



Exploring parole in rehabilitating offenders: A
study in the Brits area of
the North West Province

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Declaration

I, Olebogeng Letlape, do hereby declare that: *Exploring parole in rehabilitating offenders: A study of Brits Area in the North West Province* is entirely my own work, with the exception of quotations and references which have been attributed to their authors. This thesis has not been submitted to this, or any other, university elsewhere for the award of a degree.

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Abstract

This study explores parole as a privilege for offenders who have served a portion of their sentence in incarceration and as a way of rehabilitating and successfully reintegrating them into society. The study examines whether Brits Community Corrections parole services meets the rehabilitation needs of the offenders and explores how parole is executed in rehabilitating offenders. Given the extent of the aging parole system at Brits and in South Africa in general, and the rampant nature of crime in Brits, recidivism and the challenges facing parolees are critically discussed. The question of whether parole services still serve the purpose of rehabilitating offenders at Brits Community Corrections, as intended, is raised and is central to the study and guides the discussion of the findings. This study employs a qualitative research approach based on interviews with four parole officials and five parolees who have been on parole since the year 2019, which enables an exploration of the qualities of desistance. The study utilises purposive sampling and the data are analysed using thematic data analysis. The findings are textually presented, compared, and backed by existing literature. The conclusions and recommendations made are based on the themes and sub-themes that emerged from discussions with the participants during the study. The overall objectives and aims of the study have been met and the results in chapter four answer the research questions that were raised.

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Chapter 1

Orientation and Background to the Study

1.1 Introduction

Crime is a social problem, not only in South Africa but all over the world. As such, South Africa uses community corrections in correctional centres as an alternative to rehabilitate offenders and make them law abiding citizens in their communities. The term “community corrections” is defined as community sentences and models that provide alternatives to imprisonment (Ndike, 2014:21). Community corrections ensure that there is successful reintegration of offenders in the community through supervision and monitoring. Correctional supervision includes the parole officials going to communities to ensure that parolees and probationers are complying with their sentence plan and the conditions given to them. Parole falls under community corrections and is a sentence that is served in the community after serving half of the sentence in prison. According to South African law, there are two alternatives to incarceration which are correctional supervision and parole. Both are exercised by the Department of Correctional Services and together are known as community corrections (Department of Correctional Services, 2018). Parole, as part of the reward system for progress in rehabilitation, is a key part of community corrections because of its management of offenders’ re-integration (Magadze, 2016:79).

Cilliers (cited by Mujuzi, 2011:206) states that parole is about “rewarding offenders for complying with their sentence plan and participating in rehabilitation programmes and combating recidivism by ensuring the gradual re-integration of offenders.” Offenders that serve their sentence in the community are not expected to reoffend as the process is intended to rehabilitate them so as to leave a life of crime and become law abiding citizens; however, correctional centres struggle with managing the numbers of new cases and with offenders who have been under correctional services for offending more than once, called recidivism (Zara & Farrington, 2015). According to Zara and Farrington (2015), recidivism is the official criminal involvement of a person who after being convicted for an offence commits another crime. Communities that suffer from high rates of crime and the government at large often make efforts to devise ways to reduce crime and the rate of recidivism.

Recidivism rates vary worldwide. It was reported that Sweden had a 43% reconviction rate between 2005 and 2015, while in Norway, 2-year recidivism rates increased from 14% to 42% from 2010 to 2011 (Fazel & Wolf, 2015:6). According to Khwela (2015:407), recent studies show that general figures for recidivism indicate that 50% to 70% of inmates reoffend

within a period of three years. There are no specific statistics on the rate of recidivism in South Africa; however, the rate of crime continues to rise. For example, the total number of crimes committed in Brits, in the North West Province, increased from 4 856 reported crimes in 2016 to 9 466 in 2017 (Crime Stats SA, 2017). This increase of crime in the Brits area, which doubled in a space of one year, calls for systematic social inquiry.

While the South African Police Service is responsible for creating a safe and secure environment for all citizens in South Africa according to the South African Police Service Act, 1995 (Act No. 68 of 1995), the Department of Correctional Services complements it by contributing to a peaceful and secure country through incarceration of inmates, and rehabilitation and social integration of offenders (Department of Correctional Services, 2018). These two departments are responsible for ensuring that the rate of crime decreases and that South African communities are safe from criminals (Department of Correctional Services, 2018).

For a long period of time, parole services have been in place in South Africa to assist in rehabilitation of offenders by facilitating re-integration of offenders gradually into their communities by making them serve a portion of their sentence under community corrections. Community corrections aim to provide interventions that contribute to the reintegration of offenders as people who will abide by the law in their communities (Department of Correctional Services, 2018). The question that can be asked is whether the parole system, as a method of rehabilitating offenders, is effective enough to reduce recidivism among offenders receiving parole services. Against this brief background, this study only focuses on parole as a form of community corrections in Brits, in North West Province.

1.2 Rationale for the study

Currently, South Africa uses parole as one of the alternatives to rehabilitate offenders and to allow them to become law-abiding citizens. However, a lot of parolees still reoffend which leads to the question of whether the parole system works effectively as per its mandated goal. Therefore, the findings of this study may be beneficial in providing Correctional Services with useful information that will assist with strengthening the current parole system and by contributing to their policies pertaining to parole as a form of community corrections.

1.3 Statement of the research problem

Offenders serve a portion of their sentence in custody and another portion as parolees in their communities and are not expected to reoffend especially when they are under parole which falls under community correctional supervision. The purpose of community correctional supervision is to protect the community and to prevent recidivism by ensuring control and effective supervision of offenders (Department of Correctional Services, 2018). Besides the issue of reoffending, it is noteworthy that parolees who are placed within society are also often stigmatised and face several challenges in the community, which triggers reoffending (Chikadzi, 2017:290). This is especially the case in the Brits area where despite rehabilitation, offenders are less accepted and find they experiencing socio-economic issues which in turn leads to unsuccessful parole. The problem also derives from the increase of crime at Brits.

1.4 Research questions

The main research question is:

1. Does parole contribute to rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders in the community of Brits, North West Province?

To answer the main research question, the following secondary questions are also investigated:

2. How do parolees experience rehabilitation and reintegration into their community through the parole system?
3. How do parole officials conceptualise parole in the rehabilitation of offenders and reintegration into the community?

1.5 Aim and objectives of the study

The study wants to explore how parole assists in rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders in the community of Brits in the North West Province.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set:

1. To explore if parole is successful in the rehabilitation and reintegrating of offenders into the Brits community.
2. To explore the experiences of parolees concerning rehabilitation and reintegration into their community.

3. To conceptualise the views of parole officials concerning the parole system in rehabilitating offenders and reintegrating them in the community.

1.6 Conceptual and theoretical framework

Below are the theories that assist in understanding the phenomena in the study.

1.6.1 Ecosystem theory

Paulson (2013:6) asserts that the ecosystem theory focuses on the person-in-environment and is vital when understanding ex-offenders and the world around them and in reducing recidivism. Ecosystem theory emphasises that environmental factors play an important role in human development (Tica, 2014:9). According to Esmali, Zieyaei, Khaje and Barantvand (2011:163), the issue of crime is not limited to the person and family, but rather the entire society. This shows that each system is dependent on another and, as Teater (2014:21a) maintains, indicates that the parts of the system are interconnected and interdependent so that a transition or movement in one part of the system causes a change in the other parts. Offenders' problems or their unacceptable behaviour may be caused or influenced by systems in their environment. The emphasis of the ecosystem theory on the person-in-environment makes it possible in this study to link and connect individuals, families, and the entire community environment (Teater, 2014:26b) and how they influence each other in rehabilitation of offenders and re-integrating them into their communities.

1.6.2 Social disorganisation theory

The point of departure for the social disorganisation theory is that criminal activity among people is a "normal response to abnormal conditions" (Bond, 2015:1). Conditions such as poverty, filth and decaying living conditions and increased level of ethnic mixing are fertile predictive conditions for criminal thought and activity. In Brits area, this theory finds assertion as the community is bordered by mining activities and neighbourhood characterised by a mix of poverty and ethnic diversity and dilapidated shacks. The existence of social disorganisations can also be understood to occur when rules are missing, when there are contradictory rules and when conformity to rules is not rewarded or punished accordingly (Inderbitzin, Bates & Gainey, 2016). This becomes a collapse of community-based controls such as the parole system as community-based corrections in South Africa.

1.6.3 Classical approach

The classical approach holds a notion that people should be sentenced according to what they have done and not be sentenced based on the level of likelihood that they might reoffend (Carrabine, Lee, Plummer & South, 2009:58). Social scientists such as Von Hirsch (cited by Carrabine et al. 2009:58) argue that people seek self-interest and that if there is a threat of punishment, the act of crime can be deterred notwithstanding the fact that if they want to commit crime they will. This means that people in disregard of punishment commensurate to the offense can still reoffend. This leaves the researcher with a question of whether the parole system as an alternative to corrections is effective enough to deter parolees from re-offending.

1.6.4 Social constructivist theory

According to Teater (2014:76), social constructivism is based on the premises that individuals' realities are continually transforming and adapting to their experiences which they encounter in their lives. The debate lies in how people create knowledge and meaning of a phenomenon within a specific context. Within this context, problems are defined differently and solutions to problems thereafter constructed differently. Social constructionists assert that humans produce knowledge and meaning in relation to their experiences and their ideas (Mogashoa, 2014:52). Following this line of thought, this study adopts the social constructivism approach to understand how the participants of the study conceptualise parole as an alternative method of rehabilitating offenders. The methodology of this study commits to this approach.

1.7 Anticipated value of the study

The study is indirectly beneficial to the community of Brits by contributing to the rehabilitation of offenders placed in it. This study contributes to the academic field in terms of developing the existing body of knowledge and theoretical frameworks on criminal justice. The findings of the study inform social work practice in terms of what can be improved to enhance the parole system for rehabilitation of offenders and to enhance their re-integration into society.

1.8 Scope and limitations of the study

The purpose of the study is to explore how the parole system is beneficial in terms of rehabilitating parolees and ensuring that they become law-abiding citizens. The study also

exposes the reality of parolees in the community and how community corrections ensure that rehabilitation continues to take place to curb the rate of recidivism. After exploring the process of rehabilitation and evaluating its effectiveness, the study is able to close the gaps in knowledge by providing recommendations.

A limitation of the study was the challenge of collecting data owing to the limited personal interactions imposed by COVID-19 restrictions. To ensure that data were collected for the purpose of the study, the researcher ensured compliance with all COVID-19 regulations.

Another ethical consideration is that offenders are deemed a vulnerable group and therefore it was of paramount importance that the researcher caused no harm and ensured the maintenance of confidentiality and a non-judgemental attitude. The last limitation is that the study was only undertaken in Brits therefore further research is required to determine whether the findings can be applied to the broader South African community.

1.9 Research design and methodology

The study employs a qualitative research methodology which seeks to understand the experiences of human beings and aims to explore and explain how or why a phenomenon arises (Mohajan, 2018:2). Qualitative research was suitable for this study because it assisted the researcher in collecting information about how parole works in rehabilitating offenders with the motive of creating understanding of the phenomenon (Mohajan, 2018:2). Therefore, the research design used in this study was an exploratory descriptive design.

Exploratory descriptive design is a research design that aims to describe phenomena by exploring them from the participants' perspective (Hunter, McCallum & Howes, 2018). This approach was regarded as suitable for this study because it enabled the researcher to explore the views of participants who are involved in and part of the parole system which, in turn, generated information for future research and created informed insights of the changes needed in the parole system. This research design is consistent with Social Constructivist theory to which this study is committed. Social constructivism holds that people give and attach different interpretations to a phenomenon due to different lenses they use and experience (Teater, 2014).

In this study, the population comprised key informants at Brits Community Corrections including social workers and parole officers. The study population also comprised offenders who have been on parole since the year 2019. A purposive sampling method was used to identify primary participants who have personal experiences with parole, either through being

parolees or parole officials (parole officers and social workers). Other sampling techniques could not ensure this. Purposive sampling implies choosing participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question (Etikan, Sulaiman & Alkassim, 2016:2). Therefore, owing to the geographical scope of the study, only Brits Correctional parole officers, social workers and parolees who have been on parole since the year 2018 were selected.

According to Kothari (2014:18), data analysis occurs after the data have been collected and requires a number of closely related operations such as establishment of categories, the application of these categories to raw data through coding, tabulation and then drawing textual inferences. A thematic data analysis method was used in this study. Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3352) define thematic data analysis as the process of identifying themes within qualitative data. The researcher transcribed the collected data by listening to the audio recorded interviews to produce meaningful information. The raw data was classified into purposeful thematic categories which guided data presentation and analysis. Finally, the information was backed and compared with existing literature.

1.10 Ethical considerations

To conduct the research, permission was obtained from the Department of Correctional Services through sending a research ethical clearance application accompanied by the research proposal as well as ethical clearance from the Health Research Ethics Committee which is compulsory for them to grant permission (Department of Correctional Service, 2018). All supporting compulsory documents for the research application were submitted and approved before engaging the participants in the study. Consequently, the researcher was able to conduct the interviews with personnel from Brits Community Corrections.

The manager of Brits Community Corrections centre acted as a mediator between the researcher and the social workers and parole officers and took a role in forming a working relationship between the researcher and them. Introductory meetings were held with parole officers, social workers, and parolees to familiarise the potential participants with the study before seeking their consent to participate. The parole officers took a role of mediator between the researcher and the parolees because they are the ones who facilitate weekly meetings and ensure that the parolees have all the necessary support to be well reintegrated.

The researcher explained to the participants the purpose of the research, the interview process, the risk and benefits of the research and how participants would be protected (in

both English and Tswana languages). This was done verbally, and participants were then given consent forms where all the information was also written. It was explained to the participants that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage which was also included in the written consent forms.

To maintain confidentiality, participants were ensured that the information they provided would not be divulged to third parties except for those relevant with the consent of the participants. Participants' names, identities, addresses, and any identifying information linking the data to the participants is not used in the study. Publication of the results was shared with participants.

1.11 Outline of chapters

Chapter 1: Background and context

Chapter 1 provides an introduction of the study; provides a general overview of the study and outlines the purpose of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter consists of the literature review undertaken based on the topic and provides a theoretical framework to explain the phenomenon of the study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 3 details the methods that were used in the research process, including the research approach and design.

