

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO RECIDIVISM AMONG INMATES IN THE
NSAWAM MEDIUM SECURITY PRISON**

BY

BAFFOUR FRANK DARKWA

(10245331)



**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MPhil
SOCIAL WORK DEGREE**

Declaration

I Baffour Frank Darkwa declare that this thesis is my own work produced from research undertaken under supervision and that it has not been submitted for any award in this university or in any university whatsoever.

..... /..... /.....
Baffour Frank Darkwa Date



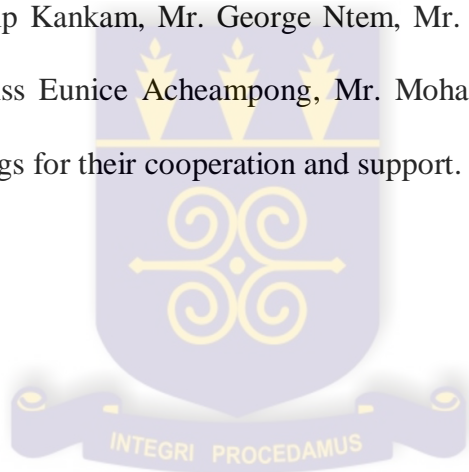
Supervisor
..... /..... /.....
Dr. Mavis Dako-Gyeke Date

Abstract

The high rate of recidivism in many countries questions the effectiveness of incarceration as a means to prevent crime as well as the criminal justice system. Recidivism leads to prison overcrowding and poor prison conditions. This study investigated factors that contribute to recidivism in the Nsawam Prison. The objectives of the study were to (a) find out why recidivists in the Nsawam prison re-offended, leading to their re-incarceration, (b) identify challenges faced by prison officers in rehabilitating and reforming recidivists in the Nsawam prison, (c) explore societal perceptions about recidivists in Ghana, and (d) find out whether recidivists in the Nsawam Prison experience stigmatization and discrimination. The study employed a qualitative research design and a sample of twenty participants were purposively selected. An interview guide was used to collect data from ten recidivists, five Nsawam community members, three prison officers and two police officers. The study found that recidivism is caused by three major factors and these are structural, situational, and personal or lifestyle factors. Also, the findings indicated that overcrowding and limited infrastructure in the Nsawam prison are the major challenges faced by prison officers in rehabilitating and reforming recidivists. Moreover, it was found that recidivists are perceived as bad persons and as a result they are labelled as thieves and criminals. In addition, the findings revealed that recidivists are discriminated against in employment, accommodation, and holding positions of trust in society. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the criminal justice system should reduce prison overcrowding by building additional prisons and expanding the existing ones. Another recommendation was that the justice authority should make use of other prison alternatives such as probation and parole. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for education and sensitization about the purposes of incarceration and how society can help decrease the rate of recidivism in the country.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my special thanks to God for guiding me throughout this study. My sincere thanks go to my supervisors, Dr. Mavis Dako-Gyeke and Dr. Paul Issahaku for their guidance. I would like to thank all the lecturers and teaching assistants of the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana. A sincere gratitude goes to Mr. Prince Owusu and Mr. Razak Oduro for their continuous support and guidance. Also, I would like to acknowledge the Ghana Prisons Service, especially the officers at the Nsawam Medium Security Prison and all the participants who made this work possible. A special word of thanks to Mr. Ernest B. Gyebi, Nana Owusu Barfi, Mr. Philip Kankam, Mr. George Ntem, Mr. Okyere Konto, Mr. Adomako Dennis, Miss. Darkowaa, Miss Eunice Acheampong, Mr. Mohammed Akuoko, Mr. Kwarkye Nelson, my parents and siblings for their cooperation and support.



Dedication

To my loving mother, Comfort Akua Serwaa and grandmothers, Adwoa Addai, Florence Mansah Boahen, and Akua Serwaa.

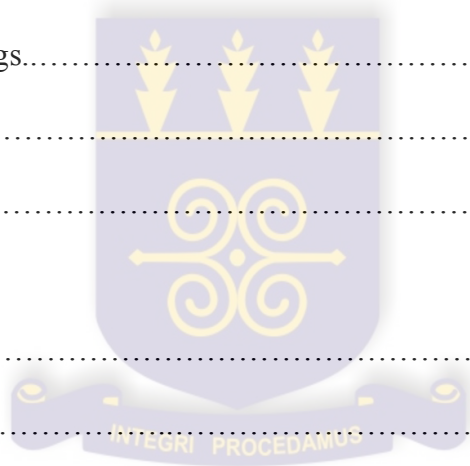


Table of Contents

Declaration	i
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Dedication	iv
Table of Contents	v
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Research Objectives.....	5
1.4 Research Questions.....	5
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.6 Definition of Terms.....	6
1.7 Theoretical Framework	7
1.8 Organization of the Study.....	10
CHAPTER TWO.....	11
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	11
2.0 Introduction.....	11
2.1 Factors Contributing to Recidivism.....	11
2.1.1 Attitudes Toward Ex-convicts.....	13
2.1.2 Overcrowding and Intermingling among Prison Inmates.....	16
2.1.3 Inadequate Prison Rehabilitation and Reformation.....	19

2.2 Challenges Faced by Prison Officers in Rehabilitating and Reforming Inmates.....	21
2.3 Stigmatization and Discrimination Experiences of Recidivists.....	24
CHAPTER THREE.....	30
Methodology.....	30
3.0 Introduction.....	30
3.1 Research Design.....	30
3.2 Study Area.....	30
3.3 Target Population.....	31
3.4 Study Population.....	31
3.5 Entry Techniques.....	32
3.6 Sampling Technique.....	32
3.7 Sample Size.....	33
3.8 Data Collection Procedures.....	33
3.9 Data Handling and Analysis.....	34
3.10 Limitations of the Study.....	35
3.11 Ethical Considerations.....	35
CHAPTER FOUR.....	36
Findings and Discussions.....	36
4.0 Introduction.....	36
4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants.....	36
4.2 Why do Ex-convicts in the Nsawam Prison Re-offend	37
4.2.1 Structural Factors.....	37
4.2.2 Situational Factors.....	45

4.2.3 Personal or Lifestyle Factors.....	51
4.3 Challenges Prison Officers Face in Rehabilitating and Reforming Recidivists in the Nsawam Prison.....	53
4.4 Societal Perceptions about Recidivists.....	56
4.5 Stigmatization and Discrimination Experiences of Recidivists in Nsawam Prison.....	58
4.6 Discussion of the Findings.....	61
CHAPTER FIVE.....	66
Summary of the Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	66
5.0 Introduction.....	66
5.1 Summary of the Findings.....	66
5.2 Conclusions	68
5.3 Recommendations.....	70
References.....	75
Appendix.....	86



CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background of the Study

Recidivism is recognized as a serious social problem worldwide. In the criminal justice system, recidivism has become a central issue to criminologists, social workers and prison officers due to the overwhelming cost in terms of public safety and tax payer's money spent to arrest, prosecute, incarcerate, and rehabilitate offenders (Caudy, Durso, & Taxman, 2013). Recidivism is the relapse into prior behavior, especially criminal behavior and it is measured by a former prisoner's return to prison for new offence (Center for Impact Research, 2004). It is the reconviction of a criminal for a new offence (Maxfield, 2005).

Recidivism, in a criminal justice context refers to the reversion of an individual to criminal behavior after the person has been convicted of a prior offense, sentenced, and has been corrected (Maltz, 2001). Recidivists are motivated to commit crime more often than not and are more resistant to criminal justice regulatory responses that are aimed at preventing their criminal acts (Payne, 2007). These categories of offenders are habitual criminal persons who value law-breaking over obeying state laws (Glick, 2005). Consequently, they always find themselves convicted repeatedly. Recidivism measures the success of the treatment program (Asiedu, 1999). In this regard, rehabilitation and reformation programs are successful when ex-convicts are well re-integrated into their respective societies and do not re-offend.

Recidivism has become a topic for researchers in the past decades due to the upsurge in the number of ex-convicts who re-offend (Freeman, 2003). Over two-third of released prisoners were re-arrested within three years and almost 55% of the prisoners released during the year under study returned to prison either because of a new crime or because of a parole violation

(Glick, 2005). Moreover, it is estimated that 70% to 80% of released prisoners are likely to be re-arrested within a decade of release (Freeman, 2003). Accordingly, high rate of recidivism leads to devastating social costs to the communities and families of offenders, as well as personal costs to offenders (Stephen, 2004). Given the high cost of crime and incarceration, almost any program that reduces recidivism will pass social benefit-cost tests (Freeman, 2003).

The main reason for incarceration is to provide an environment conducive for rehabilitating offenders and reintegrating ex-convicts back into their respective societies (Prisons Service Decree, 1972). The purpose of training and treatment of convicted prisoners is to establish in them the will to lead a good and useful life after discharge and to impart in them the needed skills to do so (Abotchie, 2008). The prison rule implies that offenders are incarcerated to be rehabilitated, (that is to equip inmates with job skills) reformed, (re-socialization and shape them to become law abiding citizens after discharge) and reintegrate them into their respective societies.

High rates of recidivism question the effectiveness of incarceration and rehabilitation system of prisons. Hence, given the aim of imprisonment, if a larger number of ex-convicts find it difficult to cope with the situations in their respective societies and re-offend only to be incarcerated again, then the purpose of incarceration is far from achieved. It is against this backdrop that Adeyemi (1968) argues that any action, social or legal, is seemingly inadequate if it cannot achieve its desired objective. It is also dysfunctional if it has the opposite effect on the individual offender. Adeyemi (1968) further asserted that, the essential aim of incarceration is the re-socialization of offenders in order to make them responsible and self-supporting members of society. However, given the high rate of recidivism, it is imperative to examine why crime has

become habitual, even when reformation and rehabilitation programs are available in the prison environment.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Research findings have shown that the rate of recidivism has remained remarkably high over the years (Wehrman, 2010). Over the years, the recidivism rate has increased substantially in Ghana (Asiedu, 1999). In 1992, it was 9.2%, it increased to 14.1% in 1996 (Asiedu, 1999), and in 2013, it increased to 23%. Given the increasing rate of recidivism in Ghana, there is the need to explore the factors that contribute to this phenomenon and identify appropriate measures to address it. Incarceration removes offenders from their communities for many years and limits them from making significant contributions to the development of their respective communities (Clear, 2007).

The primary concern of recidivism in Ghana relates to the issues that arise as a result of recidivists being away from society on several counts. For instance, it is assumed recidivists belong to families and owe their families and society in general certain roles and responsibilities. As a result, being re-incarcerated creates a void by placing a burden as to who assumes these roles and responsibilities in their absence. Furthermore, high rate of recidivism leads to overcrowding in prisons which in turn puts pressure on prison facilities (Appiah-Hene, 1995). The 45 prison facilities across the country have a capacity of eight thousand inmates; however, due to overcrowding in the country's prisons, they accommodate approximately thirteen thousand, five hundred inmates (Amnesty International, 2012).

The criminal justice system in Ghana is designed to maintain social order and deter offenders and other individuals from violating the laws of the land. Prisons as one of the institutions

responsible for carrying out the functions of criminal justice, incarcerate offenders with the aim of reforming, rehabilitating and re-integrating them into their respective communities. The primary motive of incarceration is to reform and rehabilitate offenders in order for them to become law abiding citizens. Even though the state commits resources to help rehabilitate offenders with the aim of reintegrating them back into society (Appiah-Hene, 1995), many convicts are discharged into their respective societies worse off than before and this poses challenges to the individual, his/her family, the community and the state at large (Freeman, 2003). The cost associated with incarcerating offenders is very high; money and resources spent on incarcerating offenders leave less money for other social services, such as education and health (Nunes, Firestone, Wexler, Jensen, & Bradford, 2007).

Furthermore, recidivism leads to insecurity in ex-convict's environment (Center for Impact Research, 2004). Ex-convict who has relapsed into criminal act will, on return, always put the community of origin in a state of insecurity. These and other reasons make recidivism a social problem, hence the need to investigate this phenomenon and suggest immediate and pragmatic measures that would help reduce recidivism to its barest minimum. Also, although previous studies have focused on ex-convicts, inmates, and conditions of Ghana prisons (Akpalu & Mohammed, 2013; Mfum, 2012), not much is known about why ex-convicts re-offend and are re-incarcerated. Since the phenomenon of recidivism has not been given much attention in Ghana, this study sought to address this gap by focusing on Nsawam Medium Security Prison. In this regard, the study explored factors that contribute to recidivism at the Nsawam Medium Security Prison.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To find out why recidivists in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison re-offended, leading to their re-incarceration.
2. To identify the challenges faced by prison officers in rehabilitating and reforming Recidivists in the Nsawam prison.
3. To explore societal perceptions about recidivists in Ghana.
4. To find out whether recidivists in the Nsawam prison experience stigmatization and discrimination.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Why were recidivists in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison re-offended, leading to their re-incarceration?
2. Do prison officers in the Nsawam prison face challenges in reforming and rehabilitating offenders?
3. What are societal perceptions about ex-convicts in Ghana?
4. Do recidivists in the Nsawam prison experience stigmatization and discrimination?

1.5 Significance of the Study

A study on recidivism is of interest for two main reasons; first, it affords an opportunity to gain insight into the causes of crime. Second, the findings of the study could inform efforts aimed at reducing post release re-offending and re-incarceration (Mears, Wang, Hey, & Bales, 2008). Accordingly, the findings of the study would help policy makers, social workers, prisons officers, and other stakeholders to be better informed about the factors that contribute to

recidivism. In this regard, appropriate and well-structured inmate rehabilitation efforts would be directed towards reducing these factors.

Also, the findings of this study would stimulate interest in academia, so that further research can be conducted to advance knowledge in the field of recidivism, as well as criminology. Additionally, the findings of the study would aid policy makers in the criminal justice system to design and implement policies that would promote healthy prison conditions and ensure effective rehabilitation, reformation and reintegration in Ghana prisons. Furthermore, the findings would serve as an advocacy tool for social workers and other stakeholders in the field of criminology and recidivism. Moreover, the findings of the study would provide information to the public regarding the experiences of ex-convicts. This may help reduce the negative perceptions that the public has about ex-convicts and therefore treat ex-convicts with dignity and respect.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Recidivism: In the context of criminal justice, recidivism is measured by an individual offender's re-arrest, reconviction, and resentence to prison, and return to prison with or without a new sentence (Langan & Levin, 2002).

Community sentences: They are viewed as an alternatives to incarceration which provide a safe and inexpensive way of delivering punishments that fit relatively less serious offences whilst avoiding the detrimental effects of incarceration (Bonta, Rugge, Terri-Lynne, Bourgon, & Yessine, 2008; Marja-Lisa, 2010).

