in this proverbial prison of stigma as well as all the entire barriers created for them by society, making them feeling worthless, useless and rejected (Braga & Weisburd, 2012). For some recidivists, isolation does not become a hindrance because of some of the communities which they are being re-integrated into. In certain communities being incarcerated has a value association as opposed to an unacceptability stigma (Borzycki & Makkai, 2007). Being committed to a prison system is considered as a rite of passage for people within such communities, thereby encouraging a criminal mind-set within such communities. As recidivists within such communities, they oddly re-enter such communities with ease and are not isolated due to the value associated with being incarcerated (Bartol & Bartol, 2005).

2.5.4. Unavoidable symptoms

According to Braga and Weisburd (2012), crime can affect recidivists in many ways, and their reactions are different. When people commit crime for the first time, they might experience anger and shock. A common reaction is feeling numb, and not believing that the criminal event has happened. They might suffer from headaches, nausea, sleep problems or fatigue, jumpiness and repeated thoughts of the event. These individuals might have feelings that come and go, such as guilt, sadness, confusion and helplessness. Recidivists' day-to-day life might be affected by having

trouble with your concentration or memory, reduced performance at work or school, withdrawing from others and feeling out of control. Later, some recidivists might experience depression or anxiety as a result, and they might constantly consume substances to avoid thinking and dealing with their feelings and thoughts (Squires & Plecas, 2014).

2.5.5. Learned helplessness (LH)

According to Ludwig (2012), learned helplessness (LH) is essentially defined as being unable to resolve problems that can in fact be solved due to one's cognitive and emotional ways of thinking and behaving. LH is seen as a consequence of an individual having learned that environmental events are not controllable by virtue of an objective independence between their responses and any outcome; that is, whatever the individual might wish to do, it would make no difference. Chronic environmental stressors often result in LH. Recidivists lack the capacity or motivation to make honest choices and lead social lifestyles, and hence turn to maladjustment and criminality. Learned helplessness is one of the psychological effects of recidivism. Recidivists may feel that they have no control over their lives and their behaviour, and they "give up" trying to change and "give" in to how they are labelled by society. Recidivism leads to individuals deciding to remain in the face of unpleasant, harmful or damaging circumstances even when they actually have the power to change things. Most recidivists believe that crime is in their blood; it is part of who they are and they cannot live without committing crime. Recidivists often do not realise that they have the ability to change their behaviour (Ludwig, 2012).

2.6. Policy implications (Primary and Secondary prevention)

There are various organisations that are part of the primary prevention efforts such as family therapy centres, mental health associations, school counselling programme and substance abuse clinics. School administrators, teachers, social workers, youth courts and employers frequently make referrals to these programmes as an expansion of this type of psychological services will eventually lead to the reduction of violent crime in society (Seigel & McCormick, 2006). Secondary prevention focuses on providing psychological treatment after an offence has been committed, and the offender has come into contact with the criminal justice system. Many of the programmes offered are centred on social learning principles.

Usually, judges always vouch for these programmes especially at the sentencing level. Intense psychological assessment occurs as soon as the offender enters a correctional facility. This is done in order to determine the offender's treatment. From this perspective, a conclusion can be reached that recidivists do not just commit crimes, there are various factors contributing to their behaviour such as broken families, lack of education, family background, child maltreatment, neglect, lack of adequate supervision, substance abuse, unemployment, poverty and peer pressure (Seigel & McCormick, 2006).

Some of these factors can easily be avoided and addressed while others, such as child abuse, which is one of the social problems that occur indoors and children hardly open up about it, cannot be easily deterred. The only way to know that a child is being abused is through them opening up about it. Recidivists are usually victims of unfortunate circumstances; while some of these circumstances can be avoided, others cannot be avoided. Recidivism requires the community to be pro-active instead of being reactive. Individuals who are at a high risk of becoming recidivists should be identified and attended to prior to the commission of their first crime (Seigel & McCormick, 2006).

2.7. Conclusion

There are many causes of recidivism and from the above literature. It is clear that factors contributing to recidivism include family background, broken or dysfunctional families, child maltreatment, child neglect, lack of adequate supervision, the environment, poverty and unemployment, peer pressure, substance abuse and lack of education. These factors may vary from one individual to the next. The psychological effects of recidivism include unemployment and poverty, family dynamics, social reintegration and isolation and unavoidable symptoms. The effects of recidivism might haunt the recidivists on a daily basis as they have no control over how their behaviour impacts on them. This chapter also discussed policy implications known as primary and secondary prevention.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology which Rajasekar, Philominathan and Chinnathambi (2013) see as a systematic approach used to resolve a matter, further indicating that it is also a science which involves the process of learning how to conduct research. Quintessentially, this is a method used by researchers to determine how they will explain their work, to describe and to make prediction of occurrences. Babbie (2007) argues that a research methodology focuses on methods that are related expand on data and to provide guidelines on how the research should be undertaken. The significance of a research methodology is to explain why certain studies are conducted, how the researcher formulated a research problem, how data were collected and the types of methods used and why those methods of data analysis were used. This section gives a general idea of the methodology that was employed in this research project. The chapter focuses on the research approach, research design, the population as well as the sampling process, the data collection procedures and data analysis, the tools that were utilised and the techniques. Ethical considerations and measures of ensuring trustworthiness are included.

3.2. Research Approach

The study employed a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research is emic, inductive, subjective, holistic, and the procedure looks at methods which usually focus on understanding, describing as well as interpreting, in order to come up with a theory concerning a particular matter or a situation. According to Burns and Grove (2003), quantitative research is a subjective organised approach which is used to define life experiences and to provide these life experiences with meaning. Qualitative research usually focuses on individual experiences in their own category of meaning; it focuses more on words and language. Babbie (2007) reports that the participant's unique background of experiences often provides deep insight information which was produced in-depth to paint a clear picture of their actual experiences in their own social context. The researcher considered the participants' experiences and settings very important in this research project. This approach was chosen because it enabled the participants to give data based on their own unique experiences as well as what those experiences meant to them. This enabled the researcher to understand factors contributing to recidivism and its effects amongst male youth.

3.3. Research Design

The researcher employed an exploratory phenomenological research design which is aimed at getting full insight into the recidivists' situation. This research design does not seek to give ultimate conclusion on the research problem that is being explored. The main objective of this research project was to gain insight on recidivism and to allow the researcher to get familiar with the matter which was being studied in order for a hypothesis to be formulated (De Vos, Fouche & Delport, 2012). The research design was chosen to intentionally explore the psychological effects of recidivism amongst the youth in Musina. It was intended to bring new discoveries both from a new theoretical perspective and in a way which results in people looking at issues in a different way.

3.3.1. Population and setting

Wilson and MacLean (2011) regard a population as a group which the researcher is interested in investigating. According to Burns and Grove (2003), population refers to all the elements which are regarded as minimum requirements for the selected criteria of inclusion in any given study. Yount (2006) describes population as consisting of individuals which the researcher is interested in. In terms of this study, a setting is regarded as a community where these recidivists engage with other individuals as well as the environment itself. It consists of the physical boundaries and several people who are a part of it (World Health Organization, 2014). In order for individuals to partake in this study the participants had to be male youth between the ages of 15 to 24 and must have been arrested twice or more for either the same or different offences. These individuals should be full time residing in Musina, which is a township consisting of two areas called Matswale and Nancefield. Musina is a semi-urban area located in Vhembe District, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

3.3.2. Sample and sampling procedure

Babbie (2007) states that a sample is a sub-category of population which is carefully chosen to partake in a research project. The sampling procedure defines the selected groups of elements, that is, individuals, groups or organisations. In this study the sample was carefully chosen from a study population which is usually referred to as the ‘target population or accessible population’ (Burns & Grove, 2003, p. 233; Polit & Hungler, 2004, p. 290). In this study, the sample consisted of male youth who have been arrested twice or more for either the same or different offences. The researcher adopted a non-probability, purposive and snowball sampling to recruit ten participants. According to De Vos, Fouche and Delport (2012, p. 233), purposive sampling is a “non-probability based sampling”. It is characterised by a deliberate effort to obtain a representative sample through the inclusion of groups or typical areas in a sample.