Chapter 4: Data presentation, interpretation and analysis of research findings

The fourth chapter presents the findings of the researcher as well as the analysis of those findings.

Chapter 5: Discussion of research findings and conclusions and recommendations

The final chapter summarises the findings and draws conclusions. Recommendations as well as the limitations of the study are deliberated.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of a literature review is to provide a comprehensive overview of literature related to a particular study through critically analysing the literature and relevant theories, and by identifying gaps therein (Paul & Criado, 2020:6). The processes of parole, as applied to rehabilitating offenders, is a phenomenon that has been researched and reviewed by other scholars in the past years. Through a review of the pertinent literature, this chapter provides an overview of the parole system globally and compares it with the situation in South Africa. Legislation pertaining to parole, as well as the development of the correctional system and parole in South Africa are reviewed, followed by a discussion on the purpose parole serves in terms of rehabilitating offenders.

2.2 Professionals' conception of parole

The concept of parole evolved through the juvenile justice movements of the 18th and 19th centuries. After becoming interested in the topic of young people and crime and becoming familiar with the situation in jails, key members of society became concerned that incarcerating juvenile and adult offenders together created future criminals. They advocated for separate juvenile institutions focused on both reform and societal protection. During that time, all juvenile reformatories were constructed with the intention of transforming neglected and incorrigible adolescents into law-abiding citizens by instilling order, self-control, and discipline in them (Reitz & Rhine, 2020:290). It was reported that the state would be repaid significantly for the enormous expenditure on the juvenile parole system (Reitz & Rhine 2020:283).

The reform movement spread quickly throughout the United States. As the name implies, the goal of reformatories was to encourage reform rather than punish. The main features were indefinite sentences, a grading system to track each inmate's development, and parole for those who demonstrated that they benefited from the reformation programme (Moffa et al., 2019:77; Young, 2016:433). The juvenile justice reform movement's parole system incorporated ideas from a medical paradigm, which viewed crime and delinquency as manifestations of sickness and disease, and thus treatable in both theory and practice. The

importance of focusing on prevention and treatment cannot be overstated because they are powerful justifications for coordinating social action (Harding et al., 2017:11107).

Since the establishment of jails, correctional officers have attempted to connect with the medical profession (Yekini et al., 2013:103). Adult correctional and parole authorities received imagery of pathology, infection, and treatment from the medical profession. They did not regard themselves as mere caretakers of the underclass, as Social Darwinism and Positivist doctrines would have it. According to Hargovan (2015: 57), correctional officers' self-image as doctors rather than guards aided in the acceptance of therapeutic tactics in prisons and jails. In reality, physicians such as Benjamin Rush and Isaac Ray were among the first American writers on crime and delinquency, laying the groundwork for the first official discourse on criminal reform. Cesare Lombroso, a physician and the author of "*L'Uomo delinquente*", or "*The Criminal Man*", claimed to have discovered the origins of crime, making him one of the most influential figures in nineteenth-century criminology (Brookes, 2021).

The goal of parole supervision was never to revoke parole, but rather to assess parolees' progress on a regular basis and make appropriate improvements (Schaefer & Brewer, 2022: 276). The concept of parole was founded on the assumption that the primary goal of correction is to rehabilitate offenders, and that decisions affecting inmates should be tailored to them on an individual basis (Tonry, 2019:2). Prolonged alienation from family and social networks combined with reduced pre-release planning and vocational and educational programmes results in longer periods of detachment from family and social networks, making reintegration more difficult (Gisler et al., 2018:6).

Parole as a concept was introduced into South Africa in 1991. With the enactment of section 276A(3)(a)(ii) of the Criminal Procedure Act, the legislature brought an uncommon, and at the time alien idea into the area of South African criminal law. The aforementioned provided for cases in which an incarcerated offender could approach the trial court after serving a certain minimum period as prescribed by the relevant Correctional Services Act in order for the court a quo to reconsider the sentence originally imposed and, among other competent sentences, convert the remainder of the offender's sentence to correctional supervision (Myburgh, 2017:1). Since then, this clause has been widely adopted in the country's court system, albeit with some objections. The use of correctional supervision, or parole, has been mainly perceived as a method of alleviating the pressure caused by overcrowding in prisons. This system was also aimed at returning to the traditional responses to crime, which is victim reparation (Myburgh, 2017:4).

2.3 Theoretical framework

The main theoretical frameworks underpinning the concept of parole are the ecosystem, social disorganisation, classical approach, and social constructivist theories. These are discussed in detail below.

2.3.1 Ecosystem theory

Commencing with Mary Richmond in 1917, social scientists have understood that the environment plays a significant role in the lives of people (Teater, 2014:164). This concept or theory has been redefined over the 20th century till date. In most instance, social workers have focused primarily on one aspect, either the person or the environment, which has led to inadequate results. Social workers tend to be more prone to focussing on intrapersonal issues, with less focus on the transactional problems impacted by environmental issues. The ecosystem theory is therefore critical when it comes to recidivism.

Paulson (2013:6) asserts that the ecosystem theory focuses on the person-in-environment and is vital to understanding ex-offenders and the world around them and to reducing recidivism. The ecosystem theory emphasises that environmental factors play an important role in human development (Tica, 2014:9). The issue of crime is not limited to the person and family, but to the entire society. This shows that each system is dependent on another and Teater (2014:21) maintains that the parts of the system are interconnected and interdependent, meaning that a transition or movement in one part of the system causes a change in the other parts. Offenders' problems or their unacceptable behaviour may be caused or influenced by systems in their environment. The emphasis of ecosystem theory on the person-in-environment makes it possible to link and connect individuals, families and the entire community's environment (Teater, 2014:26) and how they influence each other in rehabilitation of offenders and reintegration of them into their communities.

As demonstrated in Figure 1 below, an individual's health is within a microsystem which comprises the family, peers, church and school. This microsystem is then influenced by the mesosystem, then the exosystem and finally the macrosystem. All these different environments can significantly impact the individual. The ecosystem theory, according to Johnson (2008:2 as referenced by Dube, 2016), provides a comprehensive knowledge of how individuals connect to their environment, which affects them, and how they impact the same environment. The interplay of systems such as individuals, groups, communities, and

culture is emphasized as a primary driver of the positive and bad outcomes of such interactions (Johnson, 2008:3, as cited by Dube, 2016).

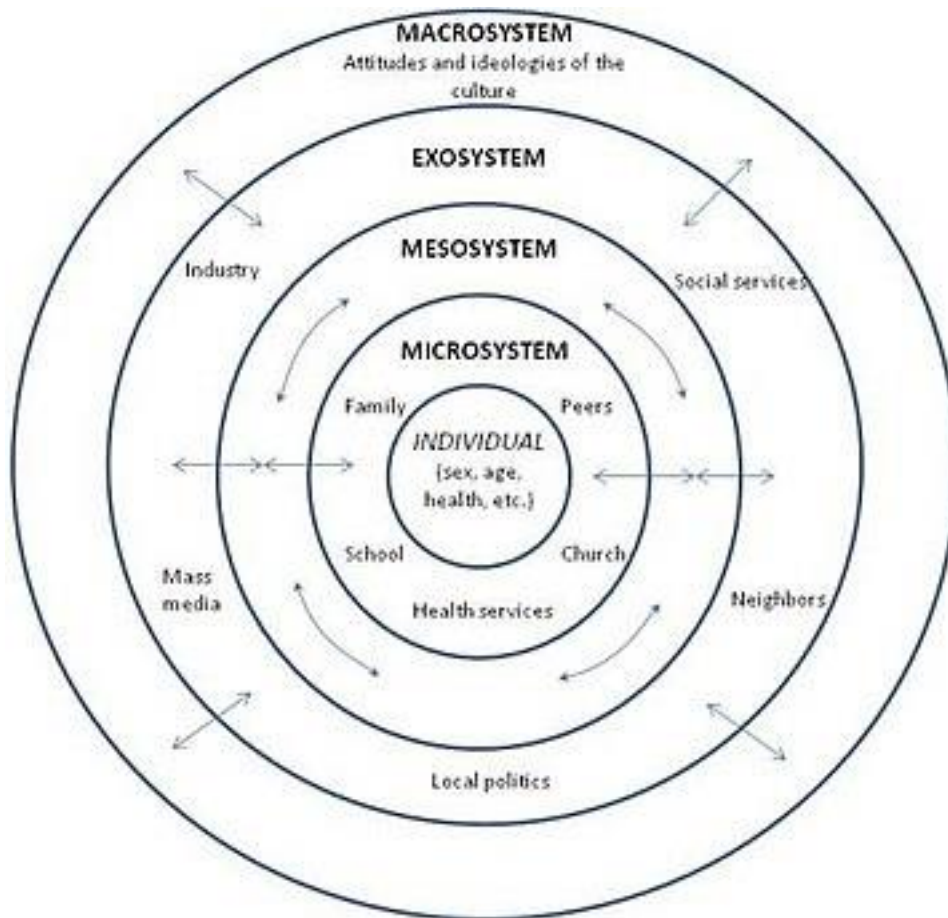


Figure 1: Diagram describing the ecosystem theory in social sciences (Adapted from Letlape, 2018)

2.3.2 Social disorganisation theory

According to social disorganisation theory, crime and disorder are caused by weak local regulations at the neighbourhood level (Wolff et al., 2018). As a result, some communities find it difficult to self-regulate. Social disorganisation theorists have generally neglected the influence of public, or state, control on processes of neighbourhood organisation and consequent chances for crime in their research of neighbourhood-level control. This is because formal public regulations are viewed as a reaction to crime. Nonetheless, there is obviously a link between the usage of local and public restrictions. When local controls are weakened, communities must rely more on state controls. This is due, in part, to the increased crime in these places, which necessitates the additional strength of official law

enforcement in their reaction to crime (Anderson et al., 2020). However, enhanced state efforts may transfer control resources from local to public, making state actions even more vital. For example, in high-crime communities, concentrating police operations drives out a huge proportion of inhabitants.

The point of departure for social disorganisation theory is that criminal activity among people is a “normal response to abnormal conditions” (Bond, 2015:1). Conditions such as poverty, filth and decaying living conditions, and increased levels of ethnic mixing are fertile predictive conditions for criminal thought and activity. In the Brits area, this theory finds assertion as the community is bordered by mining activities and neighbourhoods are characterised by a mix of poverty, ethnic diversity, and dilapidated shacks. The existence of social disorganisations is also understood to occur when rules are missing, when there are contradictory rules, and when conformity to rules is not rewarded or punished accordingly (Inderbitzin, Bates & Gainey, 2016). This causes a collapse of community-based controls such as the parole system in South Africa.

2.3.3 Classical approach

The traditional criminological viewpoint describes crime as a free-will decision to engage in illegal behaviour. This decision is made using the pain-pleasure principle, which states that individuals act in ways that maximize pleasure while minimizing suffering. Classicists think that individuals are hedonistic, seeking pleasure at all costs and avoiding misery. According to classical thought, the best approach to prevent crime is by deterrence - the threat of arrest and punishment (Valasik, 2014). The classical approach holds a notion that people should be sentenced according to what they have done and not to be sentenced based on the level of likelihood that they might reoffend (Opp, 2020:261). Social scientists such as Von Hirsch (cited by Dancig-Rosenberg & Dagan, 2019:131) argue that people seek self-interest and that if there is a threat of punishment, the act of crime can be deterred notwithstanding the fact that if they want to commit crime they will. This means that people in disregard of punishment commensurate to the offense can still reoffend, which begs the question of whether the parole system, as an alternative to corrections, is effective enough to deter parolees from re-offending.

A traditional approach relies on "regular actions" or "situational crime prevention." This viewpoint focuses on "criminal contexts" (that is, conditions favourable to organized crime activities) rather than on individual or group reasons. This approach analyses the availability of possibilities to commit certain crimes and seeks to reduce them through, for example, greater urban redevelopment and environmental design. This strategy is founded on the

principle of regular activities, or the notion that levels of organized crime are influenced by a number of enabling conditions, including the availability of appealing targets and chances, a low degree of supervision, and a low risk of arrest (Van Koppen, 2013).

2.3.4 Social constructivist theory

According to Teater (2014:76), social constructivism is based on the premise that individuals' realities are continually transforming and adapting to the experiences in their lives. The theory's origins may be traced back to two opposing philosophical traditions: interpretative and structuralist. As a result, numerous social constructionist aspects exist for criminology, as well as other social sciences, to examine and expand on. It is suggested that modern social constructionism provides potential answers to concerns at the forefront of criminological study. The ageless question of what constitutes a crime, as well as other pressing issues brought by actual social conditions and the intra-scientific state of affairs, are central (Alitavoli & Kaveh, 2018:3).

The debate lies in how people create knowledge and meaning of a phenomenon within a specific context. Within this context, problems are defined differently and thereafter, solutions to them are constructed differently. Social constructionists assert that humans produce knowledge and meaning in relation to their experiences and their ideas (Mogashoa, 2014:52). Following that line of thought, this study adopts the social constructivism approach in understanding how the participants of the study conceptualise parole as an alternative method of rehabilitating offenders. The methodology of this study makes commitment to this approach.

2.4 An overview of parole

This section of the literature review provides a discussion on the parole system globally and in South Africa. It creates a proper orientation to the reader about the parole system and draws on the conceptualisation of the system in specific contexts where it has been developed.

2.4.1 Parole systems in Western countries

The parole system varies across nations although there are many similarities in the fact that parole brings about social reintegration of offenders to their societies with the assumption that they have become responsible citizens. This study investigates how the parole system operates across the world to understand the phenomenon under research.