Crime: Constitutes any act or omission which violates the laws of the land and it is punishable by law (Abotchie, 2008).

Incapacitation: It is the act of making an individual incapable of committing further crime, usually by restraining his or her physical movement (usually through imprisonment) (Sapouna, Bisset, & Conlong, 2011).

Overcrowding: Overcrowding occurs when a prison accommodates more prisoners than the required number that it is supposed to (Pritikin, 2008).

Reintegration: Reintegration of prisoners involves the transition from prison to life outside the prison, where ex-offenders re-socialize with community members (National Research Council, 2008).

Sentence of Imprisonment: It is a socio-legal action aimed at achieving one or a combination of the following purposes: specific or general deterrence, retribution, incapacitation, protection of the public, reformation and rehabilitation (Appiah-Hene, 1995; Auerhahn, 1999; Cullen, Latessa, Burton, Jr., & Lumbardo, 1993; Greenwood & Abrahamse, 1982).

1.7 Theoretical Framework

Differential Association Theory by Edwin Sutherland (1939)

Differential association theory explains why people commit crime in society. Sutherland (1939) argued that, social interaction within a group that defines crime as their subculture influences the individual negatively. In this regard, criminal behaviour is learned but not inherited and the behaviour is learned through interaction within intimate personal groups. These groups may define violating the legal codes or societal norms as favourable or unfavourable. Therefore, the kind of group an individual associates him or herself with plays a significant role in determining

whether the person becomes a criminal or not. In addition, the learning includes techniques of committing crime, specific direction of motives, drives, rationalization and attitudes. Generally, differential association theory contends that criminal behaviour or negative behaviour is learned through interaction with others and these interactions are formed through cultural and social transmission (Church, Jagers, & Taylor, 2012). The theory maintains that association with a criminal group results in behavioural change that makes offending more attractive (Hochstetler, Copes, & DeLisi, 2002), and interaction among a group of offenders reduce conformity and increases criminal opportunities (Hochstetler, 2001).

The attitudes and behaviours of friends affect crime indirectly through the transfer of non-conforming behaviours (Hochstetler et al., 2002). For instance, it is assumed that prison inmates are friends who interact among themselves. During interactions, inmates are likely to share among themselves what brought them to prison and how they managed to escape arrest for many occasions. These interactions are likely to serve as education to members and this could strengthen their criminology lifestyles. Song and Lieb (1993) argue that prison inmates learn from themselves. This happens when new and less hardened criminals learn from the more experienced and hardened inmates how to commit different kinds of crime. For example, keeping traffic offenders, armed robbers, murderers, petty thieves, and corrupt inmates together would lead to the situation where petty thieves or traffic offenders would learn the tricks in committing armed robbery and practice it after discharge. Thus, intermingling of inmates in a prison environment could lead to transfer of criminal tricks to one another.

In prison, recidivists and other inmates socialize with all kinds of prisoners and form criminal networks which enable them to stay smoothly in prisons (Nsanze, 2007). In other words, prisoners form associations with other prisoners and learn more methods of committing crime

from themselves (Nsanze, 2007). The prison could serve as a better place, which assemble different kinds of offenders and informally transmit criminal tricks among themselves. Prisons provide criminals with criminal environment, where attitudes and norms of inmates differ from the norms of the larger society and encourage inmates to learn violence as a norm, get into contact with hardened criminals, which they maintain and commit more serious crimes after discharge (Giddens, 1997). Hence, the prison serves as a criminal college by intensifying criminal contacts and promoting a conducive environment for criminal associations (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992).

Using the differential association theory as the theoretical framework for this study helped the researcher placed it to examine how overcrowding and societal negative attitudes toward ex-convicts contribute to recidivism. The theory is appropriate because it is the pillar of criminological thought and research (Hochstetler et al., 2002). Differential association theory was useful given that it helped explain how (a) intermingling of felony and misdemeanour in one cell could lead to recidivism, and (b) societal hostile attitudes towards ex-convicts can contribute to recidivism.

Prisoners who return to unsupportive societies are more likely to re-offend and get themselves re-incarcerated (Kubrin & Stewart, 2006). Moreover, it has been argued that ex-convicts are not accepted during their return to the community (Visher & Travis, 2003). It is theorised that hostile attitudes towards ex-convicts are likely to provide hostile relationship between ex-convicts and their families and neighbours. The assumption is that when this happens, ex-convicts are likely to re-socialize with bad friends (either those they met in prison or those they left to prison or new gangs) who may encourage nonconforming behaviours over conforming behaviours.

1.8 Organization of the Study

The study was structured into five main chapters. Chapter one captures the introduction and background information of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, theoretical framework, significance of the study, and definition of terms, chapter two reviews related literature, chapter three outlines the methodology used in the study, chapter four focuses on presentation and analysis of the findings of the study, and chapter five summarizes the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Recidivism has become a major social problem and as such has attracted various researches over the years. In this chapter, relevant literature on the topic are reviewed thematically under the following areas: factors contributing to recidivism, challenges faced by prison officers in rehabilitating and reforming inmates, societal attitudes toward ex-convicts and stigmatization and discrimination experiences of recidivists.

2.1 Factors Contributing to Recidivism

The theory governing this study (differential association theory) posits that criminal behavior is learnt, therefore, the act of recidivism could be learnt from the prison or from the community. Experience in the prison may influence ex-convicts to commit either the same or a different crime after release. Also, societal hostile attitudes toward ex-convicts may lead them to engage with groups that favor violating the laws or societal norms over being law abiding citizens. In an attempt to prevent recidivism, factors that contribute to recidivism should be identified.

From the literature, there seems to be no single cause for recidivism. Western (2002) conducted a longitudinal study on how incarceration affects ex-convicts wages and perpetuates inequality in the United States prisons. The study sampled participants based on race and ethnicity. It reported that low level of education and school dropouts, drug addiction and race (blacks are more likely to recidivate than whites because they normally return to disadvantageous communities) are major factors that contribute to recidivism. In their study, Wang, Mears, and Bales (2010)

analyzed data on male ex-prisoners released to 67 counties in Florida. The main purpose of the study was, among others, to examine unemployment, crime and individual level recidivism. The study found that unemployment among ex-prisoners (particularly black ex-convicts) has a greater likelihood of contributing to recidivism. Unemployment has greater consequence on crime and recidivism (Gould, Weinberg, & Mustard, 2002).

Recidivism results from failure of the individual to live up to society's expectations or failure of society to provide for the individual; a consequent failure of the individual to stay out of trouble; failure of the individual, as an offender, to escape arrest and conviction; failure of the individual as an inmate of a correctional institution to take advantage of correctional programs or failure of the institution to provide programs that rehabilitate; and additional failures by the individual in continuing in a criminal career after release (Maltz, 2001). Maltz (2001) further asserted that, recidivism results from a technical violation of the conditions of parole, or a return to prison for further offence.

Some scholars have reported that the main cause of recidivism is societal hostile attitudes toward ex-convicts (Kubrin & Stewart, 2006; Mears et al., 2008; Travis & Visher, 2005; and Travis, Solomon, & Waul, 2001). Also, some offenders engage in criminal activities either because of lack of employable skills, personal or family problems and others do so because they believe it is easier than working (Maltz, 2001). Other scholars reported based on the findings of their studies that prison overcrowding and intermingling of different crime offenders are the main causes of recidivism (Alvarez & Loureiro, 2012; Appiah-Hene, 1995). Besides, it has also been argued that, inadequate rehabilitation and reformation facilities in prisons contribute to recidivism (Center for Impact Research, 2004). It can therefore be concluded from the stated above findings that, the factors that contribute to recidivism include: societal hostile attitudes toward ex-

convicts, overcrowding and intermingling of different crime offenders and inadequate rehabilitation and reformation among inmates.

2.1.1 Attitudes Toward Ex-convicts

Social ecology and neighborhood contexts have been identified as factors that contribute to recidivism (Kubrin & Stewart, 2006; Mears et. al., 2008; Travis & Visser, 2005). In their study, Mears et al. (2008) examined the influence of social ecology on individual level recidivism in the United States. The study used resource deprivation and racial segregation to measure ecology. Mears et al. (2008) found that, increased resource deprivation was associated with increased violence offending and repeated offending leading to recidivism. Similarly, in determining the effects of social environment on the lives of ex-prisoners, Wehrman (2010) found that the communities in which ex-prisoners live contribute to recidivism. Wehrman (2010) concludes that ex-prisoners who return to communities with high poverty and high unemployment recidivate, thus, environmental factors contribute to recidivism.

Additionally, Kubrin and Stewart (2006) used data on a sample of ex-offenders in Multnomah County, Oregon and 2000 data from the U.S. census to predict how neighborhood context contributes to recidivism. Kubrin and Stewart (2006) established that convicts who return to a disadvantaged and inequality neighborhood are at a high risk of recidivating than those who return to a resource rich or affluent communities. Ex-offenders are likely to create or maintain ties with criminal subgroups in the society, which negatively affect their likelihood of recidivating. Also, they are likely to form gangs and continue from where they left it to prison in highly disorganized and socioeconomic disadvantaged societies (Kubrin & Stewart, 2006). These findings reaffirm Sutherland's differential association theory, that criminal behavior is learned

through individual interactions with a group of individuals who favor criminal acts over noncriminal acts.

Furthermore, ex-convicts face a lot of challenges in the job market due to lack of recent job experience, basic skills and poor qualifications, low self-esteem and confidence, poor work experience history and lack of motivation from the job environment (Visher & Travis, 2003). These, coupled with a lot of hostile attitudes in the community, make it difficult for effective ex-prisoner re-socialization and re-integration (Appiah-Hene, 1995). In their study, Graffam, Shinkfield, and Lavelle (2012) examined the rate of reoffending among ex-convicts who participated in an employment assistance program in Australia. The study sampled 600 program participants and 600 nonparticipants. The study showed a low rate of reoffending for the program participant group. Therefore, improving employment access to ex-convicts in their various communities is very important in reducing recidivism. They concluded that, there is an association between employment and reduced recidivism. Ex-convicts are less likely to re-offend and get re-incarcerated if they are comfortably employed (Freeman, 2003).

Besides, the relationship between recidivists and their family members whilst in prison is very essential to determine the propensity of re-offending (Mears, Cochran, Siennick, & Bales, 2011). Angell, Matthews, Barrenger, Watson, and Draine (2014) compared re-entry engagement practices and analyzed two qualitative studies which were conducted in a newly developed treatment program, serving prisoners who have been discharged from the U.S. prisons to the community. The study highlighted that hostile attitudes ex-convicts receive from the community could lead to further criminal acts by the ex-offender, which could lead to re-incarceration. Ex-convicts particularly women face intense discrimination which results in life-long negative psychological and emotional effects and hinder successful community re-entry (Evans, 2006).

Furthermore, hostile attitudes experienced by ex-prisoners lead to debilitating discouragement, life-long disenfranchisement and community impoverishment, return to drug addiction, homelessness, and in the end prison recidivism (Evans, 2006). This implies that, the individual ex-convict's acceptance by community members can prove essential in preventing recidivism.

The communities in which ex-convicts live after their release from prison play a key role in the re-integration processes. Kubrin and Stewart (2006) estimated that, six hundred thousand prisoners return to their respective communities each year. Positive societal perceptions and willingness of community members to accept ex-convicts back to the society are vital. Therefore, ex-offenders and the communities into which they return must cope with the challenges of reentry on a much greater scale than ever before. Unfortunately, Ghanaians are intolerant to receive ex-convicts on discharge and there are state policies that deny convicted persons employment in public service, or seek political office, perhaps a sizable proportion of ex-convicts become frustrated and thus recidivate (Appiah-Hene, 1995).

Moreover, successful community reentry programs have proven vital in preventing reoffending (Kubrin & Stewarts, 2006). In other words, successful institutional rehabilitation programs should have a successful community reentry policy. Accordingly, after a successful rehabilitation in prison, ex-convicts are faced with serious disadvantages in the community, such as lack of home to return to and unfriendly attitudes by community members, which may compel recidivists to go back to their old gangs, compounding their high risk, difficulty in finding job and/or applying for financial benefits (Angell et al., 2014).

Richie (2001) used results of a qualitative study to describe the challenges that incarcerated women face as they return to their communities in the United States. The study found that, ex-

prisoners lost friends, family, money, health; do not get help from anybody in the community, and their position in the community as responsible citizens are lost. Richie (2001) concluded that these hostile attitudes ex-convicts experience drive them back to their bad activities and increase their risk of recidivating.

2.1.2 Overcrowding and Intermingling among Prison Inmates

The Ghana Prisons Service Decree (1972) mandates the prison service to maintain safe custody and welfare of prisoners. It is not only necessary to physically secure the prisoner (in custody) (remand and trial prisoners inclusive), but it is equally important to provide an environment which would guarantee their health and welfare and promote effective rehabilitation and re-integration (Asiedu, 1999). The increase in prison population for the past decades is a matter of significant concern (Alvarez & Loureiro, 2012).

A study conducted by Appiah-Hene (1995) in Ghana employed a qualitative design to investigate into the Ghanaian criminal justice system and the sentencing policies and practices of the courts and their effects on incarceration and recidivism rates. The study found that the criminal justice system of Ghana has done little to improve the country's prison conditions. It further reported that sentencing policies and practices in the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code Act 29 and 30, 1960 (Ghana) respectively have failed to reform and reintegrate offenders into their respective societies, leading to overcrowding in the country's prisons. Accordingly, poor prison conditions such as overcrowding and intermingling expose prisoners to subcultures that strengthen links to criminality after discharge instead of employment (Center for Impact Research, 2004).

Overcrowding has become a major problem in Ghana prisons (Amnesty International, 2012). High rate of incarceration and recidivism are the major factors that contribute to prison overcrowding (Maltz, 2001; Ofori & Paradis, 2006). Moreover, prison overcrowding is a major factor that contributes to recidivism in prisons (Clear, 2006). Overcrowding increases prison population which in turn gives rise to prison contamination (Nunes, Firestone, Wexler, Jensen, & Bradford, 2007), and high level prison overcrowding has been considered a hindrance to effective offender rehabilitation (Hesselink & Herbig, 2014).

Furthermore, Appiah-Hene (1995) reported that Ghana prisons are overcrowded; most of the cells are small and are used as dormitories, which accommodate three to thirty inmates. Officially, the Nsawam Medium Security prison's Condemned Block accommodates seventy inmates, but as at 1994 there were two hundred condemn inmates. Appiah-Hene (1995) concluded his findings that prison overcrowding prevents effective rehabilitation and hardens inmates rather than reforming them, which obviously increases the rate of recidivism.