The researcher selected the most representative sample to answer the research questions. The first participant is a recidivist who is part of a youth organisation which focuses on recidivism. This was the first sampling technique that was used. Purposive sampling is usually used when a limited number of individuals possess the trait of interest. It was the only viable sampling technique to start with when the researcher wanted to obtain information from a very specific group of people. The researcher selected this technique so that those who were unsuitable for the study or who did not fit the criteria will be immediately eliminated. So only the most suitable candidates remained. The participants that were chosen met the eligibility criteria set for the study. Babbie (2007) defines purposive sampling as a non-random selection of participants on the basis of convenience, availability, knowledge of the population, research aim and clearly defined similar characteristics essential to the research.

De Vos, Fouche and Delport (2012) view snowballing as the process whereby an initial participant either recruits or suggests other participants in the same category for the study. This generated more participants and strengthened the research validity with regard to the research constraints. Snowballed participants were very open and willing to talk to the researcher about anything. They were usually free and they brought more information which the initial participants perhaps suppressed. The combination of purposive and snowball design generated cases which were rich

in-depth information for the study (Babbie, 2007). The researcher knew individuals who had been arrested more than three times. Thus, the researcher actively selected the most representative sample to answer the research questions. This was the first sampling technique that was used. Snowball sampling may be defined as a technique for gathering research subjects through the identification of an initial subject who is recruited to provide the names of other participants. These actors may themselves open possibilities for an expanding web of contact and inquiry. The strategy was utilised primarily as a response to problems associated with understanding and sampling concealed populations such as deviant and socially isolated populations (De Vos, Fouche & Delport, 2012). The snowball sampling was used because the sample for this study was limited to a very minor group of the population. The researcher was referred to two initial subjects who were recidivists who managed to refer her to other participants.

3.4. Research Instruments

Wilkinson and Birmingham (2006) described a research instrument as a device which is used to assess a particular phenomenon. It could be a broadsheet and pen assessment, a questionnaire, a face to face dialogue, a research instrument, or a set of guiding principles for an observation. According to Burns and Grove (2003), these research instruments or tools are used as a method of data gathering, and without the tools mentioned above, it would be difficult to attain data. The researcher used interviews as an instrument for data collection. This study focused on semi-structured interviews which were conducted face to face because they allowed better tractability especially in words, categorisation as well as direction. This data collection instrument was preferred due to the fact that it corroborated data gathered from transcribed sources and it was able to clarify facts of data. Semi-structured interviews allowed greater flexibility, especially in wording, classification of themes and in terms of the direction of the study. This technique was used to attain feedback and gave the interviewer a chance to discover a problem or service. It also permitted the interviewees to voice out their own thoughts and views, concerns as well as how they felt about their re-offending behaviour.

The fact that it was semi-structured means the interview allowed the dialogues to move towards the direction as dictated by the participants. The advantage of this type of method was that it made it convenient to attain related data, and this allowed the researcher to gain new information concerning the effects of recidivism. Additionally, considering an interview simply meant that the participants were able to impact the topic. This resulted in new themes emerging and the researcher was able to probe. In so doing she was able to understand the perceptions and experiences of the recidivists (Babbie, 2007).

According to Kennedy (2006), an interview guide is described as a set of organised questions which give direction to the interviewer with regards to what exactly they want to know from the interviewee. The interview guide helps the researcher to focus on asking only what is relevant as well as probing in a manner that will direct the participants to only answer what the researcher asked. The research questions for this study were phrased in an indirect and non-provocative manner in order to accommodate the recidivists. This research utilised the following guide:

- What are the characteristics which affected the probability of you becoming a recidivist?
- What circumstances led you to committing crimes repeatedly?
- What crimes did you often commit?
- What motivated you to choose those crimes specifically?
- How did being a recidivist affect you?

3.5. Pre-testing

Howitt and Cramer (2011) state that pre-testing is an experimental procedure which is conducted in order to prepare for the entire study. Pre-testing was very significant in this study because the researcher was able to make changes where necessary, especially with some aspects of the methodology as well as with the way questions were phrased on the interview guide. It was conducted with three male youth who were not part of this study. The aim was to test whether or not the questions asked were straight forward and understandable, whether or not the estimated time for the interview was adequate or not. The necessary adjustments made in the interview guide included the appropriateness of the research instruments. Some of the changes included using simplified grammatical constructions so that the participants may understand the questions.

3.6. Data Collection Procedure

Burns and Grove (2003) describe collecting data as a precise, methodical manner of gathering relevant information concerning a particular phenomenon being studied through the use of approaches which include face to face dialogues (interviews), focus group discussions, case histories, narratives or stories and participant observations. Firstly, the researcher scheduled appointments with the participants. An informed consent form was handed to each participant so that they may have an understanding of what exactly they were participating in, the possible risks and benefits to their involvement, and knowing that they were not compelled to participate in the study, meaning they can withdraw at any time. For the participants who were under the age of 18, consent from their parents or guardians was required in the form of a request to sign these consent forms. No youth was forced to participate in the study. The researcher then met with the participants at a secured environment at the agreed time and place. The researcher then met with one participant at a time, and face to face interviews were conducted. Research assistants were required so that the researcher may not interview the recidivists alone, for security purposes. This made the interviews safer as compared to when she was alone. An audio recorder was available and the interviews were recorded. The researcher also used a notepad and pen for data collection.

3.7. Data Analysis

Patton (2004) states that the qualitative analysis procedure aims to convert the data collected into findings. The role of the researcher in the process of analysing data was to select and sort important data from unimportant data as well as detecting significant themes. De Vos, Fouche and Delpont (2012) indicate that the researcher's role also involves creating a structure which will best connect what exactly the findings reveal. Thematic content analysis was considered for this study because it assisted the researcher to discover underlying meanings and patterns of recidivism. The following steps of thematic analysis were followed:

Step 1: Preliminary analysis

Though analysis of data is done after data collection was completed, it was important for the data to be read and analysed during its collection (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012). The reason for this was that qualitative data collection can generate a large quantity of data. The researcher read and analysed data while it was still being collected. This made it easy for the researcher to manage and to familiarise herself with the data while the collection process was still in progress (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012). Preliminary analysis assisted the researcher to reflect on the methods of analysis which were used and possible themes (Bodgan & Biklen, 2007).

Step 2: Managing data

Data management was an integral part of qualitative data analysis (Wilson & MacLean, 2011). At this stage the researcher had to make sure that the data was organised into file folders, index cards or computer files. Transcription of data was also an integral part of this step, especially because interviews were recorded on video or audio. An integral part of managing data was to label it using a system that made its retrieval simple for the researcher (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012. p. 408).

Step 3: Reading and writing memos

The researcher had to read the collected data thoroughly or even several times to ensure that they were completely familiar with the content thereof (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012). These memos included notes that assisted the researcher in coding the information.

Step 4: Generating categories and coding the data

Though this is the most challenging part of qualitative data analysis, it is also the most important. It was important that the researcher identified salient themes, recurring ideas and similar patterns of belief (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012). Once the data for categories were made, the researcher coded the data appropriately and then put it in different categories. The categories were then named. The researcher had to continually evaluate the categories and the data within them. Where it was necessary, data was moved or shifted and the names of the themes or categories were changed (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012).

Step 5: Testing the emergent understandings and searching for alternative explanations

As themes and categories of data emerged, the researcher had to challenge the patterns that seemed very apparent (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012. p. 414). Through critical thinking and analysis, the researcher explored other acceptable clarifications for data as well as associations amongst them (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012).

Step 6: Interpreting data

Interpreting involves making sense of the data (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012. p. 416). Through the creation of typologies, the researcher developed a theory from the data collected (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012).