In Sweden, parole refers to the required release and community supervision of offenders, once two-thirds of their prison sentence is served (Basset, 2016:8). The Swedish parole system adopts a strategy of having layman supervisors who volunteer to help monitor and give social support to the offenders on a weekly basis. This helps to reduce the workload and ensures that parolees and probationers get support (Basset, 2016:8). The present Swedish correctional values aim to be resistant to future social and political changes by maintaining long-term approaches to rehabilitation and detention (Basset, 2016:8). It is important to note that parole release does not mean one is completely free; it is still part of the crime sentence to ensure that one is integrated back into the community as a better citizen. Therefore, there is supervision and monitoring to ensure that the offender abides by the law and does not reoffend. Sweden, like other countries, makes use of electronic monitoring to track offenders and to ensure that they comply with their parole conditions. Sweden shows evidence that electronic monitoring serves the ultimate purpose of parole, which is to ensure that the offender is reintegrated into society because it is believed that they are rehabilitated (Basset, 2016:24). All efforts made to ensure that a parolee is well monitored in the community are there to reduce the rate of recidivism and to ensure that the society is safe. Basset (2016:24) furthermore suggests that Sweden is far ahead of Canada when it comes to electronic monitoring, and that it brings the best results when it comes to the issue of recidivism in Sweden.

According to the Prisons Department director-general, Datuk Sri Zulkifli Omar, the Malaysian parole system has proved to be successful in reducing the rate of recidivism (Malay Mail, 2020). According to Hassan, Othman and Hammin (2017:60), the parole system in Malaysia was presented in 2007 through the amendment of the Prison Act of 1995 and was enforced in 2008. However, it depends on the severity of crimes committed for one to be eligible for parole. Those who have committed crimes such as murder, rape, incest, and offences related to kidnapping and possession of firearms are not eligible (Hammin et al. 2017:60). It shows that the eligibility of parole is dependent on many factors, one of which is that the offender is rehabilitated and has shown good behaviour. Criminology is thus important to understanding behavioural and risk factors which inform the decisions on who qualifies for parole and whether the offender will be a danger to the community.

The director-general of Sweden's prison and probation service understands that prison is not for punishment but to rehabilitate people who have broken the law to be better people (James, 2014). It can be concluded that most countries have realised that criminal behaviour cannot be deterred by harsh punishment; rather, the correctional phenomenon of rehabilitating offenders to be people who will abide by the laws in societies is what helps. This

has been proven in Sweden which since 2004 has closed 56 prisons and reduced the number of prisoners from 5 722 to 4 500 out of a population of 9.5 million people (James, 2014).

In most countries, people who break the law are viewed and labelled as criminals or offenders; however, this is not the case in Sweden. In Sweden, people who break the law are primarily seen as people with needs and need to be helped for their behaviour to be corrected (James, 2014). This approach demonstrates that underlying problems or factors that lead to criminal behaviour are understood and taken into consideration to try to eliminate those problems. This needs based approach is similar to the South African correctional system which, according to the White Paper (2005:61) Rule 66(1) of the Standard Minimum Rules, suggests: *“To these ends, all appropriate means shall be used , including religious care in the countries where this is possible, education, vocational guidance and training, social casework, employment counselling, physical development and strengthening of moral character, in accordance with the individual needs of each prisoner , taking account of his (or her) social and criminal history, his (or her) physical and mental capacities and aptitudes, his personal temperament, the length of his (or her) sentence and his (or her) prospects after release.”*

Understanding each offender’s background and factors that led to criminal behaviour helps to bring about proper and relevant rehabilitation of inmates. The most intriguing thing about Sweden from which most countries should learn, is how the country manages to keep its recidivism rate low and how it deals with overcrowding in prisons which otherwise hinders rehabilitation. Sweden prioritises reintegration instead of incarceration. Inmates in Sweden take part in occupational activities during incarceration (Kindgret & Littman, 2015:5). These may range from farming to woodwork, and help to reduce recidivism and conflict amongst inmates and the staff (Kindgret & Littman, 2015:5). Occupational activities not only help to reduce conflict inside the prison, but they equip inmates with skills that they can use to make an honest living when they get integrated into society. The perception of reintegration held in Sweden may be the reason why their recidivism rate remains low compared to the United States. According to Kriminalvarden (2015), Sweden’s recidivism rate has decreased from 40% to 31% from 2000 to 2011.

It was reported that the United States had 1 561 500 people incarcerated in the year 2014 (Hedstrom, 2018:6), which is relatively high compared to Sweden. The high rate of incarceration causes overcrowding in prisons, which then become non-conducive spaces for rehabilitation just as an overcrowded classroom becomes an unfavourable space to learn and foments discipline issues. As with any environment where a system is implemented, it is

important to ascertain whether the system introduced is effective. The above speaks to the fact that the success of a parole system is not only dependent on the individual to whom parole is granted, but is also heavily dependent on the support that accompanies such a term of parole and best aids parolees with the potential for full rehabilitation.

In essence, it becomes futile to implement parole without ensuring that the necessary support structures are in place, and it therefore makes it even more important to ensure that regardless of the number of parolees that exist in a particular legal system, the correctional system is able to support those parolees adequately and sufficiently. This is also to circumvent instances of recidivism and to ensure that the rest of society is sufficiently protected if persons are granted parole. It cannot be that because a person is granted parole and ultimately is given an opportunity to be reintegrated into society that the society itself be in danger of any sort. Hence one of the key objectives of the correctional system in South Africa is to make sure that there is public safety from offenders (White Paper, 2005:44). That can be done through monitoring of offenders under community corrections.

When looking at England, it is important to note that the parole system came about because of the failure of the British system of penal transportation (Tripathi, 2017:229). According to Tripathi (2017:229), the removal of the system of transportation of prisoners led to the overcrowding of British prisons. Therefore, a system known as "*Ticket on Leave*" was introduced with the aim of mitigating the overcrowded prisons problem (Tripathi,2017:229). However, this new system did not yield favourable results because prisoners were not provided with the necessary tools to aid in their reintegration back into society, which heightened the rate of recidivism. It therefore became necessary to make drastic changes that ultimately led to the system of parole that now exists (Tripathi,2017:229).

Tripathi (2017:229) further states that the following categories of persons in the current penal system in Britain are admitted for parole:

1. Persons that are incarcerated for serious offences and have a sentence that exceeds three years imposed. In this instance, the parolees are to report to the police every single month during the period of parole.
2. Persons who are repeat offenders and are consequently sentenced under the preventative detention laws.
3. Persons classified as juvenile delinquents who are held in reformatories or other establishments of that nature.

It must be noted that the parole practices in the United Kingdom have been criticised on three major points. Firstly, it is said that system of parole that is in place is not effective because a lot of people that enter the penal system do not leave such system reformed in any way. Instead, such people often leave the penal system insistent on committing a new set of crimes. Secondly, the lack of a definitive sentence period creates an uncertainty about how long a particular person will be incarcerated for or when such person will be released. Lastly, the parole decision-making policy is not explicit in its very nature (Tripathi, 2017:230). This, in essence, means that the boards and commissions responsible for the release of people operate in secret and do so according to policies that are not written down and are therefore not known to the public at large. This has the effect of contributing to a negative perception of the parole system in its entirety. Further to this, the lack of transparency that exists with regards to parole in the United Kingdom also contributes to a lack of confidence in the justice system as a whole.

2.4.2 Parole systems in African countries

Despite limited trials in Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, Tanzania, Lesotho, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, and Malawi, parole is rarely used in Africa, with the exception of Zimbabwe and South Africa, where a form of community service exists in possible association with sentence postponement (Parimah, 2015:17). However, with Western pressure, aid, and international expertise to develop compassionate alternatives to incarceration, Africa will almost certainly see an increase in community service or parole over the next decade. For example, an international conference co-organized by Penal Reform International and the Zimbabwe National Committee with representatives from 25 countries issued a declaration to champion the implementation of community service in their respective countries (Harris & Lo, 2002:430). This has the potential to significantly lead to an increased use of the parole system in Africa.

There are many considerations which need to be factored in before the implementation of a successful parole system. In Nigeria for instance, high rates of recidivism indicate that systems like parole need to be implemented against a backdrop of strict controls and measures to ensure an optimum level of full rehabilitation of prisoners.

A further consideration for implementing a parole system in African nations is prison overcrowding. Overcrowding not only makes operations and the daily running of correctional services difficult, but the overcrowded environmental conditions also affect the human rights of prisoners. Parole then becomes a consideration to alleviate the congestion in prisons.

It is important to note however, that this paper focuses on the parole system in South Africa with particular emphasis on Brits in the North West province. The development and characteristics of parole in South Africa are discussed next.

2.5 The development of parole in South Africa

Unlike in Europe where electronic monitoring of parolees occurs, South Africa has a lot to learn. The country does not have robust technology to use to raise the system to the global standard. South Africa needs to revisit its parole system and implement measures that accommodate the ever-changing technological times that we find ourselves in

Historically, South Africa operated on the notion that prisons were places of punishment which was executed through forced prison labour such as building roads (South African history online, 2017). In the early 1960s, the imprisonment of political detainees became a feature of South African prisons (South Africa history online, 2017). That is when the parole system was introduced. In 1993, the Interim Constitution of South Africa embodied the fundamental rights of the country's citizens, including those of offenders, which resulted in the introduction of the human rights culture into the country's correctional system (White Paper, 2005:28). The National Crime Prevention Strategy also adopted an integrated justice system approach aimed at making the criminal justice system more effective, which should ensure that the risk of reoffending is less (White Paper, 2005:10). The current focus is on rehabilitation of offenders to make them law-abiding citizens. Part of that rehabilitation is the reintegration of offenders into their communities by means of parole where they finish their sentences in the community.

Parole is a form of release that allows offenders to serve their sentence in the community under community corrections. According to The Correctional Services Act 111 of 2008, section 50(1) (a) (iii) (iv), the objectives of community corrections are to enable persons subject to community corrections to be rehabilitated in a way that best keeps them as a vital part of society; and to allow persons subject to community corrections to be fully integrated into society when they have completed their sentences.

Parole is an alternative to imprisonment; however, people on parole are still serving their sentence. Parole is seen as a privilege and not a right; offenders should comply with their sentence and be on good behaviour to qualify to be released on parole. According to the Correctional Services Act 11 of 2008, section 45(1), offenders who are to be placed in the community should first be prepared for placement and reintegration into society by participating in a pre-release programme. Offenders must comply by participating in certain

programmes to ensure rehabilitation or change of behaviour before they can be placed on parole.

According to the Department Correctional Services (2018), parolees should stay under supervision until their sentence expires and they should be involved in certain programmes if deemed necessary for the offender. The Parole Board decides if a person can be subject to parole (Department of Correctional services, 2018). There are different factors which the Parole Board considers when deciding who is eligible for parole. These factors include thorough assessments made by different professionals that ensure that the offender is rehabilitated, therefore reports of social workers and psychologists are of paramount importance. There are also tools used to assess the risk of offenders to the community before the board makes a decision. This is discussed in detail below.

2.6 Risk assessment in relation to criminal recidivism

It is critical that the term "risk" is defined in terms of criminal recidivism. For some, risk is associated with the severity of the crime, for example a felon poses a greater risk than a misdemeanour. However, even if a felon is convicted of a more serious crime than a misdemeanour, their likelihood of reoffending may be unrelated to the severity of the crime (Berk et al., 2021:5). In the case of this study, "risk" refers to the likelihood of reoffending. A low-risk offender is someone who has a low chance of committing a new offence (those offenders who are mostly altruistic and have few risk factors), whereas a high-risk offender has a significantly higher chance (offenders who are more antisocial, with a plethora of risk factors). In most actuarial sciences, the concept is applied similarly in corrections. For example, a non-smoker in his 40s pays less for life insurance than a smoker of the same age. Smokers pay more for insurance because they have a risk factor that is strongly linked to health concerns. Likewise, an offender who uses drugs while unemployed is more likely to reoffend than someone who does not use drugs while working full-time.

2.6.1 Risk, needs, and responsivity

Three fundamental principles in the evaluation process are risk, needs, and responsiveness. Each premise is discussed briefly below.

2.6.1.1 Risk principle

The concept of the risk principle comprises three major components as following (Lovins & Latessa, 2018:82; Duru et al., 2020:22):

- Pay special attention to offenders who are at a higher risk of recidivism.

- Provide the most extensive treatment to high-risk offenders.
- Intensive therapy for low-risk offenders can increase recidivism.

Since 2006, much research has been conducted to determine how the risk principle affects the effectiveness of a correctional programme. Consider this risk principle example: suppose that half of all convicts released from prison never return. About which half of the convict population should we be concerned? The obvious answer is the half comprising those who will be re-incarcerated, and it is to this group that we want to provide the most intensive programmes and services (because they pose the greatest risk of reoffending). A more troubling aspect of the risk principle is the idea that providing concentrated interventions to low-risk offenders may actually increase failure rates (Ashford & Gallagher, 2019:1149; Olsson et al., 2021:515).

The question is why a correctional intervention, or programme, can reduce recidivism in higher-risk offenders while having unexpected and unfavourable consequences for lower-risk offenders? When the following three explanations are considered, it is easy to see why low-risk offenders fail at a higher rate. Firstly, by putting low-risk offenders in more serious correctional programmes, they are likely being exposed to higher-risk offenders, and the learning that is conveyed therefrom is frequently harmful (Pei & Burke, 2018:271; Viglione & Taxman, 2018:1811). Therefore, in practice, combining high-risk and low-risk offenders is never a good idea. Secondly, putting low-risk offenders in highly structured, restrictive programmes disrupts the variables that make them low-risk in the first place. For example, if most people who are noble and generous were placed in a six-month correctional treatment programme, they would lose their jobs, their family life would be interrupted, their prosocial attitudes and contacts would be cut-off, and their neighbours replaced with peers whose thoughts are antisocial and who would most likely not throw a *"Welcome Home from the Correctional Programme"* get-together as soon as they returned. In other words, the rupture of prosocial networks would raise risk (Veale & Estrada-Hernandez, 2015). Thirdly, additional criteria such as IQ, maturity, and cognitive functioning may be involved (Altikriti, 2022:2; Capaldi et al., 2021:20). It is possible that some low-functioning, low-risk criminals are influenced by high-risk destructive criminals through more sophisticated means. In terms of corrections, this indicates that offenders who are low-risk should be recognized and placed out of intensive programmes in general. The first step in implementing the risk principle is to identify relevant targets (higher-risk offenders). To achieve the goal, organisations must evaluate offenders using standardised and objective risk assessment instruments. To be clear, this does not mean that low-risk criminals should not face consequences for their

actions; they did, after all, violate the law, but the intensity of those consequences should be less extreme.

2.6.1.2 Needs principle

Studies by several researchers have identified eight key risk factors associated with criminal behaviour (DeMichele et al., 2019:33; Olver & Wong, 2019:463; Kotelnikova et al., 2021:3).