Another study was conducted by Amnesty International (2012) in Ghana to investigate the state of the country's prisons and how they are contributing to recidivism. The study reported that even though the commission of the maximum security Ankaful Prison in 2011 is likely to ease the pressure on the country's existing prisons, the current excess of Ghana prisons is five thousand five hundred prisoners above the recommended level, and established that, the transfer of a maximum of two thousand prisoners to the maximum security prison at Ankarful will still leave Ghana prisons service with more than three thousand prisoners in excess of capacity. Based on this, they concluded that, the bad conditions in the Ghanaian prisons do not encourage effective rehabilitation and reintegration, hence give rise to recidivism.

Moreover, the prison conditions in Africa and other developing countries are very harsh, compounded by poor characteristics such as overcrowding, poor nutrition, degrading clothing and bedding, poor sanitation, homosexuality and poor sanitation (Omboto, 2010). Ofori and Paradis (2006) assessed the prison conditions in Ghana and how they affect inmates' human rights. They found that, the Nsawam medium security prison is not supposed to house remand prisoners but the issue of overcrowding across the country's prisons has compelled the Nsawam Medium Security Prison to do so. They further lamented that, the overwhelming situation is convicted and remand inmates are not segregated in the Nsawam prison. These findings are supported by the findings by Amnesty International (2012), that due to lack of space in the country's prisons, remand prisoners live in the same block with convicted prisoners. This increases the likelihood of contamination in Ghana prisons, since convicted prisoners are likely to transfer their criminal tricks to the remand prisoners (Ofori & Paradis, 2006).

In a similar study, Lowenkamp and Latessa (2004) employed a meta-analysis to investigate into how and why correctional interventions can harm low-risk offenders in the United States prisons. They established that high risk offenders are those charged with felony, while low risk offenders are those charged with misdemeanor. They reported that, high risk offenders possess a higher probability of reoffending while low risk offenders are less likely to re-offend. They further established that when low risk offenders are mingled with high risk offenders, they are exposed to higher risk offenders and their association with them could place them at a higher risk. Based on these findings, they recommended that, correctional interventions should do well to separate high risk offenders from low risk offenders.

In addition, Latessa and Lowenkamp (2006) reviewed two large scale studies in Ohio that examined the effectiveness of community correctional programs. The purpose of the study was

to address the effectiveness of community correctional programs in reducing recidivism based on the risk principles. The first study was compiled in 2002 on halfway houses and community based correctional facilities, and the second was a community correctional act programs, compiled in 2005. They reported that intermingling of low-risk and high-risk inmates would lead to prison contamination even if they are mingled in the same rehabilitation program.

Overcrowding occurs when prisons exceed their capacity, as prison populations increase, the likelihood of overcrowding increases (Pritikin, 2008). “The more people there are behind bars, the more opportunities exist for criminal contact-making, the greater the number of people who are cut off from families and communities, and the greater the number of people who are internalizing prison’s antisocial norms.” (Pritikin, 2008, p. 1089). This implies that prison overcrowding makes it easy for inmates to interact and share experiences among fellow inmates and makes it difficult for prison officers to rehabilitate and reform offenders.

2.1.3 Inadequate Prison Rehabilitation and Reformation

Prisons are designed to reform and rehabilitate individual offenders. Maltz (2001) highlighted that, “Correction or rehabilitation of the offender is but one of the goals that society specifies for prisoner custodial and treatment programs.” (p. 7). The Ghana Prisons Service was established based on the foundation that, it is the reformed and rehabilitated person who can be successfully reintegrated into the society (Asiedu, 1999). However, inadequate prison conditions make it very difficult for inmates to be reformed and rehabilitated which in turn hinder the effectiveness of a successful community reintegration (Appiah-Hene, 1995), and this could give rise to future offences after discharge.

Furthermore, a study conducted by Hesselink and Herbig (2010) in South Africa prisons investigated into the offender rehabilitation and counselling dynamics. The study reported negative prison conditions in South Africa prisons coupled with inadequate rehabilitation programs and facilities. The study further established that rehabilitation services rendered to inmates in the South African prisons and most African countries can be accurately considered a myth, due to inadequate staffed correctional personnel and inadequate experts and therapists (social workers, psychologists, criminologists, educationalists and psychiatrists). The prison's sole focus on rehabilitation has been criticized over the years. Report delivered in 1974 by Martinson completely established that, rehabilitation has not helped in reducing the rate of recidivism. Martinson (1974) observed that, "with few and isolated exceptions, the rehabilitative efforts that have been reported so far have had no appreciable effect on recidivism" (p. 25). If this is the case then there could be something wrong with the rehabilitation system.

In her study, Bailey (2007) examined the causes of recidivism in the criminal justice system. The study used the case of the fifteen prisons in Tennessee, U.S.A., and examined the failure rate of the prisons in reducing recidivism by asking these questions, "what are the goals, policies and values of the criminal justice system, are they the correct ones, and are the programs in place to see that they are actualized to their fullest potential?" (p. 6). These questions tried to interrogate the potency of the rehabilitation programs in the prisons and demanded a second look. It also implies that, if the criminal justice system is going to focus on rehabilitation to reform offenders, then it should be more effective and reflect on the number of ex-convicts who re-offend and get re-incarcerated.

The transfer from a segregated inmate population (prison) to the community is an issue of special concern (Austin & McGinnis, 2004). Making reentry to the community is an important transition

for all inmates (Angell et al., 2014). This implies that, effective rehabilitation and reformation programs do not end immediately after an offender has been discharged from prison, but put in place measures to ensure effective and a successful community reintegration as well.

2.2 Challenges Faced by Prison Officers in Rehabilitating and Reforming Inmates

Prison officers play important roles in the proper functioning of correctional institutions and directly impact on the behaviors of recidivists through their daily contact with them (Moon & Maxwell, 2004). However, in discharging their duties, it is believed prison officers' face challenges that affect their efficiency and effectiveness. Konda, Reichard, and Tiesman (2012) investigated into fatal and nonfatal occupational injuries among U.S. correctional officers. The study obtained fatal injuries data from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries and nonfatal injuries data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System. They found that prison officers are assaulted and violated by inmates in the cause of discharging their duties. Aside this they are stressed up due to the problem of prison overcrowding, rotational shifts, life threatening conditions in prison work and negative public image (Armstrong & Griffin, 2004; Finn, 2000).

In addition, prison environments tend to be relatively noisy, densely populated, and lack the comfort found in other work environment (Jacobs & Crotty, 1983). Similar findings were made by Hesselink-Louw (2004), who employed a qualitative research design to examine offender assessment from a criminological perspective in South Africa prisons. The study revealed that prisons are faced with excessive noise levels and increased aggressive behaviors. Amnesty International (2012) highlighted that, the challenges faced by the prisons service of Ghana is not secret, emphasizing that, nutrition of prisoners is very bad, as well as the health care of officers and inmates.

Moreover, the harsh conditions prisoners and prison officers go through such as overcrowding, and work without pay or tedious work that attracts poor salaries in developing countries affect the outcome of rehabilitation (Odera-Oruka, 1985). This is because overcrowding creates an uncondusive prison environment and additional burdens on staff and increases tension among prisoners and staff (Hesselink & Herbig, 2010). As a result, overcrowding in prisons is considered a major problem facing the Ghana prisons system (Amnesty International, 2012). This implies that, when prisoners are living in poor conditions such as overcrowding, their rehabilitation processes are affected. Also, when officers are not motivated they may not give out their all which may hinder the success of rehabilitation programs. Even though ex-prisoners are willing and ready to establish a life for themselves, create a stable home and re-socialize with their families, due to lack of resources to support them after discharge, they find life difficult in the society (Evans, 2006).

Furthermore, the abuse of various substances in prisons have been highlighted by Omboto (2013) who conducted a study in Kenya to examine the challenges facing effective rehabilitation of Kenya prisoners. The study used two research findings conducted by the researcher. The first was conducted in 2010 and the study employed a proportionate sampling method to select 60 inmates and 20 prison officers. The second was conducted in 2013 and selected 55 inmates by a simple random sampling method. The study established that the rehabilitation and reformation mandate of prisons have become difficult to achieve in an environment where inmates abuse drugs, which has resulted in indiscipline and rise of violence. This is a major challenge, because drugs and other harmful substances are not allowed in prison environment, therefore, recording such cases is a major challenge to the rehabilitation processes. In their study, Hesselink and Herbig (2014) revealed some key challenges faced by prison officers such as corruption and

collusion of prison staff, poor and failing infrastructures, high staff mobility, deficiency mental health care, overcrowding, inadequate social integration and developmental services.

Another major constraint in Ghana is that, prisons like other care institutions in Ghana do not receive their annual budget on time and tend to rely heavily on aids from donors such as nongovernmental organizations and faith based organizations (Amnesty International, 2012). This confirms the argument put forward by McAree (2011) that many prisons in Africa lack basic resources including rehabilitation resources. Basic facilities such as class rooms, workshops, and human resources (qualified persons to take offenders through rehabilitation and reformation) and other materials needed for rehabilitation are inadequate (Odera-Oruka, 1985). Also, vocational training is almost non-existent in various prisons, which leave prisoners with no marketable skills, which affect them after discharge (Evans, 2006).

Moreover, prison officer staff to inmate ratio has declined tremendously over the years, which has also affected the effectiveness of rehabilitation (Phelps, 2012). Swenson, Waseleski and Hartl (2008) investigated the challenges associated with shift work among prison officers in the United States prisons. They found that correctional officers are faced with a continuous increasing job demands due to rapid increasing prison population, staff shortage and a high turnover rate. Additionally, staff shortage has compelled prisons to resort to shift work, leading to fatigue, cognitive impairment which affects officer's mental performance and officer's alertness and sometimes officers feel sleepy on duty, thereby disrupting vigilance. Also, stress experienced by prison officers and other factors such as low salaries or inadequate incentives and remunerations have resulted in high turnover rates among prison officers (Rosefield, 1981). High turnover among staff creates shortage of staff, increases the number of officers days off (Carlson & Thomas, 2006), and results in staff burnout (Swenson et al., 2008).

Liebling and Arnold (2012) investigated into the social relationships in the British high prisons and assessed the roles played by faith identities and fears of radicalization in shaping prisoners social life. The study employed an observational study and further created a regular dialogue group with 14 prisoners, private interviews with 32 staff and 52 prisoners, focus group, and survey with 170 prisoners and 180 prison officers. The study found that both prison officers and inmates are faced with the problem of fear of radicalism, which goes a long way to affect rehabilitation processes. In addition, correctional officers, particularly case workers, are confronted with the problem of high turnover due to lack of support from management and other stakeholders, low salaries and remunerations, and stress, which lead to burnout (Carlson & Thomas, 2006).

2.3 Stigmatization and Discrimination Experiences of Recidivists

Ex-convicts are labelled and discriminated against in many activities that go on in the society. For example, among the Akans in Ghana, an ex-convict from the royal family cannot hold any royal position and it is a taboo for an ex-convict to become a chief/king under any circumstance. This is supported by Pritikin (2008) who made inferences from existing data on criminogenic effects of incarceration. The study examined how incarceration practices increase recidivism rate in the United States prisons. The study reported that incarceration contributes to recidivism by weakening social bonds and consequently denying ex-convicts legitimate societal opportunities.

Research on labeling and stigmatization have established that a stigmatized individual would come to view himself or herself based upon what he or she believes other people think about them (Maruna, LeBel, Mitchell, & Naples, 2004). Therefore, criminal behavior is the outcome of the interactions between the individual who violates the law and those who respond to it by

labeling the individual as a deviant person (Thorsell & Klemke, 1972). This implies that, when ex-convicts are stigmatized or labeled as criminals they accept the tag, and the act of violating the law becomes their lifestyle.

A recent study conducted by Scanlon (2001) examined the experiences ex-convicts go through when searching for jobs in the United States. The study revealed that ex-convicts go through a life-time label as criminals, which is coupled with harmful discrimination that promotes re-imprisonment and denies ex-convicts employment opportunities. Scanlon (2001) further established that in the eyes of society, ex-convicts are perceived as individuals of questionable character, someone society would not invite for lunch or dinner, to have any relationship whatsoever with your daughter/son or to engage in decision making. Also, ex-convicts are people who are likely to be avoided and discriminated against in the society. In addition, ex-convicts are not treated like anyone else, discriminated against and are perceived as failures in their respective communities (Winnick & Bodkin, 2008).

Furthermore, when criminal behavior is repeated by an offender, society is likely to react stronger and more punitive on the individual offender and this may cause stigmatization which may create further criminal acts (Lemert, 1951). Therefore, “As the penalties and rejections of the larger society become stronger and the individual becomes more and more indelibly marked as deviant, the individual begins to resent not only the norms being violated but also the social structures themselves levying the penalties.” (Cullen & Wilcox, 2010, p. 4). In addition, due to the stigmatization, the individual offender may be blocked from the opportunities of non-deviance, such as employment opportunities (Cullen & Wilcox, 2010). Hence, a single incarceration affects the entire life of the individual offender and may cost the individual employment, a place to live, and other public benefits (Evans, 2006).

The stigma associated with criminal records and legal barriers make it if not impossible, harder for ex-convicts to get jobs and those who manage to get themselves one are underemployed, and attract lower wages (Center for Impact Research, 2004). Richie (2001) conducted a life history interviews in Chicago, investigated into the challenges incarcerated women face as they return to their communities. The study found that women of color (especially blacks) returning from prison are not accepted by their communities. The study further established that ex-convicts are stigmatized and ostracized by their families and neighbors and sometimes find it difficult to get a place to live. Additionally, ex-convicts are denied housing, employment, friendship and other relationships and are discriminated against and are perceived as failures (Evans, 2006; Scanlon, 2001; Winnick & Bodkin, 2008).

A study conducted by Western (2002) on the impact of incarceration on wage mobility and inequality in the United States revealed that ex-convicts find it difficult to get themselves jobs and they are discriminated against in employment due to their criminogenic history. Moreover, the incarceration becomes a turning point in the ex-convict's life and tends to reduce the wages of ex-convicts by 10 to 20 percent. A similar study by Geller, Garfinkel, and Western (2006) examined the effects of incarceration on employment and earnings. The study obtained data from male participants and their female partners. A regression and propensity score analysis indicated that the employment rate of formally incarcerated men were about 6 percent lower than that of similar men who have not been incarcerated before. The study concluded that incarceration has negative effects on ex-convicts employment and wages.