3.8. Measures to Ensure Trustworthiness

Streubert Speziale and Carpenter (2003) describe trustworthiness as “establishing the validity and reliability of qualitative research” (p. 364). Qualitative research is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experiences of the study participants. Trustworthiness establishes the validity and reliability of qualitative research. A research, therefore, demonstrates trustworthiness when the experiences of the participants were accurately represented (Streubert & Carpenter, 2003, p. 38).

3.8.1. Credibility

Credibility has to do with ensuring the ‘truth’ and certainty of the research findings (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This is made possible by establishing internal validity (Shenton, 2004). To ensure credibility, after a month of data collection, the researcher took the transcribed data as well as the recorded and handwritten materials back to the participants in Musina in order for them to review the notes and what they said to correct any misinterpretations and to confirm information to ascertain congruence.

3.8.2. Transferability

Shenton (2004) denotes that transferability has to do with establishing external validity, or the degree to which the results obtained can be functional in other situations or areas. Transferability is also called “fittingness” for it determines whether the findings fit in or are transferable to similar situations. The potential user, not the researcher, determines whether or not the findings are transferable (Streubert & Carpenter, 2003, p. 29). It is the extent to which the findings from the data can be transferred to other settings. To ensure transferability, the findings could be applicable to a different study of the same nature.

3.8.3. Confirmability

According to De Vos, Fouche and Delpont (2012), confirmability is associated with objectivity because this concept assesses whether or not the results of this study can be supported by other studies. In order to guarantee confirmability, after data had been analysed, the researcher compared the findings of this study with data from other studies. The information that was used in this study

was validated by different studies which were conducted by credible researchers. Wilson and MacLean (2011) state that auditing is one of the essential measures used to guarantee credibility. The researcher decided to arrange the data in a manner that would make it easily retrievable at any moment, especially when the findings of this study are being challenged.

To guarantee confirmability, the researcher organised and kept all the data collected from participants, all the transcripts, audio recordings as well as the informed consent forms signed by the participants. The data can be produced when needed, it is recoverable and accessible. Quotes and excerpts were used by the researcher. These quotes and excerpts were extracted from the participants' transcripts from the interviews as proof that without any doubt that was exactly what the participants said. Trustworthiness of this study was considered very essential because the researcher ensured the relevance of this study. Warranting internal as well as external validity eradicated any possibility of biased results. Constant thorough observation of the findings limited any chances of scrutinising the research, resulting in the research being dependable, trustworthy as well as increased reliability.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

According to De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delprot (2012), ethics are basically fixed moral codes which are recommended and agreed upon by a group of individuals, and afterwards are generally acknowledged and applied as laws which govern how the study should be conducted with the intention of protecting the participants. The application of ethical considerations was a significant aspect of this study because of the nature of sensitivity involved in this study. All the probable threats were cautiously and continuously observed in order to increase the level of sensitivity of the participants to avoid exposing them to any negative effects. The researcher requested for permission as well as consent from the participants. The researcher ensured privacy and confidentiality and encouraged the participants to remain anonymous. Lastly, the participants were informed about their right to withdraw from the study.

3.9.1. Informed consent

Participants had the authority to decide what they are comfortable, and what they are not comfortable discussing during the interviews. This is part of the principles of informed consent according to De Vos, Fouche and Delpont (2012). The researcher indicated to the participants that prior their participation in the study, they had to understand what the study is about, why it is being conducted and why they were chosen to be part of the study. The researcher went further to explain the aim of the study, the time frame which would be required from them to participate in the study, the risks and benefits of participating in the study as well as the researcher's credibility. Written consent was obtained from each participant. This was crucial to all minors participants who are 18 years and below because they are not legally allowed to consent on their own (De Vos, Fouche & Delpont, 2012). The researcher's major role was to make sure the participants understood what was expected of them and that they fully understand these expectations prior their participation in this study. The main aim was to gather relevant information from all the male recidivists who were part of this study.

3.9.2. Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy

Wilson and MacLean (2011) state that confidentiality means that all the information that the participants divulges cannot be made public or available to discredit others. The anonymity of a person or an institution is protected by making it impossible to link aspects of data to a specific person or institution. Confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed by ensuring that data obtained was used in such a way that no one other than the researcher knew the source. The names of the participants were never asked in this study, not even on the informed consent forms or on the data that was collected. Codes were used such as participant A, B, C etc. especially for those participants who wanted to remain anonymous. Wilson and MacLean (2011) state that privacy is about agreement between the participant and the researcher, which makes it difficult for people to have access to private information which was discussed during data collection. Privacy is also the freedom possessed by an individual which governs the period, degree and general situations whereby private information will be shared and with whom it will be shared and with whom it will be withheld from (Burns & Grove, 2003, p. 171). Participants' privacy was maintained by not linking any of their names with the collected data.

3.9.3. The right to withdraw from the study

Before the participants participated in the study, the researcher made them aware that they were allowed to withdraw or to quit if they felt like they did not want to continue to answer any questions the researcher was asking them at any given time of the study. The researcher explained this right before the participants started participating in the interviews. According to Babbie (2007), this right is also viewed as part of informed consent.

3.10. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter addressed the type of research design as well as the approach that was used in this research project, the population and setting of the study which stated the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The procedure which was considered to collect data as well as the type of research instruments which was used to collect data from the participants was also discussed. The procedure used for analysing data was also explained and lastly, the researcher stated how she maintained trustworthiness and the ethical considerations which were applied in the study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis of the findings of the study derived from literal transcriptions of interviews. The first theme focuses on factors which contribute to recidivism such as peer pressure, lack of education and unemployment, substance abuse, poverty, child neglect as well as parenting and supervision. The second theme addresses crimes that are committed often. These crimes are divided into two subthemes namely: petty and serious crimes. The last theme addresses the psychological effects of recidivism on individuals themselves, on their education and their families.

4.2. Results

Table 1 below provides the results summarised in the form of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the transcribed data.

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
1. Factors contributing to recidivism	1. Peer pressure
	2. Lack of education and unemployment
	3. Substance abuse
	4. Poverty
	5. Child neglect
	6. Parenting and supervision
2. Crimes committed often	1. Petty crimes
	2. Serious crimes
	3. Reasons for choosing specific crimes

3. Psychological Effects of recidivism	1. Psychological effects on individuals
	2. Psychological effects on family
	3. Psychological effects on education

Theme1: Factors contributing to recidivism

There are multiple factors that contribute to recidivism. The few that are mentioned above were considered. These factors are the most common ones in the study. Most of these factors overlap with each other, meaning one factor leads to another factor. Factors contributing to crime are also known as causes of crime. These factors vary from one individual to another and from one situation to the other. These sub-themes include peer pressure, lack of education, unemployment, substance abuse, poverty, child neglect, parenting, parenting and lastly, supervision.

Children that grow up in dysfunctional families often look for love elsewhere, especially if they are being neglected, As a result, they get influenced by those that pretend to show them love. Essentially, those who pretend to be their friends seek to exploit them and to them for their own personal gain. This usually happens in cases where they are often used to commit crimes by the very people from whom they seek affection and acceptance. They ultimately get accustomed to committing crimes or living lives of crime. As a result of their being accustomed to crime, they habitually live lives that are characterised by crime. In this instance, there is no need for anyone to influence them into crime, they independently commit crime.

Sub-theme 1: Peer pressure

The researcher discovered that peer pressure was also one of the main factors contributing to recidivism. The findings indicated that individuals who were in the company of peers with criminal behaviour also end up producing the same behaviour. Most participants confirmed that they started committing crimes when they started spending time with friends who were committing various crimes. Bandura (2009) holds the same view because he states that social learning is critical for human survival, and sometimes things can go wrong if the behaviour being imitated is self-destructive. Most participants said they spent most of their time in the company of their peers. This

means that it was easy for them to be influenced by their peers into recidivism. In instances where the values and norms instilled by their parents are somewhat deemed as weak or even in worst cases where they were never instilled, the youth might easily fall prey to the influence of criminals. Most participants stated that their peers, who have strong characters also have a very strong hold over them. These strong characters are the ones who determine how they must behave. However, this study only reveal few participants with strong characters, whereas the majority were influenced by their peers (Dooley, Seals & Skarbek, 2014).