1. Links with criminals and distancing from prosocial people.
2. Characteristics such as spontaneity, adventure, and pleasure-seeking.
3. A behavioural antisocial history.
4. Antisocial/criminal beliefs, principles, and attitudes.
5. Characteristics of family such as criminality in the family or a lack of love and unity.
6. A scarcity of prosocial recreational activities.
7. A lack of hypothetical, business, or commercial success.
8. Alcohol or mistreatment of drugs.

While all of them are important, it's worth noting that the first four are known as the "Big Four" and are the most significant risk factors in the set (Kotelnikova et al., 2021:3).

On scrutiny of the risk factors, it is apparent that some of them can be modified or changed, whereas others cannot. Criminality in the family, or prior criminalities, are two examples. Early initiation of criminal conduct, for example, is a very good predictor of future behaviour, but it is a risk factor that cannot be changed. If a person was arrested for the first time when they were ten, it is likely that they will be arrested again. If their was incarcerated, it may help explain why they are the way they are. Factors which cannot be changed are referred to as being static.

Factors that can be changed are referred to as dynamic. They comprise a criminal's companions, their beliefs and values, their lack of problem-solving abilities, their substance use, and their employment situation (Olver & Wong, 2019:463; Werth, 2019:3). All of these are associated with recidivism, and all of them can be altered. These dynamic elements are also referred to as criminogenic requirements, which are those that contribute to crime and are closely related to risk (Garner et al., 2021:1175; Allan, 2018:35). Combining static and dynamic components yields the most comprehensive picture of overall recidivism risk.

Researchers developed the need principle by applying a similar rationality to effective correctional intervention. It provides direction for determining what to target for change in an offender, namely dynamic characteristics or criminogenic demands that are strongly linked with criminal behaviour. Programmes should assess antisocial peer relationships, a lack of problem-solving, substance addiction, and self-control abilities, and target antisocial attitudes, a lack of empathy and other characteristics that are strongly linked to criminal behaviour (Chatila & Havens, 2019:12).

It is critical to remember that the majority of offenders are at high risk of recidivism due to a combination of risk and need factors. As a result, programmes that focus solely on one may fall short of the mark. While unemployment is associated with criminal behaviour in a number of probationers and parolees, it is not a significant risk factor in and of itself (Siwach, 2018:232; Carter, 2019:18). After all, if a person loses their job, most people would not start robbing people or peddling drugs; they would simply look for another one.

However, if someone believes they will not get a job, if they have no problem allowing someone else to support them, or if they believe they can make more money illegally in a day than legally in a month, being unemployed significantly increases their chances of offending. Identifying criminogenic needs is an important part of the offender risk assessment process because it points to where to concentrate efforts to lessen risk (How, 2018:3).

2.6.1.3 Responsivity principle

Personal appearances of an individual should frequently be considered in addition to risk factors, as these aspects can influence treatment engagement. These include mental and emotional difficulties, cognitive presentation, inspiration, and openness to change (Viglione, 2019:656; Pei & Burke, 2018:270). For example, an offender may be somewhat likely to offend, but due to a lack of cognitive functioning they would be ineffective or non-responsive in a programme that requires normal functioning. By evaluating these areas, the value of correctional therapy and criminal placement can often be improved.

2.6.2 Types of risk assessment tools

The three primary types of assessment tools used in corrections are screening instruments, thorough risk assessments, and specialized tools (Berk et al., 2021:23; Fazel & Wolf, 2018:42). Typically, screening tools are simple to use and complete. They are normally composed of static items (for example, prior arrests) and can assist in making in-or-out decisions (let go, announcement on recognizance, and so forth). Static instruments can also be used to categorise offenders into risk categories (low, moderate, or high) but their

application is limited because they do not detect criminogenic elements (Goel et al., 2021:11). Investigating specific topics using focused tools are frequently used to determine issues such as substance abuse, or to identify special populations like psychopaths, sex offenders, or mentally ill offenders (Campbell et al., 2018:527; Bourgon et al., 2018:170). These instruments may require specialized training to administer and they should be used in conjunction with more comprehensive risk assessments. If risk assessment indicates that substance abuse is a factor in an offender's behaviour, a more in-depth examination of this area using a tool which is designed specifically for the required purpose may be helpful.

Many governments develop an assessment process that incorporates all three types of evaluations. For example, a screening instrument could be used during pre-trial proceedings or to exclude low-risk criminals from further investigation. For offenders who continue to progress through the system and are at increased risk, a more comprehensive evaluation technique should be used. Specialized assessment is used on a "need-to-know" basis. Because not all offenders are thoroughly evaluated, those who appear to pose the greatest risk of reoffending should be scrutinized much more closely; this technique has the potential to improve efficiency (Desmarais et al., 2016:208).

2.6.3 Methods of risk assessment

The assessment process can be conducted in a variety of ways, depending on the instrument used. Some instruments, such as broadcast tools, rely heavily on data from files or records, but the person being evaluated may also be asked some questions (Braga et al., 2019:290; Oswald et al., 2018:225). The assessor examines the file or record, checks the necessary indicators, and then totals the scores to determine which risk category an offender belongs to. More comprehensive evaluation tools may require data filing and recording, as well as a structured interview with the offender or completion of a questionnaire. The majority of assessment tools entail gathering data on the offender through file review, interviews, questionnaires, and third-party information. However, concerns have been raised about the nature of the assessment process which can be addressed as follows (Eckhouse et al., 2019:187; Olver et al., 2014:943).

2.6.3.1 Reliability

One of the factors to consider when administering a risk assessment tool is its reliability or consistency. When a trustworthy tool is used, the same decisions are made about the same types of offenders, regardless of who is using it. This means that when multiple people examine the same criminal, their conclusions about the likelihood of reoffending should be comparable. This is usually easier to accomplish because static instruments frequently rely

on file or historical information (Graham et al., 2021:19; Barabas et al., 2018:64). When using instruments with dynamic aspects (such as assessing the offender's opinions or values), reliability is more of a concern, which is why training is so important. An instrument that is not trustworthy cannot be valid, but one that is reliable but not valid can be legitimate - we might all get the same conclusion yet be wrong. When this happens, the instrument is deemed invalid (Dressel & Farid, 2018:4; van Der Put et al., 2019:102).

2.6.3.2 Validity

While there are other types of validity, predictive validity - the instrument's ability to predict what it is meant to predict - is the one that risk assessment instruments are most concerned about. The relationship between the tool's score and some end measure, such as a new conviction, is commonly used to determine predictive validity; the higher the correlation, the more accurate the tool (van Der Put et al., 2019:103; Graham et al., 2021:20). Of course, no instrument is 100 percent accurate. Actuarial risk assessment, no matter how compelling the case, is not a perfect science. Although statistical risk assessment reduces uncertainty about an offender's likely future behaviour, it is susceptible to errors and should be used as a guideline rather than a mandate (Natoli et al., 2022:16). Even with large data sets and advanced analytical techniques, the best models can usually predict recidivism with about 70% accuracy as long as they are completed by trained personnel (van Der Put et al., 2019:103; Graham et al., 2021:21).

Assessment results contain categorisation errors such as false positives and false negatives. False positives occur when expected failures occur, while false negatives occur when expected successes do not occur. False negatives are more noticeable and dangerous because they can lead to more crimes, injure victims, and jeopardize public safety (French, 2021:12). Due to the high cost of false negatives, most evaluation systems err on the side of caution. Assessment approaches must be able to control false positives and false negatives in order to be as effective as possible.

2.6.4 Examples of risk assessment tools

The Youthful Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI), the Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS), the Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI), and the Ohio Risk Assessment System are examples of risk assessment tools (ORAS).

2.6.4.1 Youthful Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI)

The YLS/CMI is a structured risk and need assessment tool that is widely used in Canada, the United States of America, Australia, Japan, Singapore, and the United Kingdom. The

YLS/CMI is comprised of 42 components, each of which corresponds to one of the "Central Eight" risk and need domains (Miller et al., 2021:211; Takahashi et al., 2013:390).

The *YLS/CMI–Screening Version* is a shortened version of the YLS/CMI that was trialled in Canada in the early 2000s but was only recently published and made commercially available. It is intended to provide an initial screening of the risk and need levels of adolescent offenders in order to determine whether a more comprehensive risk and need assessment is required. In a clinical/forensic setting, completion of the YLS/CMI-SV is frequently based on a file review and interviews with the child, parent(s), and other collateral sources, similar to the YLS/CMI (Shepherd et al., 2015:195; Olver et al., 2014:158). The YLS/CMI-SV contains eight items that correspond to the risk/need domains of the YLS/eight CMI:

1. History of conduct disorder
2. Current school or employment problems
3. Criminal friends
4. Alcohol/drug problems
5. Leisure/recreation
6. Personality/behaviour
7. Family circumstances/parenting,
8. Attitudes/orientation

For the YLS/CMI-SV questions, a score of "1" indicates the presence of a risk factor, while a score of "0" indicates the absence of a risk factor. As a result, adding the individual item scores yields the YLS/CMI-SV total score (range = 0-8). The score cut-offs for young offenders in the risk bins are 0 to 2 (low), 3 to 5 (moderate), and 6 to 8 (high) (Chu et al., 2014:1438).

2.6.4.2 *Ohio Youth Assessment System (OYAS)*

The *OYAS-Disposition Instrument (OYAS-DIS)* is a young risk assessment tool used in a variety of states and jurisdictions to determine the criminogenic risk of juvenile offenders. It enables juvenile justice actors to assess children at various stages of the juvenile justice system (Lovins & Latessa, 2013:72). The OYAS-DIS is comprised of the following five tools:

1. Diversion tool

2. Detention tool
3. Disposition tool
4. Residential tool
5. Re-entry tool

Each instrument is used at the appropriate level to assess adolescent criminogenic needs and to aid in treatment decision-making.

1. *Diversion (OYAS-DIV)*: The OYAS-DIV is a tool designed to help juvenile courts decide who can safely be diverted from the juvenile justice system and who should remain in it. After a thorough file review and/or face-to-face interview with the adolescent, the tool has six elements and takes about ten minutes to complete.

2. *Detention (OYAS-DET)*: The OYAS-DET is designed for use with youth facing detention. The findings of the assessment inform the court of the youth's level of danger while on pretrial release. When necessary, the instrument can be used at intake to assist with front-end judgments or at the back door to discharge children. This instrument consists of six items and can be completed in approximately ten minutes during a brief face-to-face interview.

3. *Disposition (OYAS-DIS)*: The OYAS-DIS is a comprehensive assessment tool for children who have been adjudicated by a court of law. The tool assesses juveniles' overall reoffending risk and criminogenic requirements, as well as identifies responsivity elements and case management techniques to aid in successful intervention. This test covers seven areas:

1. Juvenile justice background
2. Family and living conditions
3. Peers and social support networks
4. Education and employment
5. Pro-social skills
6. Drug abuse, mental health, and personality
7. Values, beliefs, and attitudes

4. *Residential (OYAS-RES)*: The OYAS-RES can be used by residential programmes to properly assess teenagers' overall risk of reoffending, as well as identifying criminogenic need areas and treatment impediments (responsivity factors). OYAS-RES data can also be

used to aid in case preparation. The OYAS-RES, like the OYAS-DIS, has seven province areas.

5. *Re-entry (OYAS-RET)*: The OYAS-RET tool enables review of children who have been in residential programmes for an extended period of time. The OYAS-RET is based on the same domains as the OYAS-DIS and OYAS-RES, but it assesses youth progress in a residential programme. The OYAS-RET should be used in conjunction with post-programme supervision to help juveniles positively changeover back into the public (Lovins & Latessa, 2013:72).

2.6.4.3 *Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (LS/CMI)*

The LS.CMI is a validated gender informed risk, need, and responsivity (RNR) assessment for female offenders (Gower et al., 2022:2). It can be used in a variety of situations (parole, probation, and prison/jail) without the need for separate gender-specific forms. Empirical research on the LS formulation, CMI's normative samples, reliability, and analytical validity with female offenders supports its use as an all-inclusive RNR assessment tool (Dyck et al., 2018:260). Furthermore, the LSI-R misclassifies a significant number of socially and economically marginalized women who are subjected to gender-based violations. Women with similar violating histories to men and a comparable socioeconomic status have been found to have higher predictive accuracy. Andrews and colleagues compared the validity of components in Section 1 of the LS/CMI in predicting recidivism in males and females (Andrews, et al., 2012:128). With the exception of the substance addiction component, which was more significantly associated with recidivism in women, the authors discovered that predictive validity was unaffected by gender: each risk/need item in the LS/CMI was equally predictive of recidivism for both male and female offenders.

2.6.4.4 *Ohio Risk Assessment System (ORAS)*

This was established as a state-wide system to assess the risk and needs of Ohio's offenders in order to promote uniformity and communication among criminal justice institutions. The goal was to develop recidivism assessment tools that could be used at each of the stages throughout the criminal justice system (Lovins et al., 2018:187). One of the primary goals of the ORAS was to adhere to the principles of effective classification. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) believed that by doing so, it would be able to deploy supervision resources and structure decision-making in such a way that recidivism would be reduced. As a result, ORAS was developed in order to classify the risk level of inmates in the system, as well as to identify criminogenic needs and programming challenges. The ORAS is comprised of nine distinct tools.

1. *Pretrial Assessment Tool (PAT)*: Designed to account for a defendant's inability to appear in court as well as the possibility of violating pretrial probation by committing a new felony. The tool has seven items and can be finished in 10 to 15 minutes.
2. *Community Supervision Screening Tool (ORAS-CSST)*: The tool consists of four items and can be administered in five to ten minutes. It is recommended that a full CST be conducted on offenders who score moderate to high risk on this screening instrument.
3. *Community Screening Tool (ORAS-CST)*: The tool consists of 35 items and takes 45 to 60 minutes to complete.
4. *Misdemeanour Screening Tool (ORAS-MST)*: Is meant to be used in municipal courtrooms. The tool has six components and can be completed in five to ten minutes. Offenders who receive a moderate to high risk score on this screening test should be subjected to the full MAT.
5. *Misdemeanour Assessment Tool (ORAS-MAT)*: Is meant to be used in municipal courtrooms. The tool consists of 12 elements and takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete.
6. *Prison Screening Tool (ORAS-PST)*: Created for use when entering a prison, the tool is made up of four parts and can be completed in five to ten minutes. Offenders who score moderate to high risk on this screening test should face a full PIT.
7. *Prison Intake Tool (ORAS-PIT)*: Created for use when entering a prison, the tool contains 30 items and takes between 40 to 50 minutes to administer.
8. *Re-entry Tool (ORAS-RT)*: Designed to be used prior to being released from a four-year prison sentence. The tool contains 18 items and takes between 30 to 45 minutes to administer.
9. *Supplemental Re-entry Tool (ORAS-SRT)*: Designed to be used prior to release from a prison sentence of less than four years. The tool has 18 items and takes between 20 to 30 minutes to complete (Latessa et al., 2018:150; Singh, et al., 2018:35).