Furthermore, Love and Kuzma (1996) conducted a state-by-state survey in the United States. The purpose of the study was to find out if state laws discriminate against convicted felons. The study revealed that state-by-state laws discriminate against felons in voting, holding positions of

trust, employment, attaining federal benefits and sometimes immigration. The study further established that imprisonment subjects the individual offender to an automatic life time employment ban in several states. A longitudinal study conducted by Schmitt and Warner (2010) on the effects of imprisonment on subsequent employment in the United States supported the above findings by indicating that individuals who have spent time in prison are less likely to get themselves employed. Ex-prisoners are excluded from many entry level jobs that require insurance bonding such as security guards, cashiers, night janitors, and hotel housekeeping (Evans, 2006).

Furthermore, the stigma attached to being incarcerated makes most ex-convicts isolate themselves from non-criminal activities (Ofori & Paradis, 2006). The employment rate of ex-offenders is relatively low and ex-convicts earn less than their co-workers earn even if they perform the same job (Freeman, 2003). A similar study conducted by Alvarez and Loureiro (2012) analyzed the economic consequences of people who have been imprisoned before. Data were collected from 31 German prisons between 2003 and 2004. The study reported that imprisonment reduces the individual offender's probability of finding a job and continuous incarceration reduces both labor market opportunities and earnings. This is because ex-convicts have very limited skills and sometimes on the demand side, employers tend to prefer other workers who have no criminal records (Clear, 2007). In addition, repeated incarceration reduces the individual offender's lifelong earnings and also damages employment prospects (Clear, 2007).

Moreover, over the years, there has been support for the "principle of least eligibility" where offenders are to be the least deserving members of the society to access social benefits (Dirkzwager & Kruttschnitt, 2012). Majority of ex-offenders are persons with both physical and

mental health problems, limited or no education and poor literacy, which in turn affect them badly in the job market (Freeman, 2003). This implies that, while ex-convicts have very little chance in accessing social benefits, they also lack the skills and knowledge required to compete in the job market with people who have not been in prison before. Consequently, discrimination from employment opportunities makes it more likely for ex-prisoners to engage in criminal activities which in turn increase their risks of re-incarceration (Western, 2002).

In her study on challenges ex-prisoners encounter in the society, Evans (2006) revealed areas that ex-convicts are likely to be discriminated against in the United States. These include employment, people who were convicted with drug-related offenses are ineligible for student grant, loan or work assistance, ex-convicts with job skills are denied licenses that would permit them to work and many campuses have placed a ban on people with past criminal records from living in low-cost student housing. In addition, Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2002) used data from employers to analyze employer preferences for offenders and the extent to which employers check criminal backgrounds before a job is given. The study used data collected from an established survey through a multi-city study of urban inequality between 1992 and 1994 in the Atlanta, Boston, Detroit, and Los Angeles Metropolitan areas. The study revealed that jobs that require workers to work directly or deal frequently with the public are likely to be prevented from ex-convicts. Hozler et al. (2002) further established that employers are likely to discriminate against ex-convicts in jobs that require the handling and operating of expensive products, large amount of money and expensive equipment.

Furthermore, almost all recidivists and other prison inmates across the world are discriminated against in universal adult suffrage and they are disengaged from the democratic processes of their countries (Evans, 2006). People who have been convicted before are discriminated against

in housing opportunities, particularly public housing (Evans, 2006). Holzer et al. (2002) presented a clear evidence on ex-convicts' discrimination experiences by asking whether employers would hire ex-offenders. Over 60% against 38% employers indicated that they would not be willing to employ or accept an applicant with a criminal record in their organization. More so, ex-convicts are banned from occupying some positions in the society (Harris & Keller, 2005).

In summary, the literature reviewed indicates that several factors contribute to re-offending among ex-convicts, prison officers face myriad challenges in discharging their responsibilities of reforming and rehabilitating prisoners. Also, stigmatization and discrimination experiences associated with recidivists were highlighted. The factors identified in the literature include: unemployment, low level of education and school dropout, drug addiction and race, overcrowding and intermingling of felony, misdemeanour, and societal attitudes toward ex-convicts. Also, challenges such as inadequate rehabilitation facilities, overcrowding, inadequate motivation, work stress and fatigue were highlighted. The current study therefore, is connected to prominent areas of literature, because it employed qualitative design to find out factors that contribute to recidivism, challenges prison officers face, societal perceptions about ex-convicts, and stigmatization and discrimination experiences ex-convicts face in their respective communities.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Methodology, according to Rajaskar, Philominathan, and Chinnathambi (2006) is the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining, and predicting phenomena. This chapter presents and discusses the methodology employed for the study. It describes the research design, study area, target population, study population, sample size, sources of data, entry techniques, data handling and analysis, limitation of the study, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The design for this study was a qualitative design. Qualitative research is the assumption and the use of interpretive or theoretical frameworks that inform the study of research problems, addressing the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative approach was employed for this study because the researcher collected data from participants who had experienced the problem. It enabled the researcher address sensitive issues and appreciated the wider social contexts of participant's experiences (Griffin, 2004). Creswell (2013) contends that, qualitative research helps researchers collect data from the site where participants experience the issue or problem under study. This helped the researcher conduct face-to-face interviews with participants at the study area.

3.2 Study Area

The Nsawam Medium Security Prison was selected from the population. The reason is that, the Nsawam Medium Security Prison used to be the largest prison in Ghana before the establishment

of the Ankaful Maximum Security Prison in 2011. Moreover, it is the prison with the largest number of inmates in Ghana. It is expected that the findings of the study could reflect the situations in other prisons in Ghana.

Nsawam Township is located at eastern Ghana. It is about 37km from Accra, the capital city of Ghana and it is located on the main Accra-Kumasi highway. Nsawam is the capital of the Akuapem South District in the Eastern Region. The town is very popular, because one of the nation's large prisons (Nsawam Medium Security Prison) is situated there. Specifically, the Nsawam Medium Security Prison is established on a one mile square plot of land located at the outskirts of the Nsawam Township. Oral tradition has it that the Prison area is a sacred place, where Chiefs and important personalities have been buried many years ago. The Nsawam Prison's land shares common boundaries with the Osei Stool Land on one hand, the Osofo Ntwo and the Dobro groups on the other (Ghana Prisons Service, 2013).

3.3 Target Population

The target population for the study consisted of all inmates who have been incarcerated in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison, prison officers, prosecutors, and the Nsawam Community Members.

3.4 Study Population

The study focused on all inmates who have been incarcerated for more than once (recidivists) and prison officers in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison, prosecutors (Police Court Unit) who are responsible for execution of court order in court, and members of the Nsawam community.

3.5 Entry Techniques

A letter from the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, was sent to the Ghana Prisons Service headquarters, Accra. The letter sought permission to conduct the study with inmates and officers at the Nsawam Prison. The Ghana Prisons Service gave the researcher its approval for the study to be conducted as requested. The researcher submitted the approval letter to the Nsawam Prison authorities and met the officers and inmates, talked with them about the study and recruited those who were willing to participate in it. With the prosecutors, the researcher selected the Nsawam police. The researcher visited the Nsawam police station, discussed the purpose of the study with them and selected officers who were responsible for execution processes in court and willing to be part of the study. With the Nsawam community members, some community members were identified during the researcher's field visits. The purpose of the study was discussed with these persons and those who showed enthusiasm and willingness in the study were recruited. The researcher engaged participants in face-to-face interviews. However, participants were assured of confidentiality of their participation.

3.6 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was employed in the study. The study adopted purposive sampling technique because it allowed the researcher to select participants who had the needed information to help the researcher address the study objectives. In addition, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to select participants who were in the best position to help the researcher understand the problem under study (Creswell, 2009). Purposive sampling technique was employed to select recidivists, rehabilitation prison officers, police officers, and Nsawam community members. This was because, the researcher planned to interview prison officers who

had worked with the prison service for more than five years. Moreover, participants from the Nsawam community were selected on the basis that the person had lived in the community for five or more years and was 18 years or more. In addition, the prosecutors must have worked as a prosecutor for a minimum of five years or more and must have prosecuted at least three recidivists.

3.7 Sample Size

Twenty participants were selected for the study. The participants comprised of ten recidivists, three rehabilitation prison officers, two prosecutors, and five members of the Nsawam community. Recidivists were purposefully selected because they have experienced the problem under study. Prison officers were included in the study because they were responsible for rehabilitation and reformation in the prison. Also, prison officers were purposefully selected as gate keepers and insiders in order to reach the recidivists. In addition, prosecutors are the people charged with the responsibility for arresting and prosecuting in court and were in the best position to provide the researcher information for the study. Some Nsawam community members were included in the study, because the medium security prison is situated in the Nsawam Township and it was believed they could provide information regarding recidivists and the prison system.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Qualitative methods of data collection were employed to obtain relevant information for the study. In depth interviews were conducted to gather primary data for the study. The in depth interviews were useful for this study because it provided the researcher the opportunity to probe the information provided by the participants. In depth interviews helped in the collection of

information that were grounded in the lived experiences of the study participants (Creswell, 2009). The researcher conducted face to face interviews with all participants in Asante Twi. Each interview lasted for about forty minutes and the researcher spent three months at the study site. Interviews with recidivists and prison officers were held at the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. Interviews with community members took place at the homes and work places of participants and prosecutors were interviewed at the bungalows of the Nsawam Police station.

3.9 Data Handling and Analysis

Field data collected from the participants (prison officers, Nsawam community members, and prosecutors) were tape recorded, kept safely on an external drive and stored for confidentiality purposes. Even though interviews with recidivists were conducted in Asanti Twi, field notes were taken in the English language. Field notes were taken for the interviews conducted with the recidivists because the prison service authority prohibited the use of a tape recorder and other external electronics in the prison yard.

The field data were transcribed on a later date utilizing the 2013 version of Microsoft Word, read through, edited and categorized in accordance with the objectives of the study. Thematic data analysis was used to analyze the field data. Themes were generated in terms of major concepts based on the objectives of the study.

Thematic data analysis was employed to analyze and present the field data (Braun & Clark, 2006). In the first phase, the researcher familiarized himself with the field data and did this by transcribing the data, read and re-read the data and noted down initial ideas. The second phase required the researcher to generate initial codes. The researcher did this by coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set and collated data relevant to

each code. In the third phase, the researcher searched for themes by collating codes into potential themes, and gathered all data relevant to each potential theme. The researcher reviewed themes in the fourth phase. Here, the researcher checked if themes worked in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set and generated thematic map of the analysis. The generated themes were then defined and names assigned to them in the fifth phase. The researcher came out with what the analysis presented and generated clear definitions and names for each theme. The last stage made possible the detailed write-up and meaningful presentation of the field data.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

Interviews conducted in Twi language were translated to the English language and in the process some of the data got lost. The findings of the study cannot be generalized in view of the fact that the study was conducted at one prison facility in Ghana. It is therefore suggested that future studies extend investigations to other prisons in the country.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Secondary data that were used throughout the study were duly acknowledged in order to avoid plagiarism. Also, the researcher used pseudonyms in place of the actual names of the study participants. Furthermore, the researcher proceeded with the interviews only after the consent of the study participants had been sought. Participation was entirely voluntary and participants were made aware that they could exit the study at any time. Anonymity was used to ensure that participants identities were not revealed to any third party and also that the information given could not be traced to their identity. Besides, participants were assured of confidentiality.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study. The chapter provides information on the demographic characteristics of participants and why ex-convicts re-offend. The chapter continues with information on challenges prison officers face in rehabilitating and reforming recidivists, societal perceptions about recidivists, stigmatization and discrimination experiences of recidivists, and ends with a discussion of the findings.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This section provides the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Twenty participants were interviewed; ten of the participants were recidivists, members of Nsawam Community were five, and prison officers and prosecutors (police officers) were three and two respectively. Fourteen of the participants were males and the remaining six were females. The number of males in the research was more than their female counterparts because, initially, the researcher planned to interview four female recidivists, which could not materialize due to security issues that were encountered at the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. Therefore, the researcher decided to increase female participation in the study by interviewing three female community members, two female prison officers, and one female prosecutor. The ages of recidivists ranged from twenty two to sixty four, nineteen to forty nine for community members, twenty eight to forty five for prison officers and thirty two to forty seven for prosecutors. The community members had lived in the Nsawam community for five years or more and prison officers and prosecutors had been at post for five years or more.

In addition, majority of the recidivists that were interviewed had been re-incarcerated for two to four times with the exception of one who had been re-incarcerated seven times. The highest educational background of the recidivists was senior high school with majority of the recidivists stating that they dropped out and could not complete junior high school. None of the recidivists had previous employment with a government institution. Majority of them disclosed that they were commercial bus drivers or commercial bus conductors (Trotro) and galamsey (illegal mining) workers, engaged in scrap business and carpenters.

4.2 Why do Ex-convicts in the Nsawam Prison Re-offend?

In this study, factors contributing to recidivism among inmates in Nsawam Medium Security Prison were explored. It was found that structural, situational, and personal/lifestyle factors contributed to recidivism in the Nsawam prison. These factors work together to prevent proper community reintegration which in turn leads to re-incarceration.

4.2.1 Structural Factors

The structural factors related to structural incapacitation in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. The structural factors constitute things that prevent effective rehabilitation and reformation of inmates. In this regard, recidivism is viewed as a result of poor prison conditions, such as inadequate rehabilitation and reformation facilities, overcrowding and intermingling of felony and misdemeanour offenders, and short-term sentencing. These poor prison conditions make the prison environment unfavourable and uncondusive for rehabilitating and reforming recidivists. These leave recidivists unchanged during and after discharge and return to their communities with no skills. Participants complained vehemently about how overcrowding, intermingling of felony and misdemeanour inmates and inadequate rehabilitation and reformation programs

contribute to hardening inmates rather than reforming them and increase the cycle of reoffending and re-imprisonment. Participants' responses revealed the poor conditions that exist in the Nsawam prison and how they have resulted in poor reformation and rehabilitation of recidivists.

We are too many here and if the government can build more rooms it would help. Sometimes you have to wait for a friend to wake up at mid night before you can get a place to sleep. The yards are very dirty and majority of us fall sick at any time, we have people who cannot walk and are very ill in the yards and no one is taking care of them...prison conditions are very bad and we want the government to do something about it (Recidivist 1).

Hmm, the conditions here are not that good but we are trying our best to do something about it. This is the prison with the largest population...it is highly recognized and we have to accommodate many prisoners, they are more than what the building is supposed to take but we have to adjust for the good of the nation (Prison Officer 1).

A recidivist commented on the issue of overcrowding and indicated how it is negatively affecting every effort prison officers are making to reform inmates:

We are too many and the officers find it difficult to keep an eye on us, we are not permitted to use phones here but many people here are using it; they call outside the prison and arrange the next robbery with their gangs outside (recidivist 3).

Even though recidivists expressed their discomfort about the poor prison conditions in the Nsawam Medium Security prison, they appeared not to be very much concerned. The poor conditions in the Nsawam prison did not serve as a deterrent, rather it seemed to harden inmates,

prepare them for future hardships and difficult offences. Comments by some of the study participants attest to this:

The conditions here do not reform us, they make us strong...we can stay anywhere and under any condition (recidivist 2).