Most of these participants mentioned that they felt the need to do what was expected of them by their influencers in order to fit in to whichever group they wanted to be part of. Bowman, Prelow & Weaver (2007) concur that peers with strong characters have a very strong hold on their peers and that they are the ones who determine how others should behave. The findings also reveal that most participants copy the behaviour of their friends without thinking of the outcomes. The majority of the participants stated how they committed crime in order to gain respect like other young people in the community who were labelled as notorious criminals.

Many participants believe that committing crime gives them status, implying that they become popular. They are in a sense validated by the realisation that people admire and fear them because of their popularity as criminals. They were treated like heroes. Therefore, they were encouraged to commit more crimes in order to maintain their acquired status. The more they continued with their criminal acts, the more they would be hailed as champions. They will continue to be promoted and recognised as heroes. Maintaining this social status also included peers having sexual relations with at least one or more girls per day. The participants further added that when they would go to prison they would be viewed as real street criminals by their peers. This boosted their ego and credibility in the eyes of people. All participants mentioned that they learned criminal behaviour from their peers.

Bandura (2009) agrees that behaviour is learned through a process called observational learning. The findings revealed that other major ways which these participants use to commit crime repeatedly is unrestricted interaction with deviant peers. It was also brought to light that if one member of a group engages in criminal activities, there is a high probability that other members would do the same. Most participants confirmed that they just do what their peers are doing. Meyer, Moore and Viljoen (2008) are also in agreement with these findings, stating that “Individuals with a high self-esteem will be less likely to give in to negative peer pressure”. This revealed that deviant peer affiliation was a stronger predictor of individuals committing crime repeatedly. Below are some of the responses from the participants:

“I started committing crime because my friends were doing these things and then I decided to join them. I felt it was the right thing to do” (Participant C).

“I started making friends my friends were people who smoke marijuana and nyaope, I started smoking as well” (Participant G).

“In short let me just say me desiring to be cool and the influence from my friends contributed to me being a recidivist” (Participant J).

Peer pressure is evident in most recidivists who are unable to get proper moral based relationships in their lives. They often find themselves associated with peers who misled them into lives of crime. This usually comes after they were promised emotional security (Dooley, Seals & Skarbek, 2014). Victims of such deceptions are often from child-headed or dysfunctional families. These recidivists often find themselves committing the same crimes over and over again as a result of peer pressure.

Sub-theme 2: Lack of education and unemployment

The findings disclose that the majority of recidivists lack professional and common skills required in order for individuals to be effective in the community. These findings also revealed that the majority of participants were school drop-outs. Most of these participants indicated that they had not completed grade 12 because they stopped attending classes. They explained that they would bunk classes to hang out with their friends. A report by the Florida Department of Corrections

(2014) is also in support of the view that the educational level is also one of the predispose factors causing criminals to reoffend. Most participants stated that going to school for them was a waste of precious time which they could be investing elsewhere making money. The findings of the study are in congruence with Tenibiaj and Owuamanam (2010), who agree that the absence of skills results in individuals repeatedly committing crime as a way to survive. Most participants stated that education does not generate immediate solutions to their problems and therefore they do not see why they should be focusing on something that will bring solutions years later. They would rather focus on something that will bring a solution to their problem now. Only few participants made it to grade 12. However, due to lack of financial support, they could not further their studies. Some participants indicated that they stopped going to school because they did not have school uniforms. Clear (2007) supports these findings by stating that in as much as young people want to get educated, sometimes it is just discouraging due to lack of resources.

Most participants stated that their education was also disrupted by going in and out of prison. They felt that they were way too behind to catch up and that they were too old to go back to school. They also stated that their pride will not allow them to go back to school. All the other participants mentioned that because of their criminal records, they believed that they had completely ruined their opportunities of attaining employment, and so going back to school was no longer an option for them. Borzycki and Makkai (2007) concur that recidivists in previous studies indicated that the stigma of having a criminal record can have lifetime effects. They further added that the use of electronic criminal background checks makes it easier for employers and employees to discriminate individuals with criminal records.

Borzycki and Makkai (2007) concluded: “This becomes very easy for offenders to commit crimes again when they feel isolated, discriminated and undermined that they can never change.” Some participants said they were unable to secure and maintain employment whenever they got a job because committing crime was habitual to an extent where they ended up stealing things at their work places and selling them so they could get quick cash. These participants are used to making money daily. It is difficult for them to work in an environment where they would be paid monthly because this hinders them from keeping employment. Failure to keep employment results in participants being unemployed. Unemployment as a result of a criminal record eventually leads to

poverty and crime. This means that the cycle of crime becomes even more difficult to break. The participants also stated that:

“I used to go to go job hunting but because I was not educated that contributed to me committing crime” (Participant C).

“I can’t go back to school or get proper job anymore because of the criminal record” (Participant H).

“They are not giving us a job because I didn't go to school I am not educated” (Participant I).

From the above information it is clear that recidivists have a low level of educational attainment and have no interest whatsoever in continuing with school. These participants clearly stated that education is a waste of time because they do not generate any money by attending classes (Abrifor, Atere & Muoghalu, 2012).

Sub-theme 3: Substance abuse

Most participants stated that they were not using substances prior to joining certain social crews. They usually begin by joining a crew, or a peer group, and they start abusing substances before they become recidivists. When they no longer have money to buy the substances, they commit crimes such as stealing. The situation will escalate to the point where they end up becoming recidivists due to their substance abuse. Few participants started off as criminals, but when they met new friends, inside and outside jail, who were criminals, they also started abusing substances. Most participants in the study confirmed that they take substances when committing offences in order to boost their courage and to get rid of fear. Seigel and McCormick (2006) hold the same view that most violent offenders admit to using substances when committing offences. This indicates that alcohol serves as a catalyst to individuals to commit offences.

Seigel and McCormick (2006) further referred to a Correctional Service Survey conducted in Canada, which supports the fact that over 48 per cent of 6,000 convicts, mostly violent offenders, admitted to using substances when committing offences. It was also indicated that all recidivists admitted that they were addicted to different substances such as nyaope, glue and marijuana. However, the most commonly used drug was marijuana. All participants indicated that they could not go for a day without using any of these substances. Most participants stated that they committed crime so that they would be able to buy themselves those substances. Majority of the participants admitted that they take substances on a daily basis, after every meal. On the other hand, the study proves that addiction to substances is one of the contributing factors to individuals becoming recidivists. This is because when they are under the influence of substances, they are inhibited from thinking rationally.

Chenube (2011) identifies alcohol and substance abuse as being directly linked to crime and recidivism. Their decision-making ability becomes impaired, hence they do not see committing crime as an offense, but as a way of earning a living. Committing crime is a means for them to get money so that they can buy more of these substances. The forceful desire for these substances drives them into committing these crimes without hesitation. The participants also stated that whenever they were together with their friends, if they would not be committing crime, they would either be smoking or using different types of drugs and drinking alcohol. As a result, confirming that substance abuse is their lifestyle is also confirmed by their habits of being always under the influence of these substances. Some of the substances which were mentioned by the participants included crystal meth and bottle kop. The findings reveal that the participants also committed crimes to get money in order to buy expensive substances such as whiskies and drugs. They boasted that some crimes were not just committed for any substances, but to quench certain specific cravings and desires. Therefore, drugs such as crystal meth may be expensive due to their quality (strength). The participants further explained that:

“Some crimes when you commit them they are scary and you need to be high or something. We smoke drugs and we smoke strong drugs seriously because they give us courage” (Participant B).