2.7 The role of parole in rehabilitating offenders

The role of placing offenders in a community, as stated by the White Paper, is to reintegrate them back into society as a person who has been transformed because of rehabilitation. However, there are always general debates in society that parolees or ex-convicts have not changed into law-abiding citizens despite the rehabilitation process. The intention of this section of the literature review is to provide understanding and clarity by elaborating on the

purpose of parole in depth. According to Mujuzi (2011:206), parole has many functions which includes being an alternative to incarceration. Parole is an alternative to incarceration because when an offender is on parole, they are still serving their sentence but are outside the premises of the correctional facility. The sentence is served where one is placed with family within a society. Furthermore, once the offender is placed in a community, the community also has a responsibility of ensuring the successful reintegration of that offender.

According to Fourie (2015:78), the responsibility for renewing unity at family and community levels is that of the society as a whole. However, Fourie (2015:81) argues that it is of paramount vitality to remember that communities themselves are not necessarily the right rehabilitative environments, because they also face social and economic impediments. Due to those social and economic challenges, most offenders can reoffend. Muntingh (2008:1) states that there are an unconfirmed number of non-governmental organisations in South Africa working inside and outside of prisons to help offenders and their families. That is important to ensure that offenders are successfully reintegrated in society to ensure that they do not reoffend.

The White Paper declares that it is difficult for rehabilitation to be fully complete without reintegrating the offender into their community (White Paper, 2005:41). One of the important characteristics of reintegration is that the community should be involved in the reintegration of offenders into them (Ndike, 2014:26). However, placing offenders in the community also has its own implications that can lead them to reoffending. Lekalakala (2016:1) states that the Department of Correctional Services has a challenge to provide support to offenders beyond the reintegration programmes; further adding that support may be through other stakeholders to monitor offenders. The above-mentioned statement fails to add that families can also offer the necessary support that is needed to prevent unwanted results from offenders in the community. The researcher holds the same sentiments as Ndike (2014:31): that successful social reintegration cannot be achieved by legislation and institutions alone. Families of offenders and the community at large have an important role to play in assisting and supporting offenders to adjust in the community (Ndike 2014:31).

The White Paper (2005:34) also claims that dysfunctional families provide circumstances for ex-offenders to relapse to a life of crime. It is evident that families and the community at large have a responsibility to ensure that offenders do not go back to the life of crime by offering a conducive space for them. Hence this paper explores the role of families to ensure a successful reintegration of offenders in the community when it comes to the parole system.

The White Paper (2005:34) suggests that the roles of social institutions are essential to provide a correcting environment for the youth. The researcher also holds the same sentiments that that through collaboration with other social institutions the rate of recidivism can decrease. According to the White Paper (2005:36), the Department of Correctional Services is willing to work with other societal institutions in advocating for restoration of families and communities; however, the question is: does the community fully understand the responsibility that they have when it comes to societal responsibility?

Lekalakala (2016:1) asserts that the restorative justice system in terms of addressing issues relating to stigma attached to offenders is of paramount vitality when dealing with criminal behaviour. Hegger (2015) suggests that in all efforts to reduce the escalating rate of recidivism, community corrections officers can use the restorative justice model to bring those under supervision directly in contact with victims. However, that is not the only issue at hand when it comes to discussing the challenges that parolees face, there are issues such as poverty that lead to offenders going back to crime.

Paulson (2013:6) maintains that understanding the systems and barriers in our society that effect successful re-entry is the start to finding a solution that will reduce recidivism. Paulson (2013:7) views recidivism as a combined societal failure due to barriers and limited resources. It is evident that correction is a societal responsibility. Paulson (2013:11) found that the highest number of rearrests took place in the third year of release and that issues of mental health and illness should also be remembered when considering the issue of recidivism (Paulson, 2013:12).

2.8 Challenges that parolees face

There are many challenges that offenders face, not only inside prison but also outside prison in the community. The challenges that offenders face in the community have a negative effect on the whole of South Africa and its criminal justice system, because those challenges cause offenders to reoffend. This leads to a high rate of recidivism and overcrowding in prisons. According to Ndike (2014:18), recidivism contributes ominously to the prevalence of crime in South Africa. Louw (2008:1) asserts that the challenges caused by overcrowding in prisons do not create an effective and favourable space for rehabilitation and do not improve the successful reintegration of offenders into the community. It has been proven that high rates of imprisonment do not have good effect on levels of crime in a country (Ndike, 2014:18).

Being integrated into the community can be a hurdle for offenders because the environment is different from prison. Ndike (2014:16) explains that ex-offenders face new challenges in their communities due to lack of release or discharge planning; however, the researcher

asserts that ex-offenders do not face new challenges due to lack of release or discharge planning; ex-offenders go through different rehabilitation programmes to prepare them for the release. Rather, the problem lies with how the community or families assist to ensure successful reintegration of offenders in their communities. Oftentimes, ex-offenders are discriminated in South African communities because they were incarcerated (Ndiike, 2014:21). The lack of aftercare programmes in South African communities can also be a hurdle when it comes to offenders' reintegration into society. Families of offenders as well as the community at large have an important role to play in helping offenders to rebuild their lives (Ndiike, 2014:31). Chikadzi (2017:293-297) mentions the challenges that offenders face in their release to the community which include the following:

1. Difficulties in mending family and community relationships: Chikadzi (2017:293) states that most offenders experience difficulties with mending broken relationships either with their families or the community at large. As a result, most offenders or ex-convicts do not receive the support they need from their families or the community. This can lead to feelings of rejection and lead to reoffending.

2. Unemployment: Getting employed with a criminal record is hard, as a result, most offenders suffer unemployment. Although offenders receive education and training inside the prison; it is still hard for them to be employed. This leads to recidivism because offenders need to take care of themselves and their families (Chikadzi, 2017:294). Correctional settings afford offenders with skills and qualifications. According to Ndiike (2014:22), it is not justifiable for employers to prohibit someone as a potential employee because they were incarcerated. However, most employers in South Africa still do not consider people with criminal records and this leads to many offenders seeing prison as better place than facing the challenges outside. Ndiike (2014:22) further quotes one of the ex-offenders of Krugersdorp Prison who felt that the real punishment began when he was released from prison and tried to find employment. Ndiike (2014:34) argues that rehabilitative programmes offered inside correctional settings are not linked to employment opportunities in the community. According to Ndiike (2014:142), social workers need to advocate for ex-offenders because of the challenge of not being able to find employment; however, the researcher believes that it should not only be social workers' efforts to ensure that offenders are employed. A lot of dynamics need to be considered to solve the problem of unemployment of offenders such as the educational curriculum as society moves into a space of advanced technology; there are many ways to generate an income on social media. The curriculum should be amended to provide incarcerated offenders with updated technology skills so that when they are released they are able to keep up with the times. The issue of unemployment amongst offenders

placed in the community should be an effort made by all governmental sectors as well as the private sector.

3. *Inferiority complex*: According to Han (2011:20), an inferiority complex is the emotion that arises when a person judges themselves abnormally. Some offenders suffer from an inferiority complex when they are reintegrated into the community where they feel that most of their peers are far ahead of them and they are left behind and feel small. According to Ndike (2014:24), “being branded an ex-convict is likely to diminish an individual’s sense of self-worth, and dignity is thus impaired.”

4. *Struggle with change of environment*: The prison environment is characterised by routine and has its own culture, therefore offenders often find it difficult to adjust to normal life (Chikadzi, 2017:296). This is a challenge that most offenders and ex-offenders deal with upon their release, especially when they have been incarcerated for a long time. Adapting to the environment may be a challenge for offenders because of rapid transformations in the social, economic, physical, and technological spheres of life (Ndike, 2014:35).

5. *Lack of aftercare service*: Most programmes do not continue after release, therefore it is difficult for offenders and ex-convicts to find support because of a lack of aftercare services. As a British citizen, the researcher has not seen any aftercare services that are effective in helping and giving support to offenders. Factors that originally contributed to an offender committing a crime may still be present at the time they are released, which may trigger them to reoffend; therefore, aftercare programmes are important if the challenges that offenders face are to be addressed (Ndike, 2014:35).

2.9 Successes of parole

When a prisoner's sentence is completed, he or she can be released into the community through supervised release on parole or unconditional release. The effectiveness of these two methods is a hotly debated topic. As a result, a number of studies have compared the recidivism rates of offenders released to the community on parole halfway through their sentence (that is supervised offenders) and offenders released from prison after serving their entire sentence with no supervision requirements (this means non-supervised offenders). The evidence for supervised releases or parole effectiveness is summarised here. These studies investigate whether criminals who are monitored after release have a higher or lower recidivism rate than those who are not. Although the results in this area are inconclusive, there is reasonable evidence to support the effectiveness of supervised release in reducing reoffending rates. Several studies have found that monitored criminals have lower recidivism rates (Duwe & McNeeley, 2021:743; DeLisi et al., 2021:1538; Pratt et al., 2020:55). These

findings are consistent with those of a New Jersey study, which discovered that offenders who voluntarily waived parole consideration (and thus were released with no supervision requirements at the end of their sentence) were significantly more likely to be rearrested and/or reconvicted than paroled offenders (Horner, 2020:279). A study of offenders released on probation in England and Wales also found that supervised offenders committed 14% to 17% fewer offences than non-supervised ex-offenders (Cherney, 2021:131).

Other studies; however, have produced inconclusive results regarding the effectiveness of supervised release. Clark conducted a study in which he compared two types of supervised release of convicts (split monitoring versus conditional release supervision). Offenders who were subjected to post-prison supervision were 7% to 20% more likely to be arrested for a felony and 67% to 360% more likely to be incarcerated than those who were not. According to the study, the significant increase in the likelihood of incarceration may be related, at least in part, to the nature of the watchful eye, in which supervised offenders were returned to prison for technical violations of their supervision order or as a result of a new sentence (Clark & Rydberg, 2016:331).

Finally, a study by Wright and Rosky (2011:890) assessed the impact of an early release policy introduced in Montana (USA) in 2002. Unlike typical board-ordered parolees, these offenders were released at the discretion of the Montana Department of Corrections and supervised by its Community Corrections Division. The authors compared reoffending rates for offenders on traditional prison parole, traditional community parole, conditional release from prison, and conditional release from a community setting. Criminals who were conditionally released under the new policy were the most likely to reoffend (36.4%) and had the shortest median time to failure, according to their findings. Offenders on traditional parole from a community setting were the second most likely to reoffend (36.2%), followed by those on conditional release from a community setting (34.2%), and finally, were those on regular parole from prison (30.2%). The authors concluded that the early release policy would have simply added to the financial strain already present as a result of higher recidivism rates (Mazerolle et al., 2018:83-85).

2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the concept of parole has evolved as a process aimed at reducing recidivism. The reviewed literature shows that this emanated from the reform movement of the juvenile justice system in the 18th and 19th century. Its application in the adult correctional system was therefore aimed at reforming rather than punishing. Several theoretical frameworks have been reviewed. Key among these are the ecosystems, social disorganisation, classical

approach, and social constructivist theoretical frameworks. Internationally, the adoption of parole varies between countries or jurisdictions, and is mainly driven by legal and societal practices. However, based on the available literature, it can be concluded that parole is most common in Western countries, with several African countries lacking a parole system, with the exception of South Africa and Zimbabwe.

In relation to parole, assessment of the risks of recidivism is a key factor that officials consider. In this regard, a risk assessment may be performed using a variety of tools, such as the Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory, the Ohio Risk Assessment System, and The Ohio Youth Assessment System. The use of these tools has been reported in the literature to be due to their validity and reliability.

Parole per the reviewed literature has been shown to be effective in reducing recidivism, although there are several challenges that need to be resolved. Additionally, the reviewed literature highlights the lack of in-depth studies in the field in South Africa, providing further justification for the current study. The chapter that follows will detail the methodology that was adopted in this study.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology is the science of studying how research is scientifically carried out. It refers to the research methods and the logic behind the methods that explains why certain methods were preferred and how they are going to be carried out (Kothari, 2014:1). This section of the study includes the research approach, sampling, data collection, data analysis, limitations and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research type

This study adopted a basic type of research. Basic research is also known as pure research and is used to expand understanding of basic principles (Palys, 2008:57). The end results of basic research have no immediate benefit; however, they can raise awareness about a phenomenon being investigated.

3.3 Research approach

This study employed a qualitative research approach. According to Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa and Varpio (2015:669), qualitative research is the systematized investigation of a social phenomenon in its usual settings and the researcher is the main data collection instrument, examining why events occur and what those events mean to the participants. The researcher also identified a direct connection between the qualitative research approach and social constructivist theory.

3.4 Research design

The study employed a qualitative research design. Qualitative research designs seek to understand the experiences of human beings and are aimed at exploring and explaining how or why a phenomenon arises (Haradhan, 2018:2). Qualitative research was suitable for this study because it assisted the researcher in collecting information about how parole works in rehabilitating offenders with the motive of creating understanding of that phenomenon

(Haradhan, 2018:2). Therefore, the research design used in this study was an exploratory descriptive design.

Exploratory descriptive design is a research design that aims to describe phenomena by exploring them from the participants' perspective (Hunter, McCallum & Howes, 2018). The exploratory descriptive design was appropriate for this study as it enabled the researcher to explore the views of participants involved in, or who were part of, the parole system and to generate information for future research and to possibly inform and create insights of the changes needed in the parole system. This research design is consistent with social constructivist theory to which this study is committed. Social constructivism holds that people give and attach different interpretations to a phenomenon due to different lenses they use and experience (Teater, 2014). This is essential for generation of substantial and insightful information needed in the correctional environments and is directly consistent with the exploratory descriptive design this study used.