I know this guy who was first imprisoned for a crime of stealing provisions in a shop and after he was discharged, he joined a gang and robbed a whole supermarket...he graduated from petty stealing to armed robbery...so you see, the prison can influence them to be hardened criminals (Prosecutor 1).

The conditions here make them more dangerous and hardened...they leave here heartless and can do everything for survival and money (Prison officer 2).

I tell you the experiences they have there will always make them hardened in crime. They are like slaves, they will work and will not get proper food to eat. The prison do not change them but exposes them to other ways of engaging in crime (Community Member 3).

In addition, the study participants established how overcrowding in the Nsawam prison has compelled the prison authorities to mingle hardened offenders with relatively minor offenders.

This practice has led to prison contamination:

All kinds of offenders are in this prison and they all live together, we don't have a separate place for armed robbers, traffic offenders, rapists, or drug addicts. They talk and learn from one another...sometimes a person who came here as an

economic criminal or petty thief comes back again with an armed robbery offence (Prison Officer 3).

We are too many with different charges but share the same cell. As a result, some copy from others and go out and practice it. A person may first come here with a traffic charge and the next time he comes with robbery or rape charge. Some learn how to steal, rape, and smoke and they meet outside after discharge, form a gang and commit another crime (Recidivist 4).

Due to the increasing and uncontrollable overcrowding situation in the prison, prison officers do not have much contact with recidivists and other inmates. Recidivists turn to interact with each other and other inmates more than they interact with prison officers. As a result, recidivists are influenced more by fellow inmates, which have resulted in bad peer influence and has increased non-conforming behaviors among recidivists and other inmates:

Prisoners interact with themselves more than they interact with us, the officers...this is not encouraging because at the end of the day they end up influencing each other negatively...even though we are trying to change this situation, the issue of overcrowding has always made it difficult (Prison Officer, 1).

Peer pressure is the major cause of recidivism in this prison. Because they are many, which makes it difficult for us to monitor their movements and interactions...those who are feeble minded are influenced by the behaviors of other inmates and when they are discharged they practice the negative things they have learnt and end up here again (Prison Officer 2).

Some recidivists and other inmates spend more time with fellow inmates than they spend with prison officers. Recidivists are impacted more by fellow inmates. This could affect inmates' rehabilitation and reformation processes negatively and result in prison contamination.

We hardly see the officers...we don't get any help from them when we need it but our friends are always present when we need them (Recidivist 10).

The friends we make here can cause reoffending and re-imprisonment, for example, the friends I got during my first sentence are the reason why I am back here (Recidivist 7).

With the issue of inadequate rehabilitation and reformation programs, it was established by participants that the Nsawam prison has many rehabilitation programs including: tailoring, carpentry, school, shoemaking, kente weaving, church and counselling services. The problems with these rehabilitation and reformation programs are inadequate tools and qualified persons to manage various rehabilitation and reformation departments. These discourage inmates from enrolling in rehabilitation and reformation programs, making rehabilitation and reformation a myth in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. As a result inmates spend all their jail time without learning any trade or engaging in reformation programs. They come back to the community unreformed and without a trade. Below are what participants had to say about the issue of inadequate rehabilitation facilities:

During my first sentence I was introduced to many trades and I decided to learn carpentry, but I couldn't learn because there were no tools for the training and I don't want to bother myself this time (Recidivist 5).

When you go to the workshops you will not be motivated to go there again...the place is dusty and nothing seems to go on there...it is true the workshops are there but it is difficult to learn a trade (Recidivist 6).

Experts are very scarce just as training equipment are in the Nsawam prison. Even though workshops are provided in the prison, personnel to manage these workshops and transfer skills to inmates are not available. In addition, reformation personnel are also lacking in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison:

We have rehabilitation and reformation programs but we do not have officers to train those who want to learn...for example, we have a school here but we do not have teachers, we depend on teachers in the community and they do not come every day (Prison Officer 1).

The carpentry shop is closed for some months now because we do not have tools to teach them and the officer who was in charge has retired...we are yet to get a new one (Prison Officer 3).

Inadequate rehabilitation facilities in the Nsawam prison have prevented recidivists and other inmates from learning a trade or attending reformation sessions. These leave recidivists and other inmates with no skills and unreformed prior to discharge and consequently re-enter their various societies unchanged and even hardened than before to commit offence:

I will say the motives for keeping these guys here are to help them get working skills and change them from their current behaviours...but because we do not have better facilities and experts, they are just doing their own thing in the cells

and they leave here unchanged and more likely to continue their bad acts (Prison Officer, 1).

Poor conditions in the prison prevent us from learning a trade, if you go out and you do not have anything to do for a living, you will steal or rob and may come back to prison. Again, the time we spend here is very long, you will go home and all that you left would no more be there, some will never go home when they are released, they just go and form gangs with the friends they made here who have been released and the next day, they are on the streets stealing phones (Recidivist 8).

It has been argued that, the main reason for incarceration is to reform and rehabilitate offenders (Abotchie, 2008). It is therefore assumed that it would take a relatively long time to reform an offender or teach an offender or any other individual job skills. This makes short term prison sentencing disadvantageous to the individual offender. For example, it would be very difficult to effectively learn carpentry, kente weaving, and tailoring within three to six months. Participants directed the factors that contribute to recidivism to short-term prison sentencing. The findings suggest that it would be difficult if not impossible for any individual to effectively learn a trade within three to six months. Evidence from the study therefore shows that short-term jail sentenced offenders are more likely to re-offend and get re-incarcerated particularly where they intermingle with hardened criminals. Commenting on this issue, this is what some participants had to say:

There is this person I have prosecuted three times, the first sentence, he was accused of stealing a neighbor's phone and he went in for six months; the second

was the same offence and the third was armed robbery. You could see the prison did not reform him but has hardened him and has taught him another way of stealing (Prosecutor 2).

One of the factors is weak sentencing, because, if you are sentenced for three to six months, you cannot learn any trade but you can interact with prison friends to pick from them how they committed their crimes and when released go and practice (Prosecutor 1)

I have been here for eight and half years and have seen many short sentenced prisoners who had come back on many occasions with different charges (Recidivist 6).

In addition, it was revealed that short sentenced inmates are enrolled in only reformation programs and are not allowed to be enrolled in rehabilitation programs. The reason given by prison officers is that they cannot learn a trade within three to six months. Therefore, inmates with three to six months jail sentences do not learn any trade before they return to their respective communities. This suggests that inmates who were without job skills prior to imprisonment return to the community without job skills which could affect their re-integration processes and increase their risk of re-offending and re-incarceration:

Short sentenced inmates are not allowed to learn a trade because we consider their sentence period to be too short for them to learn a trade, we only engage them in reformation programs (Prison Officer 3).

I have been imprisoned seven times and the longest sentence was one year...because I don't have any job skills and get support from no one, I am

forced to steal or sell marijuana to make ends meet and through these I have been caught on many occasions (Recidivist 2).

Above all, some participants concluded that the conditions in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison can never change a prisoner and it would take the intervention of God for a prisoner to be reformed under such bad conditions:

Except God's intervention, you can be a hardened criminal here, all kinds of bad people are here and all kinds of bad things go on here...the best reformation in this prison, in my opinion, is the Bible (Recidivist 10).

4.2.2 Situational Factors

Conditions outside the prison environment also contribute to recidivism in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. This factor views recidivism as a result of the hostile attitudes from the recidivist's family and the larger community which make it, if not impossible, very difficult for effective re-integration and re-socialization in the recidivist's community. Prisoners are expected to be re-socialized and re-integrated into the mainstream community. One major challenge ex-convicts face in their respective communities is rejection by community members. Even if recidivists were given the needed skills and learned socially accepted behaviours in the prison, they are confronted with situations in their respective communities which force them to re-socialize with their old gangs or form associations with bad gangs or friends they made when serving their prison sentences. Participants highlighted how societal attitudes toward recidivists prevent effective community reintegration and increase the cycle of re-imprisonment. These include lack of respect and rejection from families and friends. These are evidence of responses given by the participants:

The main factor is the behavior of our family members. This place is not good to live but when you are home you realize this place is a better place to live than home. My children don't even visit me and when I went home they didn't see me as their father, so what am I going home for (Recidivist 5).

To me the challenges we face in the community make it difficult for us to live without going back to criminal activities, your family does not want you anymore because you have been imprisoned before, your friends are teasing you with your prison records, calling you all kinds of names, and you feel uncomfortable around them, sometimes you feel like doing something to hurt them (Recidivist 4).

The above assertions show that ex-convicts are rejected particularly by their families. Participants further lamented on how situations such as unacceptance by family members and the job market are negatively affecting their re-integration processes:

We are not accepted at home and at the work place...when I was home during my first discharge I did everything possible to get myself a job but it never worked...sometimes you become fed up and ask yourself why am I being treated this way (Recidivist 7).

The main cause is the society's refusal to accept them...if they are not accepted, they are forced to make new friends outside...these friends may be criminals and may influence the person to re-activate his criminal life...before you know, the person is here again (Prison Officer 3).

Apart from rejection by families, recidivists faced hostile treatments from the friends they left behind. Recidivists were perceived by their old friends as bad persons; as a result, re-socializing

with old friends became very difficult and affected their re-integration processes negatively. Moreover, the continuous treatment of disrespect and unacceptance recidivists experienced in the community drove them away from good persons and got them closer to bad persons that increased their risk of re-offending and re-incarceration:

I found it difficult to make new friends and my old friends were not that open toward me, the room I was living in before I was imprisoned did not belong to me again, one of my uncles was using it and where to sleep became a major problem (Recidivist 1).

Those who think they are good persons in the community do not respect an ex-convict...they see them as bad people...as a result, ex-convicts cannot go to good people but to bad people, because they will accept them and continue their bad acts together and end up in the prison again (Prosecutor 1).

A prison officer used an illustration in a form of example to explain how the community contributes to offender reoffending and re-incarceration:

For example, a recidivist may go back to his family and everybody will be like, he has come back, if you have any valuable thing you have to keep it safe else he will steal it. When it happened like this, he will feel isolated and will find bad people who would accept him, and this could lead to reoffending and prison re-entry (Prison Officer 1).

Even though the conditions in the prison are very poor and not worth living in, participants believed the experiences in the community are worse than the experiences in the prison:

The conditions here are not encouraging and I do not think they would like to come back to the prison again, but harsh outside influences and challenges cause ex-convicts to engage in bad acts which get them another prison sentence (Prison Officer 2).

To me the experiences we face in our homes are more inhuman than the one we face in this prison...we are suffering here but we suffered a lot more at home (Recidivist 10).

Furthermore, ex-convicts are perceived different in their communities and are labeled as criminals. Consequently, any bad act that goes on in their communities is associated with them. Some participants established that ex-convicts experience false accusations and due to their past records they find it difficult to be defended:

Every bad act that goes on at where we live is directed at us and sometimes we are charged for offences we haven't committed. Also, when we are arrested nobody wants to bail us, we will be in the police cell till we are taken to court and we will have no one who is more willing to defend us (Recidivist 10).

At where I was living, the residents considered me as a different person who was creating problems for them, I was not happy about this development, so I travelled to Kumasi where I had my second case (Recidivist 2).

Sometimes they experience false accusations in their respective communities; any bad thing that happens in the community is directed at an ex-convict (Prison Officer 3).

Recidivists are rejected by their families and friends during and after prison sentence. Whilst in prison they hardly receive visitors and after discharge they find it equally hard to get people who will empathize with them and help them during re-integration:

Majority of the prisoners do not receive visitors throughout their prison sentence...either from family or friends and when they are discharged they get no one to accompany them home, some end up in the streets and continue their bad behaviors from there (Prison Officer, 3).

I have been in this profession for over twenty years, what I have observed are, inmates who receive family visits frequently and those whose families come here with powder and sprinkle on them on their discharge day have never turned up again, these show that if they are accepted back home it would be difficult for them to come back (Prison officer, 2).

Besides, community members also highlighted that their attitudes toward ex-convicts drive them away from them. They believe if they accept them and support them with some basic things like food, shelter, love and clothing, the rate of re-offending would be minimized. Community members established that:

People attitudes towards them can cause re-entry, if they realize that they are not accepted where they belong to, they would be forced to go and get different company elsewhere who will accept them. This company may be a bad bunch of people and they can influence them to commit crime again, which could send them back to prison (Community Member 5).

I think there is lack of trust and respect for prisoners. Nobody respects an ex-convict...the moment you go to prison, you are disrespected by every member in the community. Those who respect them are people who are ignorant about their prison records (Community Member 2).

Participants suggested that, some families do not want to have anything to do with their members who have been imprisoned before. This has negative effect on ex-convicts confidence and makes them see themselves as inferior to other members in the community who have not been imprisoned before:

I knew a prisoner who was given an amnesty and his family said they don't want him in the house so the prison officers should keep him...this shows that his family has disowned him and as such never wanted to see him. The prison officers did not take this serious and went on to discharge him...can you believe he went and stole electricity wires and was imprisoned again within six months of his release (Community Member 1).

In Ghana what I have observed is, members in the community are unfriendly to ex-convicts and this pushes them to the street where they are tempted by many bad things. The moment you are imprisoned, you are forever a criminal, we lose hope in them and this makes them go back to their bad acts (Prosecutor 2).

From the experiences I had with them, they see themselves as inferior to those who have never been to prison before. This makes them reserve themselves from individuals around them and tend to relate to people who share have the same status as them (Prosecutor 1).

A community member revealed that, her relationship with a person who has never been imprisoned before will be better than a person who has been imprisoned before:

My relationship with someone who has been imprisoned before will be affected negatively even if the person is my family member (Community Member 4).

4.2.3 Personal or Lifestyle Factors

This factor explains how the act of offending has become the lifestyle of some individuals. In other words, breaking the rule is the personality of some offenders and who find it difficult to desist from it. This factor view recidivism as a result of the individual recidivist's resistance to change his or her criminal lifestyle. This attests to an adage in Asante Twi that goes as “suban te se nyinsen, w'ontumi mfansie” meaning, like pregnancy, the individual habit could hardly be concealed. This implies that, no matter the effort made by the prison system, and the society to prevent re-offending, habitual offenders will always revisit their criminal deeds. Even if they go through the best form of rehabilitation and reformation processes or if they are treated well in their communities they will still reoffend. The study found that some offenders see nothing wrong with breaking the rules repeatedly. Most of the participants believed that the lifestyle of the individual offender is a major cause of recidivism:

Some inmates smuggle wee to the prison yard, sell and smoke some themselves. These people will never be reformed...if they do it here, then they can effectively do it when they are discharged (Recidivist 9).