“My friends used to do drugs, so I started hanging out with them. So I started doing them too” (Participant D).

“I also realised that if I could steal things and sell them I can get money to buy marijuana and nyaope” (Participant G).

“Like I said I can't go to bed without smoking glue or marijuana” (Participant J).

Substance abuse is a serious problem which serves as a catalyst of recidivism, especially in male youth. Substance use is usually influenced by peer pressure, therefore addicts of substance use often find themselves unemployed, without any stable income and have to fend for themselves. They commit various crimes in order to support or feed their addiction. Recidivists also fail to get proper rehabilitation and continue with the crimes and do not care whether they get caught or not (Dooley et al., 2014).

Sub-theme 4: Poverty

This study discovered that poverty contributes largely to the commission of repeated crimes. All participants indicated that they commit crimes based on the lack of resources such as money, food and proper clothing. The results of the study are in line with the report by the United Nations (2009) that although poverty is defined as lack of resources, it is also a state of mind that causes one to always feel unsatisfied with what they have, and they can do whatever it takes to quench their desires even if it means breaking the law repeatedly. The research project found that it is not far-fetched that a needy person might be tempted to commit crime than the one who is well-off. The majority of the participants stated that they did not have parents or guardians, and therefore, they had to provide for themselves and their siblings.

The participants indicated that it was tough being a teenager and having to play a role of a parent by providing for their siblings. They further indicated that crime was the quickest solution to their problem. Most participants who had a single parent or both parents indicated that there was always no food in the house. This work reveals that the lack of resources leads to stress (e.g., stressing about what to eat, how to get money and how to take care of one's siblings), and when the same stressor occurs repeatedly, it results in participants committing crime repeatedly to resolve their problems. Poverty can lead to high levels of stress which contributes largely to the participant's criminal behaviour. This research discovered that most participants viewed crime as a way in which they could obtain resources which they could not attain through legitimate means. For most of these impoverished participants, the reward that crime yields may outweigh the risk of being caught.

The researcher discovered that poverty creates higher opportunities for participants to be desperate enough to engage in criminal activities they know very well that they should not be engaging in. The participants also noted that poverty destroys their will to resist temptation. Few participants tried staying away from crime, but because of poverty they gave up and joined the criminals. Poverty makes it even harder to break the cycle of crime. This study indicated that poverty leaves the participants with two choices, either to continue committing crime or to try to come up with legal but limited sources of income. News24 (2008) supports this view, arguing that "poverty is one of the social factors that contribute largely to the commission of repeated crimes". All participants confirmed that poverty and crime are interconnected to such an extent that they are inseparable. This means that wherever there is poverty, there will always be crime. The participants opened up about how poverty contributed to them being recidivists, saying:

"I don't have anything my parents died a long time ago you see and I have to take care of my sisters they have to eat" (Participant A).

"The circumstance that led to me committing crime was being poor but also lack of knowledge" (Participant C).

"When I started, what really lead to me committing crime is the fact that life was tough" (Participant D).

In most instances, recidivists have common characteristics or factors that influence their line of crimes or their motivation to commit certain crimes. One of those factors is poverty. Poverty-stricken homes often fall victim to criminal activities happening within the house. At times, it goes to an extent where more than one family member is involved in certain criminal activities. Occasionally, it could be that a single person is aware of what is actually going on within the household. Poverty could easily influence a person to commit recurring crimes even after being sent to correctional services facilities.

Sub-theme 5: Child neglect

The research revealed that parents or guardians' inability to meet the physical, financial, psychological and social needs of the participants contributes to their becoming recidivists. The findings of this study stated that all participants confirmed that being neglected by their care-givers resulted in them feeling unloved, unwanted, unworthy and rejected by their parents or guardians. Most participants stated that feeling neglected resulted in them feeling the need to be fully depended on themselves. By depending on themselves they mean having to commit crime in order to meet their needs.

The results of this study are in congruence with the Department of Health and Human Services' (2011) assertion that "neglect is the failure of a parent or other person with responsibility for the child to provide needed food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision to the degree that the child's health, safety, and wellbeing are threatened with harm". The majority of the participants stated that their parents would go drink and come back late drunk without making sure that the basic needs (such as food) were available for them (the participants) and their siblings. Others stated that their parents could spend an entire month without buying groceries in the house; they would not care whether the participants ate or not and they would not even bother to find out. The participants also mentioned that in such a situation, there was nothing they could do apart from acting like a man and go out to fend for themselves. Fending for themselves also meant that they had to provide for their siblings as they were all in the same struggle.

Some participants also stated that their mothers would disappear for months without knowing where they were staying. The majority of these participants stated that their parents would come and go as they pleased. According to Englander (2007), Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytical theory is in line with this study because it states that appropriate background is extremely important for every child's moral code. Freud also further emphasised that through parenting, children adopt a particular moral standard of living. Whenever they would cook the little food that was available in the house, they would get into trouble for that. They would even be in trouble for sleeping before the owner of the house sleeps. Some participants indicated that the situation at home was too bad for them, and that is why they ended up running away from home. Some participants also confirmed that they lacked basic needs such as school uniform and resources needed at school for learning. All participants stressed that there was nothing else they could do apart from committing crime. They would likely get arrested but when they got out of prison, they would still be in the same situation. This implies that they would have to continue from where they left off. The participants said:

"I had to take care of my siblings. My mom would often come back home drunk, sometimes we would go for months not knowing where she is or where she is staying. She is just an alcoholic" (Participant: C).

"Whether you ate or you didn't eat they wouldn't even ask and they wouldn't care to find out. Sometimes the entire month would pass by without them buying groceries so I realised that I need to be a man" (Participant F).

"Mainly it's because of the way the situation was at home everyone had to hustle for themselves" (Participant J).

This study shows that the majority of children who were raised in broken families are more at risk of becoming recidivists because they rely on peers for love, advice, acceptance and approval to compensate for the gaps their parents are not occupying in their lives. They are easily misled by their peers because they do whatever it takes for them to feel accepted by their peers even if it means that they have to break the law. Recidivists are easily influenced into any form of deviant behaviour leading them to commit crime repeatedly (Abrifor et al., 2012).

Sub-theme 5: Parenting and supervision

This study revealed that lack of adequate supervision contributes largely to individuals becoming recidivists. Most participants did not have any supervision due to the absence of parents or guardians. The majority of the participants are from child-headed families, resulting in recidivists living their lives without any proper guidance and with no restrictions. Few participants had parents or guardians who were never present for them physically, emotionally and financially. Hoeve et al. (2009) concurs that the majority of recidivists' care-givers are unable to meet the physical, financial, psychological and social needs of the recidivists although these caregivers have all the resources needed to provide for the recidivist's needs. The researcher discovered that most participants were either raised by a single mother or by their grandmother. However, only a few participants stayed with both. Some participants indicated that they raised themselves as they did not have any parent or guardian around.

This research project confirmed that all participants had no prominent male figure in their lives. Some of the participants had fathers. However, they had no clue about their whereabouts and had never met each other before. This study also discovered that most participants indicated that neglectful parenting drove them to their choice of lifestyle. This study revealed that all participants were from families immersed in conflict and who lacked proper parental modelling and supervision. Most participants indicated that their parents did not care about their whereabouts, whether they had eaten or not. They would not even enquire about all the other aspects of their lives.

USDHHS (2007) supports this view by arguing that lack of adequate supervision is one of the major contributing factors of child neglect. This work also indicates that participants without guardians or parents were not being supervised or taken care of by anyone. This meant that the participants were free to leave home anytime and come back anytime. They had no one calling them into order or telling them how to behave and conduct themselves. This indicates that these participants raised themselves through the beliefs of their peers, because their peers automatically became the people who intervened into their lives. Most participants had parents who were struggling with addictions and therefore were hardly at home to supervise them. The findings of

this project also confirm that most parents had poor parenting style, and the absence of parenting contributed largely to individuals becoming recidivists. Abrifor, Atere and Muoghalu (2012) opined that the number of siblings and family background result in child neglect. In a family where parents have many children, it becomes difficult for the parent to pay attention to the needs and wants of every single child. This results in children feeling neglected. Some of the participants' responses are as follows:

“Yes it was lack of adequate supervision my parents didn't care where I was...My mother is always working and she comes back late and on weekends she will be out drinking and sometimes she doesn't come back and cook and there is no one” (Participant B).