3.5 Population

According to Gray (cited by Dube, 2017:345), a population is defined as the total number of possible elements that are included in the study. In this study, the population comprised key informants at Brits Community Corrections which included the social worker and parole officers. The study population also comprised offenders who had been on parole since the year 2019.

It was beneficial for the study to include parolees who had been on parole since 2019, to explore how well they have adjusted to the community during the period since the granting of parole to the present. It also assisted in better exploring the qualities of desistance, meaning whether they had stopped committing crime (Alpher, Durose & Markman, 2018:14). According to Khwela (2015:407), studies show that general figures for recidivism indicate that 50% to 70% of inmates reoffend within a period of three years. So, selecting offenders who had been on parole since 2019 helped to assess the success thereof on integrating offenders into the community.

The key informants were useful when exploring the role of the parole system in ensuring successful reintegration of offenders into society. The key informants render services to the offenders by supervising and monitoring them to facilitate successful re-entry into the community. The parolees were part of the population as they are the recipients of the services offered by correctional services to ensure that they do not return to a life of crime but instead are reintegrated into the community.

3.6 Sampling method

The sampling method that was used in this study was purposive sampling to identify primary participants who had personal experiences of parole, either as parolees or as parole officials (parole officers and the social worker). Other sampling techniques could not ensure this. Purposive sampling implies choosing participants according to pre-selected criteria relevant to a particular research question (Etikan, Musa & Alkassim, 2016:2). Therefore, the researcher selected only Brits Community Correctional parole officers, the social worker and parolees who had been on parole since the year 2019. This assisted the researcher in exploring how the parolees had adjusted in the community for the past years.

3.7 Sample size

The sample size was determined based on the specific number of individuals in each of the specific groups. The data saturation point determined the final number of participants in the study; however, the preferred sample size for this study was 10 participants comprising two social workers and three parole officers who were the key informants and five parolees. However, only one social worker was interviewed because Brits Community Corrections only has one social worker. Data saturation was met with the four key informants and five parolees, making a total of nine participants who were interviewed. The involvement of the two categories of the participants in the study ensured that information which was gathered properly represented the significant data sources of this study.

3.7.1 Sample inclusion criteria

The following sample inclusion criteria were selected for the purpose of this research in order to reach the goals of the study.

The first sample inclusion criteria for the two groups of participants were:

3.7.1.1 Parolees

- Participants were offenders who had committed any crime.
- Participants had been on parole since 2019. The research has proven that people fall back into a life of crime within three years.
- Participants had taken part in the pre-release programme that prepares them for re-integration.
- Participants were adults who were 18 years and above.

- Participants live around the Brits area. This was to ensure that they reside within the parameters and demarcation area of the study and were reachable.

3.7.1.2 Key informants

The inclusion criteria for key informants were:

- Participants were a social worker or parole officer of any gender and age from Brits Community Corrections.
- They had experience of three years or more in monitoring parolees.
- They held a relevant NQF level 6 qualification in behavioural sciences or equivalent qualification.

3.7.2 Sample exclusion criteria

Potential participants were excluded from the study if:

- They were an offender who had never been placed in the community for parole.
- They were an official with less than three years of working experience in the Brits Community Corrections.
- They did not give consent to be part of the study.

3.8 Data collection

The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the parolees, social worker, and parole officers utilising three interview schedules as instruments. These are clearly labelled in Annexure D (D1-D3) of this study. The interview questions were semi-structured.

Procedurally, the researcher sought approval with ethics number NWU-00479-19-S1 from the North West University Faculty of Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee to proceed with the study (see Annexure A). Upon receiving a conditional approval letter, the researcher applied to conduct research at the Head Office of the Department of Correctional Services so as to get permission to conduct the study (see Annexure B). When permission was granted, an internal guide was appointed from Department of Correctional Services Head Office and a mentor from Brits Community Corrections.

The mentor assisted in terms of identifying all participants and holding a meeting with officials involved in parole services to inform them about the study and to confirm their willingness to participate in the study as well as to choose a day suitable to conduct the interviews. The consent forms were handed to those who were willing to take part in the study (see Annexure

C). Participants were given five days to decide on participation and to sign and return the consent forms. The interviews were held on scheduled appointments with parolees and key informants. No parolee or key informant was forced to take part in the study, only those who were interested in taking part in the research were interviewed. Voluntary participation in the study was emphasised and included in the consent form as part of the ethical requirement with participants before conducting the interviews. The interviews took place at Community Corrections facility and to follow COVID-19 regulations, the researcher ensured that everyone adhered to social distancing, keeping a one-meter distance. The participants were also screened for COVID-19 before interviews commenced and kept their masks on to curb the spread of the virus.

On the arranged day and time, the researcher collected data through one-on-one interviews with the parolees and key informants. The amount of time with each interviewee was approximately twenty-five minutes which was explained to the potential participants beforehand. All the interviews in this study were recorded after seeking consent from the participants. Therefore, in-depth interviews were used to collect data and audio recordings were made to ensure that no information was missed during the interviews. An interview schedule was utilized and all questions were compiled in English and translated for those who could not speak English; however, the majority of participants could understand English (see Annexure D).

3.9 Data analysis

According to Kothari (2014:18), data analysis occurs after the data has been collected and requires a number of closely related operations such as establishment of categories, the application of these categories to raw data through coding, tabulation, and then drawing textual inferences. Thematic data analysis was used in this study. Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3352) define thematic data analysis as the process of identifying themes within qualitative data. The researcher transcribed the collected data by listening to the audio-recorded interviews to produce meaningful information; therefore, the raw data were classified into purposeful thematic categories which guided data presentation and analysis, and then the information was backed and compared with existing literature. The six phases were very important in guiding the data analysis process. Below are the six phases that were followed as provided by Braun and Clarke (2006) cited by Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3354):

Step 1: Become familiar with data

According to Maguire and Delahunt (2017:3354), “the first step in any qualitative research is reading the transcripts.” The researcher familiarised herself with the data by making notes.

Step 2: Generate the initial codes

These codes were organised in a meaningful way for further analysis. Coding reduces lots of data into small meaningful chunks (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3355). Therefore, the researcher ensured that the codes were organised to produce quality data.

Step 3: Search for themes

The researcher searched for predominant themes from the data through the use of interviews.

Step 4: Review themes

The researcher reviewed and developed themes identified in step 3 to ensure that they were relevant.

Step 5: Define themes

The researcher tried to make sense of all the themes by identifying their meaning and how they related and compared to each other.

Step 6: Write-up

The researcher then analysed the data collected through interpretation and discussion of the data. Monitoring of data is of paramount importance to ensure good quality of the data collected and analysed. Data monitoring is the process of reviewing and evaluating data to ensure that is fit for its purpose (Experian, 2020). The researcher’s supervisor formed an integral part of the monitoring process of the data. The researcher reported every step and process to the supervisor and the internal guide as they unfolded during data collection and processing. Therefore, monitoring of the data collection and data analysis was done through documentation, ensuring that all the data collection methods and every step of data gathering was measured against the ethical procedure. When analysing data, the researcher always referred to the initial documentation of the analysis methods to ensure quality analysis.

3.10 Ethical considerations

According to Bhandari (2021), ethical considerations are a set of principles that guide the research activities and ensure that the code of ethics is adhered to when collecting data. Therefore, it was important to ensure that the research adhered to ethical considerations as named and discussed below:

3.10.1 Goodwill permission /consent

The researcher sought permission from the Department of Correctional Services by sending a research application accompanied by the research proposal as well as ethical clearance from HREC which are compulsory for permission to be granted (Department of Correctional Service, 2018). The research application and all the compulsory documents were submitted before engaging the participants in the study. Submitting all the necessary documents allowed the researcher to conduct the interviews with personnel and parolees from Brits Community Corrections.

After permission from Correctional Services was granted, the researcher explained to the participants the entire interview process (in both English and Tswana languages). Information was provided about the purpose of the research, the procedure that would take place, the risk and benefits of the research and how participants would be protected. This was done verbally and participants were given consent forms where all the information was also written. Signed adult consent forms were obtained from all participants. It was explained to participants that they had a right to withdraw from the study at any time. Language was not a barrier to obtaining consent from the participants as both English and Tswana was used for communication and consequently the services of a translator were not necessary.

3.10.2 Vulnerable participants

The vulnerable participants in this study were parolees. Parolees are a vulnerable group because the community still labels them as convicts. Parolees are legally bound by parole service conditions, and as Magadze (2016:126) explains, those labels enforce the concept that a criminal will always be a criminal even though rehabilitation has taken place. It was necessary to include this population group in the study because of their relevance in terms of providing valuable information on parole services as they are direct participants and beneficiaries of the parole system. The researcher ensured comfort of the parolees and avoided asking sensitive questions to minimise the risk of emotional involvement. The participants were free not to answer any question which they felt they did not want to answer.

3.10.3 Risks and benefits

There were no foreseen potential risks to the participants. Risks emanating from the COVID-19 pandemic were minimised by ensuring that everyone applied social distancing during meetings and data collection, that everyone screened for COVID-19 before meetings, and that masks were worn at all times. The study was beneficial to the Department of Correctional

Services in terms of giving recommendations about their parole programmes. There were no foreseen risks for the researcher. According to the risk-benefit ratio analysis that the researcher did, there were more benefits in conducting the study than possible risks. The study had high potential to inform parole policy reforms for the better. According to Ahmed (2017:87), risk mitigation strategies are action plans that are put in place to reduce threats that may disrupt a project. Therefore, below are the risk mitigation strategies that were adopted in this research:

- The risk of the researcher being harmed by parolees was mitigated by ensuring that data gathering happened at Community Correction offices where parole officers were around.
- To minimise the cost risks for the parolees, they were compensated for their time.
- The researcher ensured that there was efficient and effective communication in gathering data.
- The researcher also ensured that the parolees were protected and provided with privacy during data gathering and as such they were interviewed in a safe space.

3.10.4 Confidentiality, anonymity and privacy

Confidentiality is an important component in any research and refers to protecting the data collected from participants. Therefore, precautions were made and the participants were ensured that the information they provided would not be divulged to third parties except for those relevant for obtaining the consent of the participants. Participants' names, identities, addresses, and any other identifying information linking the data to the participants were not used in the study. Publication of the results will be shared with participants and that information will be in article format and not raw data. This information was explained beforehand to the participants so that they could give informed consent and to ensure their relative confidentiality. Anonymity refers to a condition in which the true identity of an individual is not known to researchers (The Evergreen State College, 2019), therefore when referring to parolees, pseudonyms are used in the presentation of the findings.

For the parole officials, alphabetical letters are used instead of their titles or names or positions in the Department of correctional Services. This also ensures anonymity of the participants. Privacy refers to when a researcher protects the identity of participants and protects the data collected from the interviewees. Interviews were done in private spaces where nothing could interrupt the interview process.

3.10.5 Incentive/reimbursement

There were no big incentives due to the limited research budget and the participants were made aware of that.

3.10.6 Storage and archiving of data

The collected research data is stored in a password protected computer that is only accessible to the researcher. A backup of the information is stored in the researcher's Google drive account that will ensure safely and minimise the loss of the information collected for the study. Google drive is a file storage facility that also has security measures such as being password protected which ensures that not anybody can have access to the stored files. The study supervisor also stored the information in a password protected computer with backup copies in drives accessible through passwords as well as on a compact disk (CD) that is stored in a lockable cabinet in the office.

The information collected during the study will be stored for five years before it will be destroyed. Hard copies of the study are stored in the North West University archives in the Boloka Institutional Repository which is a digital archive that preserves research work of members of NWU. According to Doorn and Tjalsma (2007:16), data are increasingly stored in different places therefore it essential to make sure that they encounter the minimum criteria of quality, traceability, accessibility, and usability. Therefore, as far as storage and archiving of data is concerned, the researcher ensured that all the standards of quality, traceability, accessibility and usability were met.

3.11 Validity and reliability

3.11.1 Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (as cited by Creswell et al., 2009:80) assert that credibility, applicability, dependability, and confirmability are key standards of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness refers to how trustworthy or reliable the data gathering instrument is in producing quality results that are acceptable. Creswell et al. (2009:80) add that including investigators or having an assistant to interpret the data could improve trustworthiness. Therefore, the researcher had a supervisor who assessed the work to ensure trustworthiness.

Credibility seeks to convince that the findings depict the truth of the reality (Bless, Smith & Sithole, 2013:236). As the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the parolees, a social worker, and parole officers, the different data sources for this study ensure credibility of

the results. Member checking was a strategy that the researcher used to ensure that the participants looked at the data and confirmed the data obtained. The researcher also took notes and recordings in order to avoid missing any information. The researcher used sufficient verbatim information to allow the reader to hear the exact words of the participants and to understand how the researcher analysed the data (Bless et al., 2013:239). These procedures enhance the credibility of the data collected in the study.

3.11.2 Triangulation

In order to enhance trustworthiness of the study, the researcher used data source triangulation in order to engage three different categories of participants which are the parolees, the social worker, and parole officers from Brits Community Corrections. Data source triangulation in this study involved a sequential collection of data from individuals (parolees), the parole officers and the social worker as key informants to gain multiple perspectives and thus validate the data (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014:545). Data source triangulation enhances trustworthiness and hence is very important for the study.

3.11.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to how much one can rely on the quality of the data. According to Bless et al. (2013:237), dependability should be ensured by providing thorough explanations of how data were collected and analysed. In this study the researcher created an audit trail which provided detailed processes of how the data were collected and analysed. Interviews were recorded so that the researcher did not miss any information during the interviews. The researcher also personally analysed raw data to ensure that essential information was not lost.

3.11.4 Transferability

Transferability refers to how data can be compared (Bless et al., 2013:237). In order to ensure that the study was of good quality and could be assessed and compared to find with other similar research studies, the researcher provided a standard description of the context in which the study took place. The researcher also made use of thick description of the data obtained in the raw form from the three categories of participants (parolees, social worker and parole officials).