Since I came here, one person has gone and come four times and all the time if you ask him what brought him back, the cause is different. I therefore think the cause can be from the individual resistance to change (Recidivist 7)

A recidivist gave his life account after he was first discharged from prison. He believed that he was given the needed support by his family but that could not prevent him from revisiting his bad deeds:

When I was discharged my senior brother bought me a taxi which I was working with. One day, I picked a passenger and in our interactions he told me he would like to work with me and that I will make more money than what I was making in the driving. He took my phone number, called and we met somewhere. He told me the nature of the work – it was armed robbery, we were a gang of ten. We did it for many years and one day we were caught (Recidivist 8).

However, putting blame on the community and the prison system alone would not serve recidivists any good. Because, the problem is coming from the individual himself since they chose to engage in non-conforming behaviors. The explanations given by some participants were that recidivists are lazy and always want to survive antisocially through vulnerable persons in the community:

People in the community don't tell us to go and steal or force us to steal, we chose to do it and it is our fault, not the society's (Recidivist 4).

The people themselves cause it, because if you decide to steal for a living, you will be caught all the time. Some people have decided not to work, the only thing they want to do in life is to steal. If you are imprisoned and with all these hardships you don't change then you can never change (Community Member 3).

I think the Individual offender's bad attitudes are the major cause of recidivism...some are given assistance from their families but they still engage in other acts that will lead them back to prison (Community Members 5).

The individuals choose to live with prisoners than with their families. I think they are okay going to prison so they cause it themselves. It is no one's fault that they always go there...they do not want to change; they are lazy persons and will never work, so their place is the prison (Community Member 4).

Finally, some offenders have become habitual to certain acts of offending and would find it difficult to desist from them. These offences include substance abuse, pocket picking and mobile phone snatching. In other words, some offenders have become addicted to abusing substances, picking pockets and snatching people phones:

Drug addicts, mobile phone snatchers, and pocket pickers have made these acts their profession and will always be tempted by it whenever they are in the community (Prosecutor 2)

4.3 Challenges Prison Officers Face in Rehabilitating and Reforming Recidivists in the Nsawam Prison

Rehabilitation and reformation have been considered the major purposes for imprisoning offenders in Ghana (Prison Service Decree, 1972). Rehabilitation is a criminal justice procedure that seeks to equip prison inmates with knowledge and skills required for a successful community reintegration. Reformation is also a criminal justice process of re-teaching or re-socializing prison inmates in order to help them behave in accordance with the norms and

traditions of the larger society after discharge. Rehabilitation and reformation aim at helping the individual offender to re-integrate well with the larger community after their discharge.

Some participants established that the best form of rehabilitation program in the Nsawam Prison is education, because they have observed that, in Ghana people with low or less education are more likely to commit crimes. They further suggested that, all rehabilitation programs should have some form of formal education. However, some of the challenges prison officers encounter include: inadequate facilities and lack of motivation, overcrowding and intermingling of inmates with different crime history, and absence of a social worker (aftercare agent). Prison officers lamented on the problems they face in effectively delivering their rehabilitation and reformation duties:

I think all rehabilitation programs should have some aspect of formal education in it...to me, the best form of rehabilitation is education. What I have observed over the years is most of the offenders, particularly recidivists, are illiterates and teaching them anything has always been difficult (Prison Officer 3).

Equipment to work with or to rehabilitate recidivists and other inmates in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison have become very scarce for some time. Also experts to teach inmates skills and reform inmates are not available in the prison. These were expressed as long-standing problems confronting the Nsawam Medium Security Prison:

I will say the major challenge has been inadequate facilities...we have school but sometimes we the officers have to contribute and buy books and pens for them, and there are no text books for them to read. The money assigned to the prison is inadequate and do not come on time. We sometimes depend mostly on outside

donations to cater for them and we do not get motivation from anywhere (Prison Officer 2).

The conditions here are very bad to our health...also we do not have a nurse or doctor here so we have no option than to share the hospital in town with the prison community...it is very stressful when some of us or inmates fall sick (Prison Officer, 1).

Overcrowding was considered the root cause of majority of the challenges the prison officers at the Nsawam Prison cope with. The Nsawam Medium Security Prison was built to accommodate not more than seven hundred inmates. Currently, the prison houses almost four thousand inmates with no expansion whatsoever. This has resulted in intensive overcrowding in the prison and created discomforts among the prison staff:

To me overcrowding and intermingling of all kinds of offenders in the prison make our work very difficult. We have never set eyes on many of the prisoners since they came here...with this how do you rehabilitate or reform them (Prison Officer 3).

The inmates are more than the staff and this stresses us up...sometimes you have to work overtime and extra hard which does not attract any additional pay (Prison Officer 1).

This prison is supposed to accommodate seven hundred inmates but it accommodates more than three thousand inmates...this brings pressure on the structures and the officers which is not helpful at all (Prison Officer 2).

Furthermore, prison officers expressed dissatisfactions with their salaries and allowances. They believe they are not well motivated looking at the nature of their work. In addition, prison officers established that their work is the least recognized among the security sector, looking at their salary and the time they are paid. Hence, they experience discomfort with the level of motivation and remunerations:

When you compare our work with other security institutions you would realize that our work is relatively very dangerous and tedious, yet the pay we receive is lesser than what they receive and they are more respected than us...I think we are not motivated enough and something should be done about it (Prison officer 2).

Moreover, the prison does not have an aftercare agent or a social worker. This has posed challenges to inmate's reintegration processes. Aftercare agents play major roles in reformation processes as well as reintegrating inmates into the mainstream community. Their absence could affect the overall processes of rehabilitation, reformation and reintegration. Also, lack of a social worker or aftercare agent means no one is there to liaise between inmates and their families. Consequently, inmates are discharged without the knowledge of their family members and majority of discharged inmates end up in the street:

Under normal circumstances, we have to give discharged inmates some money to start something and send them to their various homes, but the prison does not have the means... we should have an after care agent who will arrange for their reintegration but we don't have, so all our efforts to help them change end immediately after their discharge (Prison Officer 1).

4.4 Societal Perceptions about Recidivists

Prison inmates are incapacitated for a specific period. They do not spend the remainder of their lives in the prison. Therefore, after serving their sentences they are discharged back into their respective communities. However, the perceptions the communities they return to have about them could prove significant to their reintegration. Societal perception about the prison was identified to be an important predictor of how society relates with ex-convicts which reinforces nonconforming behaviors. Participants indicated that, the society has negative perceptions about the prison and that, anybody who has been imprisoned before, irrespective of the nature of the case, is perceived as a bad person who should not get a chance to live in the midst of people who have never been imprisoned before. This became a general concern during the interviews. These are what some participants had to say:

Had it not been this position that had got me closer to prisoners, I was so upset about them. I believe those who have not gotten the opportunity to interact with them feel the same. The fact is, everyone is afraid of them because once one is sentenced to prison, irrespective of the nature of offence, he/she is perceived as a bad person and everybody tries to separate themselves from you on return to the community (Community Member 3).

Some participants hold the perception that the prison is a place where offenders are kept and punished for their wrong doings. Per their understanding about the prison system, the main motive behind imprisonment has eluded them, given that they perceive the prison to be where pains are inflicted upon offenders:

Imprisoning offenders is very good, prison helps to punish the individual offender, it teaches them sense and I think it is good in preventing them from stealing from us (Community Member 2).

It is only bad persons who go there...when you commit an offence and you are caught you are sent there to be punished (Community member 5)

Some community members perceive prisoners as bad persons who should never be entertained. In addition, they are perceived as callous and can do anything to fellow human to achieve their desire:

I know prisoners, I know what they can do, and I see them as bad persons, they are heartless people who do not care what will happen to you when they steal your money. They can kill for money, so I am afraid of them and don't want to have anything to do with them (Community Member 4).

Every prisoner is a bad person, even those who go there by mistake, you cannot trust them, they can do anything at any time...I am afraid of every prisoner, when I see them around I try to protect my property and myself (Community Member 5).

Moreover, some participants were of the view that the conduct of some ex-convicts creates doubt as to whether they were changed before they were released:

They do not change before they come back to the community...the prisons should make sure they are changed before they release them...criminals will always remain criminals (Community Member 1).

They see us as people who will never change and even if we change they still see us as criminals, they don't respect us...they refuse to live with us...they believe we are hopeless and that nothing good can come from us (Recidivist 5).

Members in the community always say and make bad statements about us...we are like devils in their eyes (Recidivist 8).

4.5 Stigmatization and Discrimination Experiences of Recidivists in Nsawam Prison.

The behaviours of recidivists are socially unacceptable and as such society tends to assign labels to them. As a result, recidivists are labelled as 'criminals', 'thieves', or 'ex-convicts' which has become indelible in their everyday activities. These tags follow them everywhere and sometimes restrict them or make it somewhat difficult for them to access certain benefits. For example, in Ghana and other parts of the world, as a condition for travelling or working in some countries, one is required to get clearance from the police before further actions are taken. Ex-convicts are adversely affected by this requirement. Ex-convicts are discriminated against in employment, accommodation, holding positions of trust and sometimes marital relationship:

Recidivists are labeled as criminals, thieves and most commonly, ex-convicts...once a prisoner always a prisoner, the prison association terms will always be on you till you die (Prosecutor 1).

Because of the stigma attached to imprisonment, ex-convicts go through countless discrimination experiences. A recidivist revealed during the interviews how he was denied a woman's hand in marriage:

No one desires for his or her daughter to be with a recidivist. I was denied marriage to a woman because I have been in prison before. Even though the family didn't directly tell me the reason why they could not give me their daughter's hand in marriage, from what I heard and observed, the main reason was that I have been imprisoned before (Recidivist 1).

Most predominant among the discrimination experiences of ex-convicts is employment. Due to their criminal records, ex-convicts find it difficult to get themselves a job. This was recurrent throughout the interviews:

It is difficult for us to get a good job and even rent accommodation, everybody is afraid of an ex-prisoner and they don't want to live with us... Even if you have the skills and ability to work, no one is willing to employ you or wants to work with you (Recidivist 3).

They are discriminated against in employment...I am saying this because, most organizations in the country ask for a police report before a job is given...sometimes you could be denied a job if you have criminal record...also when you want to travel outside the country, you will be asked to produce a police report and all these serve as discrimination practices against prisoners and ex-prisoners (Community Member 3).

Some community members established that they would not like to live in the same house with or employ an ex-convict in their organization if they have one:

I will not employ an ex-convict if I have a business, because they can commit acts that could lead to the downfall of the business...I will never rent out my property

to an ex-convict. I wouldn't feel secured living in the same house with an ex-convict (Community Member 4).

Imprisonment automatically disqualifies an individual to hold any royal position in the Akan communities in Ghana. In other words, the moment a person is sentenced to prison, that person is forever discriminated against in holding a royal position. This is coupled with other public positions which ex-convicts are prevented from occupying by the laws of the land:

In this town, it is a taboo for a person who has been imprisoned before to become a king or a queen if that person comes from the royal family (Community Member 2).

What I know is people who have been convicted before are not allowed to hold any public office...and no one would trust an ex-convict with his or her job (Prosecutor 3).

However, a prison officer lamented on the long lasting stigma ex-convicts go through and called on the National Commission for Civic Education to intervene and educate the public to desist from the act of stigmatizing ex-convicts:

The notion that if you are a thief you remain a thief forever even if you change is a bad mindset and the National Commission for Civic Education needs to educate the public to change this mindset otherwise, we cannot prevent recidivism, we can do our part here and the society has a big part to play as well (Prison Officer 3).

4.6 Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study were consistent with the theory that guided the study which contends that criminal behaviour is learned through an individual's association with a group that favours breaking rules than conforming to rules of the land (Sutherland, 1939). It was found in the study that due to overcrowding in the Nsawam prison, inmates with different criminal records intermingle and this has resulted in peer interaction and influence among inmates. As a result, inmates learn from each other tricks used in committing crimes through their interactions and tend to practice these after discharge.

Structural and lifestyle factors contributing to recidivism as found in this study are consistent with past studies by Centre for Impact Research (2004); Maltz (2001). These studies found that, recidivism results from failure of the individual as an inmate of a correctional institution to take advantage of the rehabilitation and reformation programs or failure of the recidivist to change from his or her criminal deeds after release, and failure of the prison as an institution to provide the individual inmate with appropriate rehabilitation and reformation programs. Besides, in their studies Kubrin and Stewart (2006); Mears et al. (2008); Travis and Visser (2005) found that, one major factor that contribute to recidivism is societal hostile attitudes toward ex-convicts. Their findings are consistent with the findings of this study that, societal hostile attitudes create unfavourable reintegration environment for ex-convicts which in turn contributes to recidivism.

The findings of the study are in support with research findings by Wehrman (2010); Western (2002) that low level educational attainment could contribute to recidivism. Education and employment background of recidivists were very essential to the study since it was established by participants that poor educational background and unemployment on the part of ex-convicts

contribute to high rate of recidivism. The findings are also consistent with Wang et al. (2010); Gould et al. (2002) who reported in their study that high unemployment rate among ex-convicts could increase the rate of recidivism. If prisoners return to their communities with no employable skills and those who have skills are discriminated against, in trying to make ends meet, it is likely they would revisit their criminal activities, which may serve as an employment to them.

In addition, the findings of the study support the research outcomes by Alvarez and Loureiro (2012); Appiah-Hene (1995) which established that, prison overcrowding and intermingling of different offenders contribute to recidivism. Also, short-term (three to six months) prison sentencing was found as a contributor to recidivism in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. This is possible because majority of the recidivists interviewed were victims of short-term prison sentencing. In the Nsawam prison, short-term sentenced inmates are not allowed to learn a trade and it has negative effects on their reintegration, particularly those who were without job skills prior to imprisonment.

Furthermore, the study found that rehabilitation prison officers face challenges such as, overcrowding and intermingling of all kinds of offenders, inadequate rehabilitation and reformation facilities and lack of motivation. These findings are in line with the findings by Amnesty International (2012); Swanson et al. (2008) that overcrowding is one of the major challenge that confronts prisons in Ghana. Across the globe, a lot of problems faced in the prison environment are caused by prison overcrowding (Hesselink & Herbig, 2014). Also, the findings support the research report that prison officers are not motivated (Odera-Orika, 1985), and facilities to implement rehabilitation, reformation and reintegration programs are inadequate (Angell et al., 2014).

In addition, Odera-Orika, (1985) found that in developing countries prison officers are challenged with tedious work that attract lesser salaries. In this study, it was also found that the prison officers were underpaid and not well motivated. Moreover, the research findings by Armstrong and Griffin (2004); Finn (2000) that prison officers are stressed due to overwork, which results from prison overcrowding are consistent with the findings of the current study. In addition, the findings of the study that the prison lacks resources to support discharged inmates start up their own businesses are in line with the research findings by Evans (2006).