“We were left alone with him and his drinking escalated so we were forced to take care of ourselves.” (Participant: D).

“What lead me to commit crime was the fact that my parents were always drunk, they were always fighting and hitting each other” (Participant F).

This research project showed how parents get too preoccupied with their own agendas, forgetting to instil discipline and to supervise their children. Lack of parenting and supervision results in recidivists making every decision in their lives without proper guardians. Even when they made wrong choices in life, their parents or guardians were not there to steer them into the right direction. This is even worse for those recidivists who do not have parents or guardians at all. Without parenting, there can never be supervision (Abrifor et al. 2012).

Theme 3: Crimes committed often

One of the themes that emerged was crimes most often committed. There were common crimes which recidivists prefer committing, or rather that they committed. The crimes that recidivists commit often are categorised into two sub-themes namely, petty crimes and serious crimes. This work reveals that crimes which most of the participants committed were usually petty crimes. This means that they only got a short-term prison sentence. Only a few participants committed serious crimes. This study also shows that most of these participants only committed crimes which would generate money immediately. Most of these crimes did not really need planning but were more

opportunistic or circumstantial in nature. The few participants who committed serious crimes were experts who had already acquired a lot of experience in committing crime. Patchin and Hinduja (2015) agree that common crimes committed often include petty crimes and serious crimes.

Sub-theme 1: Petty crimes

From this study the majority of the participants committed petty crimes. This research project reveals that petty crimes in this study are referred to as crimes that individuals committed and got a minimal sentence. These crimes include pick-pocketing, mugging, shoplifting and house breaking. Patchin and Hinduja (2015) agree that petty crimes include assault (bullying), house breaking, shoplifting, snatch and grabs, disorderly conduct, school offenses (truancy), theft and burglary, vandalism, possession of illegal drugs (marijuana), pick-pocketing, and underage purchase, possession or sale of alcohol or cigarettes. This study also reveals that petty crimes usually do not require or involve killing someone in the process. The participants also indicated that petty crimes are also known as “low profile crimes” or “dizzy crimes”. From this study, the researcher also learnt that the participants commit these crimes for quick, easy and very little cash. They indicated that this could be due to the realisation that they did not have cash for substances or food. They also specified that they committed these crimes repeatedly as a stepping stone for them to becoming high profile criminals through repeated arrests.

Crimes such as shoplifting and snatch and grab are geared or determined by the situation of a particular time; hence the deduction from the study that these types of crimes are opportunistic. From this study, the majority of the participants who committed this type of crimes stated that these crimes do not need proper or thorough planning prior commission. They are crimes that just haphazardly presented themselves, or just stumbled upon as they were smoking their marijuana or just walking around. Some of the participants stated that these types of crimes were influenced by whatever that was in fashion or which was trending at that particular time. Instances such as the selling of nyaope were influenced by the number of people taking the drug at that particular moment. The most common petty crimes mentioned by participants are as follows:

“Dizzy crimes you see? More like useless simple crimes, crimes like stealing cell-phones, those are like child's play.” (Participant A)

*“Often we would do things like shoplifting, snatch and grab”
(Participant B).*

*“I chose them simply because they are the easiest crimes to commit.”
(Participant G).*

From this study the researcher was able to deduce that petty crimes are widely influenced, and common amongst recidivists. These crimes also have a very low level of risk, and there is a wide variety of these crimes. These are the crimes which happen frequently on a daily basis. They are usually random and unplanned.

Sub-theme 2: Serious crimes

The findings of this study indicate that few participants committed serious crimes. The study reveals that serious crimes are the ones that involve lots of money and may lead to taking of someone's life. These crimes carry long jail sentences. From this research project, the researcher is able to deduce that this type of crimes involves a high level of risk, meaning it also requires a lot of courage to commit. These are crimes such as high-jacking (this can be car-jacking or cargo-jacking, with the utilisation of lots and very offensive ammunition), armed robbery, trafficking of drugs (marijuana and cigarettes) and cash heists (ATM bombing, high-jacking of armoured trucks). Patchin and Hinduja (2015) concur that serious crimes include driving violations (driving under the influence of alcohol or driving without a license), possession of stolen goods or illegal weapons, harassment, cash heist, fraud, violent crimes and armed robbery.

From this study, it is revealed that it is not every criminal who commit this type of crime, but those who had a high level of experience which is acquired from repeated criminal offences and good instincts towards that crime. O'Donnell, Baumer and Hughes (2008) holds the same view that serious crimes seem to be a specialty to most recidivists. Hence some participants referred to them as their “specialities”, or connections which are effectively gained through a series of repetitive jail time or longer jail time and good status (in terms of their criminal profile).

The participants who committed these crimes were long time law offenders, and they also got a very long jail time, due to the crime they committed. The most common serious crimes mentioned by the participants are as follows:

“I'm referring to shooting people so that we can take their cars.” (Participant C).

“I stole this other white man's car, he just left it there.” (Participant H).

*“I have been killing a lot of people I have done a lot of crimes outside there”
(Participant I).*

This study reveals that these types of crimes require high levels of planning and timing. These crimes or opportunities to commit these crimes do not occur frequently or “just” present themselves, but criminals need to put an extra effort to pull these crimes off. As much as these types of crimes require proper and plenty of planning, they also require a lot of money for buying the necessary resources.

Sub-theme 3: Reasons for choosing specific crimes

The findings of this research project indicate that the majority of the participants chose all their crimes because firstly, they were the easiest to commit; easy crimes bring easy and quick money. Additionally, they did not require many resources in the sense that, for the crimes to be committed, not many resources were required such as guns and cars, and that these crimes did not require too much planning. Similarly, when the participants chose their crimes, they also chose crimes that would not require staying longer than they should in prison, revealing that the crime chosen must carry as minimal a jail time as possible. Only a few participants stated that they had no issue staying longer in prison because they would get food and shelter for free. It was something they did not get when they are outside prison. Accommodation was one of their primary objectives of committing the particular crimes.

Only few participants committed serious crimes. For this reason, they had been criminals for a long time and they have gained a lot of experience, which made it easier for them to commit these crimes. Also, their profile (criminal status gained through the criminal offenses that they have committed) did not allow them to commit petty crimes, but serious crimes because they feel or think that other small criminals will not show them the respect they deserve. Bartol and Bartol (2005) state that “being committed to a prison system is considered as a rite of passage for people within such communities and thereby encouraging a criminal mind-set within such communities”. The study revealed that some few criminals committed the crimes so that they could be well-known and respected as dangerous and serious criminals. Most of the participants’ responses are as follows:

“You have to go with whatever that is not going to get you arrested quickly.”

(Participant: A).

“Shoplifting is better because even if they arrest you, you don't take a lot of time in prison.” (Participant: B).

“So with what I chose I knew that I'm going to get arrested but I will come out of prison quicker.” (Participant: F).

This study also shed some light in understanding that some crimes are chosen because of the money which is involved. The participants chose these crimes for the money they were going to get. Since it was a lot, carrying a long jail sentence or little money, carrying less jail sentence.

Theme 4: Psychological effects of recidivism

Recidivism has many effects not only to society, but to recidivists themselves as well. In this study, effects refer to the results or outcomes of recidivism amongst the participants. While recidivists keep going in and out of prison, there are certain consequences which might not be seen immediately such as psychological effects. Recidivism affects the participants' relationship with their parents, siblings and other people within the community. The participants might not care much about these effects because they feel that they have nothing to lose after all. The sub-themes that emerged from this theme include psychological effects on individuals, psychological effects on family and psychological effects on education. These sub-themes are discussed in detail below.