3.11.5 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to how other researchers would be able to discover similar findings by following a similar research process in a similar context (Bless et al., 2013:237). The researcher used methodological verification whereby the researcher had other experienced researchers in the research committees confirm the logic and execution of each and every step of the methodology through the created audit trail (Bless et al., 2013:239). Therefore, the researcher had her supervisor verify the logic of the methodology because of his research expertise. After collecting data, the researcher utilised member checking to ensure that participants confirmed that the data collected was a true reflection of the information they provided during their interviews.

3.12 Limitations

According to Simon (2011), limitations are possible flaws in the research which are beyond the researcher's control. In this study exploring the effect of parole in rehabilitating offenders, a limitation of the study was that it was sometimes difficult to tell whether the respondent was telling the truth with regards to their experience of parole. However, follow up questions were used to probe further and to elicit further responses that the researcher needed.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter highlighted how the research was conducted and how information was obtained in terms of sampling and data collection procedures. The justification for adopting an exploratory descriptive qualitative research design was explained and the criteria for purposive sampling of the study population were described. The limitations as well as the ethical considerations were discussed as they are important aspects to be considered when doing research. The next chapter focuses on the findings of the study.

Chapter 4

Data Presentation, Interpretation and Analysis of Research Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, data is presented, interpreted, and analysed and findings described based on the information gathered. The data were gathered with nine participants who comprised two groups: five parolees and four key informants who were the social worker and three parole officials. The participants were interviewed individually. Two interviews were developed, one for each of the two groups of participants, and were based on the same set of questions which addressed different thematic areas. The main themes of the study revolved around the experiences of offenders with parole and the views of professionals pertaining to the parole system. This chapter focuses on the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews. The names of the participants in the study are pseudonyms to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

4.1.1 Theme one: Background

The researcher wanted to find out the personal details of the participants. These included their age, place of residence, educational background, and the type of families they come from.

Name	Age	Place of residence	Level of Education	Type of family
Tony	38	Damonsville	Grade 8	Poor family
Thomas	39	Mmakau	Grade 7	Stable family
Terry	32	Ramogodi	Grade 7	Dysfunctional
Thabo	32	Mmakau	Grade 10	Dysfunctional
Tammy	26	Mmakau	Grade 11	Dysfunctional

4.1.1.1 Sub-theme: Age

Age was one of the factors that assisted the researcher with insight on the developmental stage most participants are in. From the above data presentation, it is evident that most participants are youth ranging from 26 to late-30s in age. The focus was on the age the

participants were when the study was conducted. The study found that most offenders had committed the crimes in their youth due to several factors that had affected them. Age plays an important role when it comes to understanding crime and the behaviour of humans. According to Farrington (1986), as cited by Cornelius, Lynch and Gore (2017), rates of criminal behaviour increase throughout the adolescent stage and then descend as the person ages. The transformation of participants, in this case, is mostly influenced by the rehabilitation process that takes place during their incarceration.

4.1.1.2 Sub-theme: Type of family

The participants were asked about their upbringing and family background to explore how that factor may have contributed to their criminal behaviour. The sub-theme of unhealthy family dynamics emerged from the interview responses. Below are excerpts of what the participants had to say:

“...I stayed with my parents, my mother however my father passed away and the situation was bad due to poverty...” - Tony

“I come from a family where I was raised by maternal family and there has always been family conflict that only old people would know about. I was raised by a single parent who was working at Johannesburg therefore I was taken care of by my aunts who treated me bad...they used to remind me that my mother is not present...” - Terry

“I started staying with my sister then later moved to stay with my mother...my mother and father have separated when I was still young.” - Thabo

“My parents passed away, my father passed away when I was 13 and my mother passed away when I was 16. My sisters are not supportive, they would buy groceries but they were not really assisting me so that I can finish school.” - Tammy

This study provides evidence that the majority of the participants came from disturbed family patterns and dysfunctional families which might have created a toxic environment for them. The study also shows that the family system plays a major role in socialising an individual. According to Tica (2014:9), ecosystem theory emphasizes that environmental factors play an important role in human development. Offenders' problems, or their unacceptable behaviour, may be caused or influenced by systems in their environment such as family. The emphasis of ecosystem theory on the person-in-environment makes it possible in this study to link and connect individuals, families, and the entire community environment (Teater, 2014:26) and how they influence each other in the rehabilitation of offenders and re-integration of them into their communities. From the above data presentation, four out of the five parolees interviewed

came from home environments that were not conducive for their early childhood development and their wellbeing, which therefore negatively impacted them and led them to a life of crime.

4.1.1.3 Sub-theme: Place of residence

It was important to highlight the place of residence from where the participants came because the environment in which one grows up in can shape one's behaviour. Ecosystem theory emphasises that environmental factors play an important role in human development (Tica, 2014:9). Below are the responses of where the participants come from:

"...I stay at Damonsville but I grew at Mmakau where I have committed my crime." –Tony

"...I am from Mmakau..." - Thomas

"...I was born at Ga-Mphahlele however I grew up at Ramogodi then I moved to Johannesburg, that is where I started to commit crime..." – Terry

"I am from Mmakau...for me to move from Soshanguve where I was staying with my sister to come back to Mmakau it is because I had broken the law..." – Thabo

"I am from Bela-Bela however I now stay with my boyfriend at Mmakau..." - Tammy

From the above data, it is evident that all parolees are from areas or have been in areas where crime is prevalent, for example, Terry committed his crime in Johannesburg. Johannesburg is known as the city of gold; however, it is where crime is also prominent. According to the latest crime statistics, the level of crime in Johannesburg, is such that 89.34% of the population has experienced crime (Nambeo, 2022). It proves that the environment has power to influence a person. Tony, Thabo, and Terry were originally from the Brits Area, which is a low-income area where crime is also rife as a result of poor socio-economic circumstances.

The total number of crimes committed at Brits, in the North West Province, increased in the period of 2016 to 2017, from 4 856 crimes reported in 2016 to 9 466 crimes in the 2017 (Crime Stats SA, 2017). The statistics demonstrate that crime exists in the area where the participants come from. Against the literature review, the social disorganisation theory is relevant to understanding the participants' backgrounds and to understanding the phenomenon under study. When elaborating on this theory, Bond (2015:1) stated that criminal activity among people is a "normal response to abnormal conditions". Conditions such as poverty, filth and decaying living conditions, and increased levels of ethnic mixing are fertile predictive conditions for criminal thought and activity. In Brits area, this theory finds

assertion as the community is bordered by mining activities and a neighbourhood characterised by a mix of poverty, ethnic diversity, and dilapidated shacks.

4.1.1.4 Sub-theme: Educational background

The participants were asked about their educational background to gauge the impact of education on criminal behaviour. It emerged in the study that all five participants had poor educational backgrounds that might have had an impact on their criminal behaviour. None of them had completed secondary school. Below are the responses of the participants:

“I went Lebogang Primary School then I went to Tswelelang Primary School, after that I attended school at Malatse Motsepe Secondary School and dropped out in Grade 8. I dropped because sometimes I would not have things needed to go to school then I decided to leave school.” - Tony

“...I dropped out of school in grade 7...” - Thomas

“My highest level of education is grade 7...” - Terry

“I finished high school in Grade 10 then I went to study to be a Chef at Sunnyside then I dropped out. I also have a certificate in business training.” - Thabo

“I dropped out of school in grade 11 however it was not my intentions, my sisters were not supportive and I got a child when I was still at school so I had to drop out.” - Tammy

With the exception of Thabo who has a certificate in business training, none of the participants finished school which also explains why most offenders struggle with unemployment. This will be unpacked later in the chapter when discussing the challenges that parolees face. The parolees' highest level of education also shows that although the correctional services offer educational services to its offenders, not all offenders enrol so that they can further their studies to at least have Matric (grade 12).

The White Paper (2005:61) of the Department of Correctional Services states that all means, including education, shall be used to meet the holistic needs of the offenders. Free education, including grade 12, is provided to all in the correctional facilities where resources permit (Department of Correctional Services, 2022). However, not all correctional facilities have proper resources to encourage parolees to finish their Matric or to further their studies. The researcher also holds the view that the cognitive aspect of offenders could contribute to them not completing their Matric even though they are inside the correctional facility, meaning that some offenders might not have the capability to complete their Matric through mainstream education. However, the holistic approach to the rehabilitation of offenders

assists in a sense that the offenders keep busy with different therapeutic and educational programmes that assist them to be better people.

4.1.2 Theme two: Factors that led to committing crime

The participants were asked about contributing factors that might have led them to crime. The following sub-themes emerged:

Table 2: Factors that led to committing crime
Sub-themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The kind of crime committed• Alcohol abuse• Poverty• Anger issues• Peer influence

4.1.2.1 Sub-theme: The kind of crime committed

All of the people on parole are people who have broken the law and have committed crime. It is important to have awareness of the crimes that the participants have committed to provide insight on the kind of crimes that are prevalent amongst the parolees. Knowing the kind of crimes that parolees have committed assists with determining factors that may have led them to such offences. Below are the responses of the five participants who talk about the kind of crime they committed:

"...I have committed murder...it is not like the person I killed had offended me, he just liked fighting with people at the tavern. He had started to say offensive things and I reprimanded him, however he still followed me with his friends, hit me with a bottle then I stabbed him with a knife...my first crime was malicious damage to property in 2002." - Tony

"...I have been caught couple of times and I was sentenced for car theft..." - Thomas

"I have committed a crime of armed robbery. I used to do it with my friends" - Terry

"...the crime that I committed is theft, I took someone's phone in the train...I used to steal from people in the train." - Thabo

“I committed attempted murder...I was from a tavern when there was a guy who I knew fought with me and he took out a knife and I stabbed him with the knife.” - Tammy

The data shows that three out of five parolees committed crimes of theft and two committed similar crimes linked to murder. This shows that the correctional centre affords the privilege of parole to offenders who are eligible regardless of the nature of the crime committed; an offender can be granted parole even when they have committed brutal crimes like murder. However, the parole conditions are put in place and might differ from each and every parolee depending on the crime they have committed.

For example, an offender sentenced for child rape might be given a condition to never work in environments where there are children. In some countries, parole does depend on the severity of the crime committed. In the case of Malaysia, those who committed crimes such as murder, rape, incest, and offences related to kidnapping and possession of firearms are not eligible (Hammin et al. 2017:60). In South Africa, eligibility for parole is dependent on many factors with one of the overall factors being that the offender is rehabilitated which is shown by good behaviour.

This aligns to the mandate of the correctional system to rehabilitate offenders and to give them a second chance, hence according to The Correctional Services Act 111 of 2008, section 50(1) (a) (iii) (iv), the objectives of community corrections are to enable persons subject to community corrections to be rehabilitated in a way that best keeps them as a vital part of society; and to allow persons subject to community corrections to be fully integrated into society when they have completed their sentences.

All the above mentioned crimes have contributing factors as to why they occurred and below are other subthemes that emerged when the participants were asked about the factors that contributed to their crimes.

4.1.2.2 Sub-theme: Alcohol abuse

It emerged in the study that alcohol or drug abuse are contributing factors to many of the social ills that occur in South Africa and worldwide. One of those social ills is crime that alcohol abuse contributes to. When some of the participants were talking about the crimes they had committed, they mentioned how they struggled with alcohol abuse which might have led them to lead a lifestyle of crime or to finding themselves committing crime whilst under the influence. Below are the responses of two offenders who found themselves committing crime under the influence of alcohol:

“Sometimes to relieve stress, we start drinking a lot... Even my baby’s mother was telling me that alcohol will not solve anything...even at the end when I murdered that person, I was not aware of what I did...I would have anger that other people are educated or others are doing well in life then I would drink alcohol.” - Tony

“I was drunk when I committed my crime, I would get drunk around the 24th, 25th and 31st.” – Tammy

From the data presentation, it is evident that poor mechanisms of coping can lead to substance abuse, for example, Tony used alcohol to relieve stress. Two of these participants committed their crimes while they were under the influence of alcohol which shows how alcohol abuse clouds judgement and can affect one’s ability to think clearly or to behave accordingly. Studies by several researchers have identified eight key risk factors associated with criminal behaviour (DeMichele et al., 2019:33; Olver & Wong, 2019:463; Kotelnikova et al., 2021:3) and one of the existing factors amongst the eight is alcohol abuse.

4.1.2.3 Sub-theme: Socio-economic challenges

Many people in our societies are led to a life of crime due to socio-economic challenges that they find themselves in. During the interview it emerged that three of the participants had experienced unpleasant socio-economic issues that contributed to committing crime. Below are their responses:

“...there was a time I was stranded; I couldn’t find a job... I would go steal...” - Tony

“...there were times where I would sleep on an empty stomach when I was young and I would have to hustle or ask from neighbours so I can eat. So when I came to Gauteng then I met friends who got me involved in the life of crime to survive...” - Terry

“...I had pressure from getting my first-born child and I had told myself that my child will not grow up the way I grew up. I’ve been looking for a job and not getting one...until I got into a life of crime.” - Thabo

The above responses show that some people get into a life of crime as a mode of survival. All three participants found themselves in situations where they did not have the means to financially sustain themselves or their families and as a result they resorted to a life of crime. The point of departure for social disorganisation theory is that criminal activity among people is a “normal response to abnormal conditions” (Bond, 2015:1), in this instance it shows how the participants responded to abnormal conditions such as unemployment by committing crime in order to be able to provide for themselves.

4.1.2.4 Sub-theme: Anger issues

Anger management challenges emerged as one of the common factors amongst parolees that contributed towards their criminal records. Below are the responses of the participants:

“... I have temper, if I don't deal with a person who has angered me then I would not feel good. There was a time I committed a crime of malicious damage of property due to the anger issues I have...there were a lot of people I had anger towards.” - Tony

“...I am a person who has anger...so I would steal people's possessions.” - Thabo

“...I can now manage my anger, at first I could not manage my anger.” - Tammy

From the above statements it is evident that some people commit offenses in their moments of outrageous anger outbursts. Others, like Thabo, have internal anger issues that might cause them to not have any consideration for people to an extent of feeling entitled to their belongings or trying to inflict pain on others. In the case of Tony, there is a pattern of crimes that are a result of anger, from murder to also having a previous record of malicious damage of property. Tammy also reported that she could not manage her anger before, hence her record of attempted murder. That is why anger management is one of the imperative and therapeutic programmes offered to offenders. Anger contributes to violent acts including domestic violence (Psychology Today, 2022).