Moreover, it was found that because the inmates outnumber the prison officers, the work of monitoring the behaviour of inmates is very difficult and this affects the reformation processes. This is consistent with the findings by Phelps (2012) that prison officer staff to inmate ratio has declined over the years, which has affected the outcome of rehabilitation and reformation negatively. In extreme cases, an inmate may not go through any form of rehabilitation or reformation program throughout their prison sentence at the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. The danger in this is, while inmates are not being reformed, they are rather learning from colleague's new ways of committing crimes, thereby acquiring new and dangerous tricks in committing different forms of crimes after discharge. In addition, it was found that inmates abuse substances in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. This supports Omboto's (2013) study which revealed that rehabilitation and reformation in an environment where inmate's abuse drugs are difficult to achieve.

Furthermore, the study found that the Ghanaian society has developed negative perceptions about the prison and perceives that all prisoners are thieves and criminals. This attests to the fact that Ghanaians are intolerant about recidivists and ex-convicts (Appiah-Hene, 1995). The current study revealed that recidivists were faced with countless stigmatization and discrimination

experiences during their previous discharge. These findings are in line with the outcomes of Cullen and Wilcox (2010); Richie (2001); Scanlon (2010) that ex-convicts are labelled and stigmatized in their respective communities. Also, the study found that recidivists were discriminated against in employment, and accommodation. This is consistent with the findings by Freeman (2003); Geller et al. (2006); Love and Kuzma (1996); Schmitt and Warner (2010); and Western (2002) who established that ex-offenders are discriminated against in employment due to their criminal records.

The study found that individuals with past criminal records such as recidivists are discriminated against in royal positions and are prevented from holding any position of trust. This finding supports the findings by Evans (2006) that ex-prisoners are excluded from holding certain positions in the country. The above are coupled with state policies and laws that prohibit ex-offenders from holding public office. In addition, the findings of the current study which revealed that people with past criminal records are discriminated against in marriage are consistent with the findings by Scanlon (2001) that ex-convicts are perceived differently from other individuals in the community and nobody would like to have a relationship whatsoever with them. Also, the study revealed that people who have served jail sentences before are labelled as criminals or thieves in Ghana and this is consistent with a research finding by Scanlon (2001).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The first section of this chapter presents a summary of the findings. The second section draws conclusions based on the findings. The chapter ends with recommendations centred on the findings. The recommendations suggest ways which could remedy or mitigate the factors that contribute to recidivism in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison as identified by the study.

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The study found that the factors contributing to recidivism in the Nsawam Prison are threefold: (a) structural factors, (b) situational factors and (c) personal or lifestyle factors. The structural factors consist of the institutional shortcomings that hinder effective rehabilitation; the situational factors constitute the situations ex-convicts find themselves in the community which hinder effective community re-integration; and the personal or lifestyle factors being the individual recidivist's failure to take advantage of the rehabilitation and reformation programs and change their criminal personality permanently. In addition, it was found in the study that poor educational background, drug addiction, and ex-convict's inability to find employment due to discrimination play important roles in increasing the rate of recidivism.

Moreover, the study found that the Nsawam Medium Security Prison is overpopulated with participants estimating that it is more than three times the number it should accommodate. As a result, authorities are compelled to intermingle prisoners of all kinds. By this, inmates interact

with all kinds of offenders, share experiences and their personal strategies which influence them negatively after discharge and put ex-convicts at high risk of re-offending and re-incarceration.

Furthermore, the study found that the perceptions held by the public about individuals who have been imprisoned before are negative. The notion is that all prisoners are bad persons who should never be favoured or entertained. It was established by the study that people perceive those with criminal records as callous who can cause harm at any point in time. Based on these assumptions, individuals who have served prison sentences before are stigmatized and discriminated against.

Ex-convicts are labelled as criminals and thieves and their records attract discrimination experiences regarding employment, holding positions of trust such as chief, king or queen, public office, among many others, and in its extreme cases, accommodation. These were established when participants (community members) declared that, they would never live in the same house with a recidivist nor employ a recidivist in their organizations. In addition, recidivists established that the perceptions and the kind of relationships they have with their families, friends and neighbours compel them to join gangs and bad friends which put them in a very high risk of reoffending and consequently re-incarceration.

In addition, the study revealed that prison officers in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison are faced with challenges. Prison officers established that basic facilities such as equipment for rehabilitation are inadequate and the available ones are outmoded, making it difficult for them to carry out their rehabilitation duties. It was revealed that exercise books, pens, and pieces of chalk used by inmates enrolled in the school at Nsawam prison are acquired through prison officer's voluntary contributions. They further revealed that the overcrowding conditions in the prison

make effective rehabilitation and reformation very difficult. The reason being that, inmates outnumber the prison officers and that makes it difficult for prison officers to keep an eye on inmates. These were confirmed when a recidivist revealed that inmates were not supposed to use cell phones but majority of them were using phones. Speaking on illegal materials smuggled into the prison, the study revealed that inmates abuse substances in the prison yard which questions the security mechanisms put in place by the authorities of the Nsawam Medium Security Prison.

Also, prison officers lamented on the absence of an aftercare services, which confirms the issue raised by some participants that the prison has insufficient expertise to carry out rehabilitation and reformation duties. These are coupled with inadequate resources, including financial resources needed to assist discharged inmates, and delay in prison officers salaries which have raised job satisfaction and motivation concerns. Again, prison officers are stressed out due to work overload in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that recidivism is a serious social problem that needs as much attention as any other social problem in the country. Recidivism affects the individual offender negatively and impairs their chances of employment. They look dejected in their respective communities, hardly get support from families and friends and are seen as a threat to the security of people around them. Generally, recidivism affects the family of the recidivist, his or her community and the state at large.

Furthermore, offenders are imprisoned to be reformed, rehabilitated and reintegrated into their respective communities. These purposes are far from realized due to poor prison conditions. It has been noted throughout the study that poor prison conditions hinder the effectiveness of

rehabilitation and reformation programs, hence the probability that inmates would leave prison or correctional service without any job skills and unreformed. Prison officers are faced with challenges which also hinder their ability to effectively reform inmates. The population in the Nsawam Prison far exceeds what it is supposed to contain. This has resulted in intermingling and contamination in the Nsawam prison. Inmates outnumber prison officers, and this has resulted in job over load and stress on the part of the officers.

Also, it was found in the study that overcrowding was a very serious problem in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. Whilst overcrowding can be a cause of recidivism, recidivism can also be a cause of overcrowding. The assumption is that high incarceration rate could lead to overcrowding, whilst overcrowding could lead to intermingling of different offenders which could lead to contamination and in turn lead to reoffending after discharge. If recidivism rate is high and the prison remains unexpanded, the prison authority would have no option than to admit more inmates which may give rise to overcrowding.

Furthermore, the situations surrounding ex-convicts in the community provide them with limited options to show conforming behaviours. The reason lies in the fact that they are faced with unacceptance from the community in which they return to after discharge. The perception of the community about ex-convicts is based on the assumption that once a criminal always a criminal. As a result, people with criminal records are forever seen as criminals and bad persons. Based on these perceptions, ex-convicts experience stigmatization and discrimination in their respective communities. Specifically, they are labelled as criminals and discriminated against in employment, accommodation, marriage and holding positions of trust. These and other factors prevent effective re-integration which in turn contributes to recidivism.

Furthermore, the study revealed that factors that contribute to recidivism are threefold (structural, situational and personal or lifestyle) and these factors work together to increase the rate of recidivism in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. The Ghana Prisons Service's aim of reforming and rehabilitating inmates and reintegrating them into the community seems to yield no results. Inferring from the findings, community members seem to be unaware about imprisoning offenders, making them develop unfriendly attitudes toward people who have been imprisoned in the past. The assumption may be that community members are not sure if ex-convicts have changed. It is difficult to find an antidote for a problem without knowing the causes, hence the need to investigate factors that contribute to recidivism. The subsequent section provides recommendations that could help reduce recidivism in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison and other prisons in Ghana.

5.3 Recommendations

Recidivism is a social problem that affects every unit of the society and any strategy designed to prevent crime must address recidivism. The literature reviewed and the findings of the study indicate the cycling nature of incarceration among offenders. Based on the findings, a number of recommendations are provided to help improve on prison conditions that prevent effective rehabilitation and reformation, to educate the society and have them change their negative attitudes toward ex-convicts and therefore prevent stigmatization and discrimination of ex-convicts.

- The cycle of incarceration among offenders should be tackled through a total overhaul of the country's prisons system. The sole concentration of the criminal justice system on incarceration should be reconsidered to ensure that minor offences that attract short term

jail sentencing are substituted for alternative methods such as community sentencing. It is recommended that, a commission of experts in the criminal justice system should be set up to draw demarcations and come out with offences that should attract prison sentences and those that attract a court disposal such as probation, restitution or fines. This would ensure that not all offences are given prison sentences and that would help reduce overcrowding.

- In addition, the commission of experts should critically assess the issue of prison sentencing that last for three to six months. Also, the commission should ensure that, the parole board in the prison is efficient. This would ensure that transformed inmates are given conditional release based on the board's recommendations.
- The government and other stakeholders should work together to help reduce prison overcrowding. Reducing prison overcrowding would have implications for reducing the rate of recidivism. The criminal justice system should adopt a strategy that would aim at expanding the Nsawam Prison through the construction of new buildings or focus on community sentencing or strengthening various institutions such as the family, religious groups, and law enforcement institutions. These institutions would help ensure that, its members are well socialized and laws of the land are enforced and applied effectively.
- Furthermore, the prisons should improve the quality of rehabilitation programs. The Ghana prisons service should renovate the existing rehabilitation facilities and re-equip them with the state of the art equipment. Also, they should train and organize refresher courses for craftsmen responsible for rehabilitating inmates. When these are done, the quality of rehabilitation in the prisons would improve and inmates will return to the community skilled and ready to practice what they learned. Given that after learning a

trade, inmates find it difficult to practice after discharge due to lack of basic tools, the researcher recommends that the criminal justice system should develop a policy mandating the Ghana prisons service to provide successful inmates with tools and funds needed to start their own businesses. The prisons are encouraged to provide training for inmates' on ready market trades such as tailoring, shoemaking, and carpentry that need relatively less expensive tools to start with. Also, the prison service should motivate the prison officers by introducing annual awards that would reward hardworking prison officers.

- Moreover, the general public should be educated and sensitized about the purpose of imprisonment. This would change the public's negative perceptions about prisoners and ex-convicts. Platforms such as the media, schools, churches and mosques could be used for the education and awareness creation. These platforms are likely to transfer information to many people in the country and give the public a second thought about prisoners.
- Prisons in the country should be provided with an aftercare agent. The aftercare agent should be equipped to liaise between the prison and the community. The officer should work to establish a cordial relationship between inmates and their families. They can do this by dwelling on their professional skills to establish a conducive environment for re-entry by the ex-convict. This would encourage family members and friends to visit their imprisoned relatives and would contribute in reforming offenders with their advice during visits. Additionally, the aftercare agent should take responsibility of inmate's community re-entry and reintegration processes.

- Besides, the government should introduce annual business award that will honour businesses that take on more employees who have been in prison before. Such an award should have a component for a successful ex-prisoner entrepreneur and worker. This would motivate both private businesses as well as public organizations to employ ex-convicts. Again, such an award would encourage ex-convicts to work harder and in turn reduce the rate of recidivism and crime in general.
- Habitual offenders should be assigned to social workers to provide therapeutic interventions. In addition, in performing their role as advocates, social workers should campaign for better policies that would promote effective prison conditions and reduce barriers in the community that stigmatize and discriminate against people who have been in prison before. Moreover, in performing their role as brokers, social workers should link ex-offenders to institutions such as non-governmental organizations and faith based organizations that could assist ex-convicts by providing them with employment opportunities.

References

- Abotchie, C. (2008). *Social deviance and correctional service*. Accra: Hans Publications.
- Adeyemi, A. (1984). *Sentences of imprisonment*, in T. O. Elias, the prison system in Nigeria. Bainsley: University of Lagos.
- Akpalu, W. and Mohammed, A. (2013). Socioeconomics of crime and discretionary punishment: The case of Ghana. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 40(2), 116-126.
- Alvarez, R. D., and Loureiro, M. L. (2012). Stigma, ex-convicts and labor markets. *German Economic Review*, 13(4), 470-486.
- Amnesty International. (2012). *Prisoners are bottom of the pile: The human rights of inmates in Ghana*. London: Amnesty International.
- Angell, B., Mathews, E., Barrenger, S., Watson, A. C., and Draine, J. (2014). Engagement processes in model programs for community reentry from prison for people with serious mental illness. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 37, 490–500.
- Armstrong, G. S., and Griffin, M. L. (2004). Does the job matter? Comparing correlates of stress among treatment and correctional staff in prisons. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 32, 577–592.
- Asiedu, W. K. (1999). Effective treatment measures for prisoners to facilitate their reintegration into society: The Ghanaian experience. *Participants' Paper*, Resource Material Series, 327-340.

- Appiah-Hene G. J. (1989). *Alternatives to imprisonment in Ghana: A focus on Ghana's criminal justice system*. (Unpublished Master's Thesis). A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the school of criminology, Simon Fraser University, Canada.
- Auerhahn, K. (1999). Selective incapacitation and the problem of prediction. *Criminology*, 37(4), 353-388.
- Alvarez, R. D., and Loureiro, M. L. (2012). Stigma, ex-convicts and labor markets. *German Economic Review*, 13(4), 470-486.
- Austin, J. and McGinnis, K. (2004). *Classification of high-risk and special management prisoners a national assessment of current practices*. U. S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Correction, Washington DC.
- Bailey, K. (2007). The causes of recidivism in the criminal justice system and why it is worth the cost to address them. *Nashville Bar Journal*, 6-9.
- Bonta, J., Ruge, T., Terri-Lynne, S., Bourgon, G., and Yessine, A. K. (2008). Exploring the black box of community supervision. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 47(3), 248-270.
- Braun, V., and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Buonanno, P. and Raphael, S. (2013). Incarceration and incapacitation: Evidence from the 2006 Italian collective pardon. *American Economic Review, American Economic Association*, 103(6), 2437-2465.