Sub-theme 1: Psychological effects on individuals

The study findings proved that recidivism has negative consequences on recidivists themselves. Borzycki and Makkai (2007) are both in agreement with the research findings that according to the recidivists, the stigma of having a criminal record can have lifetime effects. Crime starts as a random activity but it can be very addictive. This study reveals that most recidivists failed to abandon their criminal behaviour, and they would not live like other normal citizens without breaking the law because they lack a shared vision of morality. Most of these recidivists indicated that they did not hold back committing crime because of empathy, remorse, fear or guilt. Goleman (2006) opined that most recidivists suffer from a short circuit in their social brain which is important in articulating empathy.

The majority of these recidivists knew what was right and what was wrong cognitively. However, they had no regard for what is right or wrong; they would use any opportunity presented to commit crime. Most of these participants had no fear of being arrested. They shut down emotionally and being inside or outside prison is the same thing to them. According to Ludwig (2012), this is known as learned helplessness. Recidivists get so comfortable with committing crime until a point where it becomes addictive and they feel that they can no longer get out of the behaviour. This is a psychological effect because their behaviour becomes conditioned. This results in recidivists having irrational beliefs about who they are (criminals) and that they can never change. Only few participants had a problem of getting arrested; this means that they could not provide for their

siblings for that period of time. Weisburd (2012) indicates that these individuals might feel guilty, sad, might have difficulties sleeping and get flashbacks of the event, resulting in depression or anxiety. However, sometimes these individuals could use maladaptive coping strategies such as repeatedly committing crimes and abusing substances to avoid coping with their frustrations. This study reveals that these participants feel unwanted, unloved and unworthy. This results in feelings of anger or resentment, making it easy for them to have an “I don’t care” attitude. Braga and Weisburd (2012) hold the same view that recidivists get smacked in the face in a sense that they get out of prison, but still remain in this proverbial prison of stigma as well as all the other barriers created for them by society. The effects of recidivism on individuals according to the participants are as follows:

“This lifestyle is in my blood, I am so addicted to a point where I can't stop, I tried so many times but I failed to stop, it's something that is in me. Crime is in my blood” (Participant F).

“For now it made me be a rascal person because whenever they take me out, is it parula or what? The only thing I can see is to steal” (Participant I).

“It has affected me in a sense that I am not afraid to be arrested anymore” (Participant J).

Recidivists are affected emotionally by their parents’ inability to provide for them. Recidivists do whatever it takes to take care of themselves and to fill the voids by desiring to prove that they can take care of themselves even if it means breaking the law. How they behave and the damage they cause is basically an expression of what they really feel inside. That is why their main goal in life is to commit crime to get quick money, and that money will help them buy food as well as to take care of their substance addictions. When the participants’ basic needs are met they do not have to worry about what they will eat and what they will wear or even how to get money to buy food and clothes (Abrifor, Atere & Muoghalu, 2012).

Sub-theme 2: Psychological effects on family

The effects of recidivism on family are that parents cannot even help their children because they themselves failed to give their children a loving, warm home. A family is an environment where children learn skills, morals and values (Abrifor et al., 2012). Most of participants indicated that their experiences of a family involved, lack of love, emotional abuse and abandonment. Families are responsible for providing initial socialisation for children that shapes their self-worth, attitudes and behaviours. Most participants committed crimes because at home they felt unworthy. Families also create structure and stability in the lives of family members. According to this study, participants stated that they were raised in families without love, stability and accountability.

Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, Van der Laan, Smeenk and Gerris (2009), concur that majority of recidivists are from broken families. Participants also stated that they raised themselves, meaning they never learned anything about the rewards and consequences that come from following or disobeying formal and informal house rules as there were no rules at all, everyone did as they wish. Patchin and Hinduja (2015), added that close to 90.5% of juveniles who commit both major and petty crimes repeatedly had a rather harsh up-bringing. Therefore, they developed a habit of taking out their childhood distractions on activities that later on become a trend and a road to their life of re-offending at a tender age.

Majority of participants did not care how their parents would feel when they found out that they were criminals. However, recidivism breaks the little existing relationships between parents and their children. Most participants indicated that they grew up with no moral, social, and economic support, with no example and identity. All participants confirmed that they had no one to communicate love with consistently, not just in words but in actions. Some participants even ran away from home because crime filled the void they had in their hearts. They replaced their need for love and approval from their parents with the solace they found from their friends. Most participants confirmed that they grew up in families with no discipline, without discipline, participants had no place where they could feel safe, no security and no refuge to run to when they are in trouble (Abrifor, Atere & Muoghalu, 2012).

Most participants stated that they were from broken or dysfunctional families. The dysfunctions in the family have made the relationship between the participants and their parents unpleasant. All participants struggled to confide in their parents about anything because the relationship between the participants and the parents is already poor. Participants stated that they could not relate to their parents or guardians because of this poor relationship. In fact, they indicated that they barely knew them. As a result of not having any relationships with their parents, all participants mentioned that they felt unloved and neglected. They did not care about doing what was wrong because they felt that they have no one to disappoint. Furthermore, due to the dysfunctions at home, parents do not have a problem disowning the recidivists while some recidivists decide to run away from home. Abrifor et al. (2012) opined that family background is one of the factors contributing to recidivism.

Most recidivists did not find it important to behave in an appropriate way because already they feel neglected and unloved by their families. This study reveals that committing crime repeatedly creates even a bigger gap between parents and recidivists making it even more impossible to resolve any dysfunctions between them. The research project also reflects that recidivism results in individuals being disowned and kicked out of home while some recidivists decide to leave home on their own due to the poor relationship they have with their families. Patchin and Hinduja (2015), agree that most parents, guardians and family members of recidivists are negatively affected by the youth's choice of lifestyle. They further added that recidivism can result in a lot of strain on the recidivist's family income or cause upheaval in a parent or guardian's lifestyle or daily schedule. Parents and guardians may suffer a huge degree of humiliation or shame due to the recidivists' behaviour. Abrifor et al. (2012) stated that most parents suffer from depression, sleeping disorders, somatisation disorder, as well as psychosis because they are unable to process their children's deeds and they blame themselves because they did not know that their parenting style contributed to their child's behaviour. This study indicates that majority of these participants were from broken families, only few participants have both parents whom on the other hand do not take care of them. These participants are usually rejected by their families. This work revealed that none of the participants' parents are actually good role-models. The effects of recidivism on the family can be stated as follows:

“I can’t socialise with my parents; I don’t have a relationship with my parents usually when there are family gatherings I usually feel like I’m not one of them”

(Participant J).

“I don’t get to see my mom because she chased me away from home because of the things I do” (Participant B).

” My sibling is still young so sometimes when I’m in prison she has to take care of everyone else because at that moment she is the eldest sibling who has to take responsibility” (Participant C)

From this study it is clear that family institutions are affected by recidivism. The poor relationship between parents and their children plays a major role in individuals becoming recidivists. Abrifor et al. (2012) opined that family background plays a major role in shaping an individual’s behaviour. Children learn what is right and wrong from their parents. If they are not taught at a young age, this affects them in future as they make poor decisions that are enforced by their peers.

Sub-theme 3: The psychological effects on education

This study revealed that most participants had low levels of educational attainments. Recidivism affects the ability of one to view education as important. The majority of the participants stated that they dropped out of school as soon as they started committing crime and abusing substances. Hoeve, Dubas, Eichelsheim, Van der Laan, Smeenk and Gerris (2009) agree that lack of parental supervision will eventually lead to children dropping out of school. They further added that this increases the possibility of unemployment. Most participants indicated that they had no regard for education; that it was insignificant because it did not bring immediate results which they are in desperate need of. This study also reveals that the participants’ education is negatively affected, especially when they get arrested.

The participants said getting arrested disturbed the process of learning because after serving a one-year sentence, the participants would be a year behind at school, and keeping up would become a challenge especially because they were often absent from school. When they went back to school, in a few months they would be arrested again. The process of going in and out of prison disturbs the process of the participants to learn, resulting in individuals not going back to school as their

peers will be ahead of them. Most participants also indicated that they lacked the academic, vocational and social skills needed to become effective in society. They further added that the absence of these skills resulted in individuals repeatedly committing crime as a way to survive. Only few participants have made it to grade 12 (matric). However, none of them performed well or rather none of them passed grade 12. According to Ludwig (2012), recidivists are likely to fail repeatedly, resulting in low self-esteem, shame and learned helplessness which is further defined as the “giving up reaction” or “quitting response” that follows from the belief that whatever an individual does does not matter or does not change things. The psychological effects of recidivism on education according to the participants include:

“School is not for everyone” (Participant G).

“I already have a good reputation so I can't lower my standards by going back to school.” (Participant: C).

“At school I am going to sit and they will be telling me about things that will benefit me in 10 years to come you see. Life is today” (Participant: A)

According to Hockenberry, Sickmund and Sladky (2009), research has demonstrated correlation between lack of educational attainment and involvement in recidivism. This research project also confirms that the majority of these participants believe that school is a waste of time and not an immediate solution to the problems they are currently facing. This study concludes that the participants cannot engage in criminal activities while they are under the influence of substances and perform well at school concurrently. Some participants stated that they are well-respected and popular, therefore, they could lower their standards by going back to school where they will be in the same class with other young people who look up to them. Florida Department of Corrections (2014) indicate that effects of recidivism on education includes the educational level. The higher the level of educational attainment, the lower the likelihood of recidivism, and the lower the level of educational attainment, the higher the likelihood of recidivism.

4.3. Conclusion

It is now clear which factors contribute to recidivism, which crimes are committed and the psychological effects of recidivism on individuals, their families and on their education with regards to these themes. The researcher analysed the data, separating the similarities and differences as well as information presented in different themes. The findings have been accepted and supported by past studies done on recidivism. While factors contributing to recidivism might differ, there are different views and conceptions about the causes and effects of recidivism amongst male youth. This shows that the study has brought new information to this area of research and has expanded on the area. Different views relating to recidivists' experiences and challenges of crimes committed often as well as the effects of recidivism have been outlined.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This study has thoroughly explored factors contributing to recidivism hence showing why recidivists commit crime repeatedly. Some factors are social and beyond one's control while some are personal. Individuals have the ability to choose whether or not to partake in criminal activities. This study focused on addressing three main objectives which were stated in chapter one. The first objective of this study was to identify factors contributing to recidivism amongst male youth discharged from correctional services in Musina. These factors included peer pressure, lack of education, unemployment, substance abuse, poverty, child neglect, and lastly, parenting and supervision.

The psychological effects of recidivism on individual, on family and on education were identified. This study proved that there is a relationship between the psychological effects of recidivism. For example, lack of parenting and supervision could result in youth feeling neglected. Neglected youth usually feel unloved, lonely and unworthy and depressed. This leads to these youth hanging out with friends who are bad company, who will give them a sense of belonging, make them feel valued and loved, resulting in individuals conforming to the standard of the group by imitating everything that they are doing in order to be accepted. Peer pressure results in substance abuse, which leads to recidivists dropping out as a result of learned helplessness due to their poor academic performance at school; and they learn to commit several crimes. Recidivists deal with their problems by using substances resulting in addiction. Their addictions to substances as well as poverty made it challenging for them to stop committing crime. This led to these youth being unable to attain employment as a result of poor educational attainment. The cycle of recidivism continues as these recidivists become experts in crime.

The second objective was to explore the crimes committed often by male youth recidivists in Musina. The study found out that there are two common crimes which are committed: petty crimes and serious crimes. Petty crimes are usually opportunistic; they are also known as quick and easy crimes which require no planning. The few mentioned crimes included pick-pocketing, mugging, shoplifting, just to mention a few. Serious crimes are crimes such as high-jacking, armed robbery, trafficking of drugs and cash heists. These crimes require much planning because they involve a high level of risk. The participants who committed petty crimes were less experienced while those who committed serious crimes had more experience as well as mentors who are in prison who guided them on how to commit these crimes better. However, most participants committed petty crimes than serious crimes.

The last objective described the psychological effects of recidivism amongst male youth in Musina. These effects were on individuals, their families as well as on their education. The findings of this study proved that recidivists believe that crime is in their blood and that they cannot live without committing crime. This was further elaborated as learned helplessness whereby an individual believes that they are not in control and they are not able to change their behaviour or situation. Recidivists believe that because of their criminal records, there is no way they will be able to obtain employment, and that even if they did obtain employment, they would steal at their workplace because it is in their nature. This study indicated that most recidivists are from broken families and they raised themselves without any guidance, discipline, love and support.

This study also highlighted the fact that recidivists suffer from depression with symptoms of feelings of worthlessness and sadness by events which occurred in the past, and that crime sometimes is committed as a way of dealing (maladaptive coping) with the underlying pain or frustrations. Lastly, this research found that recidivism has certain psychological effects on participants' education because they stated that they have no regard for education because it was insignificant and it does not bring immediate results which they desperately are in need of. Recidivists usually drop out of school due to poor scholastic performance which might be a result of family dynamics, resulting in low self-esteem or distorted self-image.

It is now clear which factors contribute to recidivism, which crimes are committed and the psychological effects of recidivism on individuals, their families and on their education with regards to these objectives as confirmed by the findings of this study and supported by past studies on recidivism. Recidivism can be reduced but only if the community, the government, non-government organisations and the Department of Correctional Services work together.

5.2. Limitations of the study

Due to the fact that this was a qualitative study, only ten participants were sampled for participation, which means that these findings will not be generalised to the whole youth recidivists' population. It is also worth noting that agreed meetings had to be rescheduled because the participants would sometimes show up under the influence of marijuana, which would affect the validity of the data collected.

5.3. Recommendations

- On the basis of the findings of this study, a number of recommendations can be highlighted. Most recidivists are from child-headed families. Social workers could ensure that these participants receive financial and academic assistance from the government, including monthly home visits, and academic support.
- The community should play a role to serve as a support system for recidivists by starting recreational activities which will involve all youth to keep them out of the streets and from criminal activities.
- The government should consider having a technical and vocational college in Musina so that those who are motivated can learn in order for them to improve their futures. It is also recommended that there be a rehabilitation centre, particularly for those recidivists who are already “addicted”.

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Appendix A: Informal letter and request for permission

1 Kgaka Street

Winterveld Bottom Village

Steelport

1133

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Sympathy Khuthadzo Mulaudzi. I am a Masters student at the University of Venda. I am conducting a study on the effects of recidivism amongst youth in Musina. I am writing this letter to kindly request for permission to collect data from the Musina Correctional Services. This information will be used for the purpose of the study I am conducting only. My contact number is 0762643102 and my email address is skmulaudzi@gmail.com.

Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours faithfully,

Sympathy Khuthadzo Mulaudzi

Appendix B: Informed Consent

I _____ of age ____ agree to participate in the study entitled “Effects of recidivism amongst youth in Musina” conducted by Ms S.K. Mulaudzi in the Department of Psychology at the University of Venda. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and I also understand that my parent or legal guardian must sign the consent form if I am under the age of 18 because I am not legally allowed to consent for myself. I know I can withdraw from my consent at any time without penalty or reward. I also understand that by agreeing to participate in the study, I agree to be audio taped and I understand that all precautions will be taken to protect my confidentiality.

Participant Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Person Obtaining Consent (Researcher)

Date

Appendix C: Research instrument

Research related questions.

- Which characteristics affected the probability of you becoming a recidivist?
- What circumstances lead you to committing crimes repeatedly?
- Which crimes did you often commit?
- Why did you choose those crimes specifically?
- How did being a recidivist affect you?