- Caudy, M. S., Durso, J. M., and Taxman, F. S. (2013). How well do dynamic needs predict recidivism? Implications for risk assessment and risk reduction. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 41, 458–466.
- Center for Impact Research. (2004). *Current strategies for reducing recidivism*. USA, Center for Impact Research.
- Carlson, J. R., and Thomas, G. (2006). Burnout among prison caseworkers and corrections officers. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 43(3), 19-34.
- Church, W. T., Jagers, J. W., and Taylor, J. K. (2012). Neighbourhood, poverty, and negative behaviour: An examination of differential association and social control theory. *Children and Youth Services Review* 34, 1035–1041.
- Clear, T. R. (1996). *Backfire: When incarceration increases crime*. New York, Vera Institute of Justice.
- Clear, T. R. (2007). The impacts of incarceration on public safety. *Social Research*, 74(2), 613-630.
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SEGE Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: chosen among five approaches*. (3rd ed.). London: SEGE Publications, Inc.
- Cullen, F. T. and Wilcox, P. K. (2010). *Encyclopedia of criminological theory*. London: SEGE Publications Inc.

- Cullen, F. T., Latessa, E. J., Burton Jr., V. S. and Lombardo, L. X. (1993). Correctional orientation of prison wardens: Is the rehabilitative ideal supportive. *Criminology*, 37(1), 69-62.
- Dirkzwager, A. J. E., and Kruttschnitt, C. (2012). Prisoners' perceptions of correctional officers; Behavior in England and Dutch prisons. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40(5), 404-412.
- Evans, L. (2006). Locked up, then locked out. *Women and Therapy*, 29(3-4), 285-308.
- Finn, P. (2000). *Addressing correctional officer stress: Programs and strategies*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.
- Freeman, R. (2003). *Can we close the revolving door? Recidivism vs. employment of ex-offenders in the U.S.* The Urban Institute Reentry Roundtable Discussion Paper.
- Geller, A., Garfinkel, I., and Western, B. (2006). *The effects of incarceration on employment and wages: An analysis of the fragile family survey*. Center for Research on Child Wellbeing, Working Paper 2006-01-FF.
- Ghana Prisons Service (2013). *Annual report*. Unpublished.
- Giddens, A. (1997). *Sociology*. (3rd ed). Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Glick, L. (2005). *Criminology*. Pearson Education, inc.
- Gould, E. D., Weinberg, B. A., and Mustard, D. B. (2002). Crime rate and local labor market opportunities in the United States: 1979-1997. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 84, 45-61.

- Graffam, J., Shinkfield, A. J., and Lavelle, B. (2012). Recidivism among participants of an employment assistance program for prisoners and offenders. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 58(3), 348–363.
- Greenwood, P. W. and Abrahamse, A. (1982). *Selective incapacitation*. Rand Publications, Santa Monica, California.
- Griffin, C. (2004). The advantages and limitations of qualitative research in psychology and education. *Scientific Annals of the Psychological Society of Northern Greece*, 2, 3-15.
- Harris, P. M. and Keller, K. S. (2005). Ex-offenders need not apply: The criminal background check in hiring decisions. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 21, 6-30.
- Hesselink, A. M. E., and Herbig, F. J. W. (2010). Offender rehabilitation and counselling dynamics in the South African correctional environment: Systems and prospects. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 20(1), 143-147.
- Hesselink-Louw, A. E. (2004). *Criminological assessment of prison inmates: A constructive mechanism towards offender rehabilitation*. Doctoral thesis submitted to the Department of Criminology, Pretoria, University of South Africa.
- Hochstetler, A. (2001). Opportunity and decisions: Interactional dynamics in robbery and burglary groups. *Criminology*, 39(3), 737–764.
- Hochstetler, A., Copes, H., and DeLisi, M. (2002). Differential association in group and solo offending. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 30, 559–566.

- Holzer, H. J., Raphael, S., and Stoll, M. (2002). Will employers hire ex-offenders? Employer preferences, background checks, and their determinants. *Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper*, 1243-02.
- Jacobs, J. B., and Crotty, N. (1983). The guard's world. In J. B. Jacobs (Ed.). *New perspectives on prisons and imprisonment*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Konda, S., Reichard, A. A., and Tiesman, H. M. (2012). Occupational injuries among U.S. correctional officers, 1999-2008. *Journal of Safety Research*, 43, 181–186.
- Kubrin, C. E., and Stewart, E. A. (2006). Predicting who reoffends: The neglected role of neighborhood context in recidivism studies. *Criminology*, 44, 165–98.
- Langan, P. A., and Lavin, D. J. (2002). *Recidivism of prisoners released in 1994*. Special Report. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Latessa, E. J., and Lowenkamp, C. (2006). What works in reducing recidivism? *University of St. Thomas Law Journal*, 3(3), 521-535.
- Lemert, E. M. (1951). *Social pathology: Systematic approaches to the study of sociopathic behavior*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Liebling, A., and Arnold, H. (2012). Social relationships between prisoners in a maximum security prison: Violence, faith, and the declining nature of trust. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40, 413-424.
- Love, M. C., and Kuzma, S. M. (1996). *Civil disabilities of convicted felons: A state-by-state survey*. Washington, D.C.: US Department of Justice, Office of the Pardon Attorney.

- Lowenkamp, C. and Latessa, E. J. (2004). *Understanding the risk principle: How and why correctional interventions can harm low-risk offenders*. Ohio, Division of Criminal Justice University of Cincinnati.
- Maltz, M. D. (2001). *Recidivism*. Orlando, Florida, Academic Press, Inc.
- Marja-Liisa, M. (2010). Recidivism among people sentenced to community service in Finland. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime* 2(1), 72-82.
- Martinson, R. (1974). What works? Questions and answers about prison reform. *The Public Interest*, 10, 22-54.
- Maruna, S., LeBel, T. P., Mitchell, N., and Naples, M. (2004). Pygmalion in the reintegration process: Desistance from crime through the looking glass. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 10(3), 271-281.
- Maxfield, L. D. (2005). Measuring Recidivism under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines. *Federal Sentencing Reporter*, 17(3), 166-170.
- McAree, T. (2011). *Prisoner rehabilitation in South Africa: A case study of Phoenix Zululand's work in Eshowe Correctional Facility*. School for International Training, South Africa.
- Mears, D. P., Cochran, J. C., Siennick, S. E., and Bales, W. D. (2011). Prison visitation and recidivism. *Justice Quarterly*, 29(6), 888-918.
- Mears, D. P., Wang, X., Hey, C., and Bales, W. D. (2008). Social ecology and recidivism: Implications for prisoner reentry. *Criminology*, 46(2), 301-340.

Moon, B. and Maxwell, S. R. (2004). The sources and consequences of corrections officers' stress: A South Korean example. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 32, 359 – 370.

Mfum, C. (2012). Prospects and challenges of prison libraries in Ghana: A case study of the Nsawam medium security prisons. *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. Paper 851.

National Research Council. (2008). *Parole, desistance from crime, and community integration*. Committee on Law and Justice Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington DC: The National Academies Press.

Nunes, K. L., Firestone, P., Wexler, A. F., Jensen, T. L., and Bradford, J. M. (2007). Incarceration and recidivism among sexual offenders. *Law and Human Behavior*, 31(3), 305-318.

Nsanze, C. F. (2007). *The ex-prisoners' transition processes into society: The case study at Gothenburg city, Sweden*. Thesis submitted to the University of Gothenburg for the award of International Master's Degree of Science in Social Work.

Odera-Orika, H. (1985). *Punishment and terrorism in Africa: Problems in the philosophy and practice of punishment*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.

Ofori, E. and Paradis, C. (2006). *Prisoners' rights in Ghana*. Report prepared for Journalists for Human Rights. Accra, JHR.

Omboto, J. O. (2013). The challenges facing rehabilitation of prisons in Kenya and the mitigation strategies. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences*, 2(2), 39-43.

- Omboto, J. O. (2010). *Challenges facing the control of drugs in substances use and abuse in prisons in Kenya: the case of Kamiti Prison*. Unpublished thesis submitted to the University of Nairobi.
- Payne, J. (2007). *Recidivism in Australia: Findings and future research*. Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra ACT.
- Phelps, M. C. (2012). The place of Punishment: Variation in the provision of inmate services staff across the punitive turn. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, 40, 348-357.
- Prisons Service Decree, 1972, N.R.C.D. 48. *Laws of Ghana*. Retrieved from Ghana Legal website: <http://www.laws.ghanalegal.com/acts/id/548/prisons-service-pensions-law>.
- Pritikin, M. H. (2008). Is prison increasing crime? *Wisconsin Law Review*, 1049- 1108.
- Rajaskar, S., Philominathan, P., and Chinnathambi, V. (2006). *Research methodology*. Ar XIV Physic, India, Tiruchirapalli, Tamilnadu.
- Raynor, P. and Robinson, G. (2009). *Rehabilitation, Crime and Justice*. (2nd ed), Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Richie, B. E. (2001). Challenges incarcerated women face as they return to their communities: Findings from life history interviews. *Crime and Delinquency*, 47(3), 368-386.
- Rosefield, H. A. (1981). *Self-identified stressors among correctional officers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.
- Sapouna, M., Bisset, C., and Conlong A. (2001). *What work to reduce reoffending: A summary of the evidence justice analysis service?* Scottish Government.

- Scanlon, W. (2001). Ex-convicts: A workplace diversity issue. *Employee Assistance Quarterly*, 16(4), 35-51.
- Schmitt, J. and Warner, K. (2010). *Ex-offenders and the Labor Market*. Washington, D.C, Center for Economic and Policy Research.
- Song, L., and Lieb, R. (1993). *The effect of incarceration and length of time served*. Washington State Institute for Public Policy, Recidivism.
- Sutherland, E. H. (1939). *Principles of criminology* (3rd ed.). Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott.
- Sutherland, E. H., Cressey, D. R., and Luckenbill, D. F. (1992). *Principles of criminology*. Lanham, MD: Alta Mira Press.
- Sutherland, E. H., and Cressey, D. R. (1955). *Principles of criminology*. California, USA, J. B. Lippincott Company.
- Stephen, J. (2004). *State prison expenditures*. Washington D.C: U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Swenson, D., Waseleski, D., and Hartl, R. (2008). Shift Work and Correctional officers: Effects and Strategies for Adjustment. *Journal of Correctional Health Care*, 14, 299–310.
- Thorsell, B. A. and Klemke, L. W. (1972). The labeling process: Reinforcement and deterrent. *Law and Society Review*, 6, 393-403.
- Travis, J., Soloman, A. L., and Waul, M. (2001). *From prison to home: The dimensions and consequences of prisoner reentry*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

- Visher, C. A. and Travis, J. (2003). Transition from prison to community: Understanding individual pathway. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 29, 89-133.
- Wang, X., Mears, D. P., and Bales W. D. (2010). Race-specific employment contexts and recidivism. *Criminology*, 48(4), 1171-1211.
- Wehrman, M. M. (2010). Race, concentrated disadvantage, and recidivism: A test of interaction effects. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 38, 538–544.
- Western, B. (2002). The impact of incarceration on wage mobility and inequality. *American Sociological Review*, 67, 528-546.
- Winnick, T. A., and Bodkin, M. (2008). Anticipated stigma and stigma management among those to be labeled “ex-con”. *Deviant Behavior*, 29(4), 295-333.

Appendix

Interview Guide for Recidivists

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master of Philosophy in Social Work, I am conducting a research on the topic “factors contributing to recidivism among inmates in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison”. I would be pleased if you could spend a few minutes of your time. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose.

Background Information

Age

Educational level

Marital status

Ethnic origin

Why People Repeatedly Commit Crime

Employment history

Types of crime committed

Reasons why they engaged in those criminal activities

On what grounds were u convicted on all occasions

Relationship with family before and after being convicted

Prison conditions

Access to rehabilitation programs

Skills acquired and its usefulness when discharged

Means of income during first discharge

Challenges ex-convicts face in the community

Factors that lead to recidivism

What can be done to prevent recidivism?

Types of Stigmatization and Discrimination Ex-convicts Experience

Stigmatization and discrimination associated with convicts and ex-convicts

Causes of stigmatization and discrimination against convicts and ex-convicts.

What can be done to prevent stigmatization and discrimination against ex-convicts?

Interview Guide for Rehabilitation Prison Officers

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master of Philosophy in Social Work, I am conducting a research on the topic “factors contributing to recidivism among inmates in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison”. I would be pleased if you could spend a few minutes of your time. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose.

Background Information

Level of education

Marital status

Shed Light on the Challenges Prison Officers face in Rehabilitating Offenders

Availability of rehabilitation programs to recidivists

Types of rehabilitation programs

Challenges faced by prison officers in rehabilitating offenders

Effectiveness of rehabilitation programs

Best form of rehabilitation programs

Appropriate setting for rehabilitation

Importance of rehabilitation

Impacts of prison on the individual offender

Factors that lead to re-offending

Prison conditions

How can re-offending be reduced?

Types of Stigmatization and Discrimination Ex-convicts Experience

Stigmatization and discrimination associated with convicts and ex-convicts

Causes of stigmatization and discrimination against convicts and ex-convicts.

What can be done to prevent stigmatization and discrimination against ex-convicts?

Interview Guide for Nsawam Community Members

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master of Philosophy in Social Work, I am conducting a research on the topic “factors contributing to recidivism among inmates in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison”. I would be pleased if you could spend a few minutes of your time. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose.

Background Information

Level of education

Marital status

Perceptions of the Public about Ex-convicts and its Effects on Recidivism

Perceptions about convicts and ex-convicts

Relationship with ex-convict before and after incarceration

Paying visit to a convicted prisoner

Effectiveness of rehabilitation programs

Appropriate setting for rehabilitation

Importance of rehabilitation

Impacts of prison on the individual offender

Challenges ex-convicts face in the community

Views on prison conditions

Causes of recidivism

What can be done to prevent recidivism?

Types of Stigmatization and Discrimination Ex-convicts Experience

Stigmatization and discrimination associated with convicts and ex-convicts

Causes of stigmatization and discrimination against convicts and ex-convicts.

What can be done to prevent stigmatization and discrimination against ex-convicts?

Interview Guide for Prosecutors

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for Master of Philosophy in Social Work, I am conducting a research on the topic “factors contributing to recidivism among inmates in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison”. I would be pleased if you could spend a few minutes of your time. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose.

Background Information

Level of education

Marital status

Years of working

Why People Repeatedly Commit Crime

Prison conditions and its impact on the individual offender

Societal perceptions on convicts and ex-convicts

Best form of rehabilitation

Appropriate settings for rehabilitation

Types of offenders who re-offend

Challenges faced by ex-convicts in the community

Factors that contribute to re-offending

What can be done to prevent recidivism?

Types of Stigmatization and Discrimination Ex-convicts Experience

Stigmatization and discrimination associated with convicts and ex-convicts

Causes of stigmatization and discrimination against convicts and ex-convicts.

What can be done to prevent stigmatization and discrimination against ex-convicts?