4.1.2.5 Sub-theme: Peer Influence

Peer influence was also one of the themes that emerged amongst myriad factors that led them to crime. Below are what the participants had to say:

“...I became close with my cousin who used to do thefts so because of the pressure I had from my ex-girlfriend, I started stealing with my cousin to make plans.” - Tony

“...when I arrived at Joburg I then met friends who do crime then I ended up being involved in criminal activities...” - Terry

“...I ended up befriending people that are a bad influence then I did crime...” - Thabo

“...after I realised that people I have been helping to fix their cars were bringing stolen cars, then decided to get involved in that kind of crimes.” - Thomas

From the data presented, it is clear that the offenders were also influenced by the people who were in their circles. The researcher regards the ecosystem theory (Teater,2014:21) when it

comes to this particular factor of how people are shaped by their interactions with different systems in their environment. In chapter two it was stated that the issue of crime is not limited to the person and family, but the entire society. This shows that each system is dependent on another and Teater (2014:21) maintains that the parts of the system are interconnected and interdependent, meaning that a transition or movement in one part of the system causes a change in the other parts. Offenders' problems, or their unacceptable behaviour, may be caused or influenced by systems in their environment. The emphasis of the ecosystem theory on the person-in-environment makes it possible in this study to link and connect individuals, families, and the entire community environment (Teater, 2014:26) and how they influence each other in rehabilitation of offenders and re-integrating them into their communities.

4.1.3 Theme three: Rehabilitation process

This theme sought to find out the participants' experiences pertaining to the parole process that they have undergone and how they experienced being integrated back into the community. Below are the themes that emerged when the participants were interviewed:

Table 3: Rehabilitation process
<p>Sub-themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside correctional facilities • Parole officials' roles and responsibilities • Reintegration into the society

4.1.3.1 Sub-theme: Inside correctional facilities

When the participants were asked about how they experienced parole, two of the participants expressed how they were when they were inside the correctional facility where the rehabilitation process started. Below are what the participants had to say:

“Inside the correctional facility during my sentence, I never got involved into gangs or any forbidden criminal behaviour...” - Tony

“...when I got inside I was part of the gangs however I was always on my good behaviour, I took a number but I never got involved into any violence and I was never charged...the gang was just there for a backup...the correctional facility I was part of everybody was part of a

gang, if you not part of a gang is like you are nothing...I helped myself by not misbehaving.” - Terry

From the above data representation, it makes sense for the two participants to express how they behaved while they were incarcerated because that is where the rehabilitation process begins. The rehabilitation process does not start when the participants are on parole but starts the moment they get behind the walls of the correctional centre. As mentioned in chapter two, offenders must comply with their sentence and be on good behaviour to qualify to be released on parole and that is why the two participants above were released on parole. The common crime inside correctional facilities that both offenders mentioned, which could possibly influence them into not being law abiding citizens, is gangsterism. Tony declared that he was never part of any gang when he was incarcerated, meaning that he made sure he became obedient inside the facility to aid his rehabilitation process. However, Terry was part of a gang to protect himself even though he did not get involved in any criminal activities that the gang did. The researcher is of the opinion that even though the correctional facility seeks to create a conducive environment for rehabilitation, there are still myriad challenges that might not make it entirely possible to reach everyone with other offenders actively reoffending inside prison through gangs.

4.1.3.2 Sub-theme: Parole officials' roles and responsibilities

The above-mentioned aspect was a pre-determined theme that was necessary to gain understanding of the role that parole officials play when offenders are on parole. Below are the responses of the participants:

“When I got admitted into community corrections, I found Mr Nkuna who welcomed me well and they gave me rules and they oriented me about parole conditions and they told me about the consequences of breaking the parole conditions. So I am being monitored every time.” - Tony

“...They told me that I should report everything I do like for instant if I found a job, I should let them know. The parole officers are there to guide us and supervise us to make sure that we comply with the conditions.” - Thomas

“...from the community correction, the officials are good and I never felt threatened...they supervise us and monitor us by making us sign...I make sure I report everything I do even when I travel.” - Terry

“The parole process started when I was inside the correctional centre and I was welcomed and admitted at the community corrections where I was given all the rules and expectations, I would be fetched at home to do community services, they monitor me as well...” - Thabo

“I always come to community corrections to do something similar to roll call like in prison...the officials supervise us to make sure that we abide by the law.” - Tammy

From the above data presentation, the participants expressed how they experienced being admitted into the community corrections and it is also clear that the role of the parole officials is to ensure that the offenders are admitted. The most important part of admission is to ensure that the offenders understand the parole conditions and build a relationship going forward to ensure the mandate of community corrections is achieved, which is to monitor and supervise the offenders in the community. According to The Correctional Services Act 111 of 2008, section 50(1) (a) (iii) (iv), the objectives of community corrections are to enable persons subject to community corrections to be rehabilitated in a way that best keeps them as a vital part of society; and to allow persons subject to community corrections to be fully integrated into society when they have completed their sentences. The objective is achieved through monitoring and supervision. Through that mandate, all the parole officials have a role to play to ensure that the vision of the Department of Correctional Services is carried out. Therefore, the role of parole officials, according to how the respondents are experiencing their rehabilitation process, is to be responsible for facilitating the admission process and to supervise the offenders to ensure that they abide by their parole conditions.

4.1.3.3 Reintegration into society

It is important to understand the aspect of being integrated back into the community and family when talking about how offenders experience the rehabilitation process when they are on parole. Below are the responses of the participants:

“...getting into the community I was afraid...I went through VOD and I learned that the mother of the person I murdered is still hurting and I knew that I could not stay at that place so when I came back to the community I immediately moved to my cousin’s place.” - Tony

“...most people did not know what I was arrested for, so they just heard rumours but they treated me well.” - Thomas

“...I get a lot of support from the family. I relate well with even the community members...” - Terry

“...I get support from both family and community members, maybe the community members speak behind my back however when I am with them, they do not treat me otherwise...” - Thabo

“Inside correctional centre they teach you how to accept so when I got into the community it was easy for me to accept myself...” - Tammy

The findings show that four out of five parolees did not encounter many problems being integrated into the community. However, one participant, Tony, did not feel comfortable to go back and stay in the same community where he had committed the crime. He attended the Victim Offender Mediation; however, the victim was not ready to forgive and that meant the offender made a decision to move far from the victim. Victim offender dialogue aims to achieve the objectives of restorative justice and Hegger (2015) suggests that in all efforts to reduce the escalating rate of recidivism, community corrections officers can use the restorative justice model to bring those under supervision directly in contact with victims. However, it is clear from the case of Tony that bringing those under supervision directly to the victim may not be the ultimate best solution to ensuring successful reintegration of the offender into the community. All the participants were aware of how the community also needs to accept them, hence they knew that it is possible that the community might not be in favour of them being in the community even though the participants had not experienced a direct confrontation of that from any of the community members in their areas.

4.1.4 Theme four: Challenges experienced

This section of the study sought to find out the challenges parolees experienced during their parole sentences. These challenges have a bearing in how parolees cope with parole and has an influence on recidivism. Below are the sub-themes that emerged when the parolees were asked about the challenges they experienced during their parole sentences.

Table 4: Challenges experienced
Sub-themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Socio-economic challenges• Lack of flexibility

4.1.4.1 Socio-economic challenges

In the study, it emerged that all the five paroles experienced socio-economic challenges during parole. Their verbatim responses below describe how they expressed their experiences during the interviews:

“...I struggle with a job, there was a time I was working someone but he would not give me money. At home they would demand money...I can't obtain my own property at the age of 38 and my children are taken care of by their uncles...” - Tony

“...I was struggling with an ID so I went with the social worker around the Home Affairs and they wanted me to go back to where I was born and sometimes there is no money for that.” - Thomas

“...we just need opportunities to get jobs because we can't always rely on our parents...one thing that's hurtful is that we can't market for jobs because of the criminal records.” - Terry

“...I do not have the beautiful things I used to have when I was still doing crime, and I also think of how I am going to support the children...” - Thabo

“My challenge is lack of jobs plus I did not finish school and I am planning to go to college but I do not have money.” - Tammy

The responses of the participants in the preceding lines indicate how the paroles experienced socio-economic challenges. The emergent common problems in their responses included the challenge of unemployment or not being able to financially maintain themselves. In the case of Thomas, his inability to finance the process of getting an identity document further hindered his chances of employment. Tony and Thabo both have children who they need to look after; however, because of unemployment, they are unable to do so.

The age of all the participants is the stage where they wish to be independent and able to take care of themselves and their families, as expressed by Terry: *“we cannot always rely on our parents”*. A further dominating factor affecting the participants' ability to find a job was that none of them offenders had a Matric, which is usually required when applying for a job. Tammy plans to finish school; however, she also has the same common problem of a lack of money to meet her needs. Chikadzi (2017:293-297) mentions the challenges that offenders face in their release to the community, one of which is unemployment.

The reality of having a criminal record, as Terry mentioned, combined with the economic situation in South Africa, are two factors that negatively impacted the offenders. South Africa had a high unemployment rate of 34.4% in the second quarter of 2021 (Naidoo, 2021), and

as of 2022, the rate has increased to 35.30% (Trading Economics, 2022). It was previously highlighted in Chapter 2 that it is critical to remember that the majority of offenders are at high risk of recidivism due to a combination of risk and need factors. As a result, programmes that focus solely on one may fall short of the mark. While unemployment is associated with criminal behaviour in a number of probationers and parolees, it is not a significant risk factor in and of itself (Siwach, 2018:232; Carter, 2019:18).

4.1.4.2 Lack of flexibility

Three of the participants reported that they felt that their movements are limited while they are in the community. They felt bound to one place and lacked the ability to move to other parts of society which might offer chances for the betterment of their lives. The responses of the participants below indicate this emergent theme:

“We sometimes get odd jobs but the community corrections rules is that I need to submit a letter of employment, however we get informal jobs where we cannot even get those letters so we end up risking so that I can go to the piece job and I know I won’t be found at home and that will be a problem...” - Terry

“...my movement is limited, it takes six months to change address, sometimes I just get a piece job all of a sudden and that time I need to report and I don’t have money to call to report then I end up not going so I miss out...” - Tony

“...it is just that sometimes when I think of going to do business to make money for a living, then I have to go for supervision then I miss out on making money for that particular day...” - Thabo

The challenge of limited movements during the sentence in the community is linked to the difficulties in seeking employment. Due to the struggle of getting a formal job because of their criminal record, the three parolees often get odd jobs where they are not hired on a permanent basis. They explained how they get called to work on random days when their services are needed but that can tamper with their parole conditions; for example, they need to report to their parole officials if they have to travel outside their community but sometimes they would not be able to do so. Instead, we see with two parolees, Tony and Thabo, missing out on the odd opportunities that could assist them with putting food on the table. One of the challenges with the informal jobs parolees might get, is that they cannot get formal letters to prove that they are hired, as Terry reported.

It is reasonable for the parole officials to still supervise and monitor the parolees to ensure that they comply with the parole rules because being outside does not mean that the offenders are entirely free. The parolees should take into cognisance that they are still serving their sentence, hence restriction on movement is imposed and when they need to find employment in a place outside of the demarcation of where they are serving, then there need to be protocols put in place. According to the Department of Correctional Services Volume 5 of Revised Procedure Manual, Unit 7, when an offender violates any of the parole conditions set for him/her, he/she must be summoned to the office and they must be given a chance to explain the reasons for non-compliance. According to the manual, if the reasons are not valid or unacceptable the following can be done:

- Put into operation the suspended portion of community service.
- Recommend adjustment of conditions to accommodate the personal circumstances of the offender.
- Recommend attendance of additional programmes.
- Instruct the offender to appear before court.

However, in serious circumstances where an offender has repeated crimes or the severity of crime is risky, a warrant of arrest will be issued for investigative purposes (Department of Correctional Services Volume 5 of Revised Procedure Manual, Unit 7).

4.1.5 Theme five: Quality of community corrections services

This section of the study sought to find out from the participants the quality of services they received from the Brits Community Corrections and the Department of Department of Correctional Services. In their responses of the quality of services, some themes emerged and discussed below.

Table 5: Quality of Community Corrections Services
<p>Sub-themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programmes available • Support • Improvements suggested

4.1.5.1 Programmes attended

The participants mentioned the programmes that they had attended when they were still inside the correctional centre and the programmes they attend under the community corrections. Below are their responses:

“The programme that has impacted me was ‘Cross-road’. The motto of ‘Cross-road’ is to show you that you are in control of decisions you make. The other programme is ‘Restorative Justice’ that teaches me to accept what I have lost...I also did ‘Anger Management’ course which helps to manage my anger ...I also did ‘Victim Offender Dialogue’. Here I just do community service where I will be called to work around the office...” - Tony

“...ehh I did ‘Life Skills’, other programmes I forgot and in the community corrections I go through supervision and helping around the office with renovations or cleaning...” - Thomas

“I attended ‘Life Skills’, ‘Anger Management’, ‘Restorative Justice’...in community corrections, I am attending a programme ran by the social worker and it is about life skills and anger management.” - Terry

“...I just do community service, being called to come work in the community corrections office. It helps me because, I did not know how to paint but now I know how to paint...” - Thabo

“I attend social worker’s programme even the ‘Anger Management’ programme. I also did HIV programmes.” - Tammy

From the data presented, it shows that the offenders have gone through extensive programmes to help them to be rehabilitated, ranging from life skills to anger management. Assessing the responses of Terry and Tammy, it shows that they are still attending therapeutic programmes offered by the social worker at the community corrections. However, the other three parolees seem to be more involved in the community work service as they reported that they would be called to the community corrections facilities when there is maintenance work to do such as painting or cleaning. That helps the offenders to keep busy in the community and to continue the journey of being rehabilitated after being reintegrated into the community. Lekalakala (2016:16) argues that programmes at the South African Department of Correctional Services are not effective in changing the offenders’ behaviour. However, the response from Tony demonstrates the programmes have given him insight and have made an impact on his rehabilitation journey. According to the Department of Correctional Services (2018), parolees should be involved in certain programmes if deemed necessary for the offender.

4.1.5.2 Support given by community corrections

The above-mentioned sub-theme emerged when the participants were asked about the quality of support given by community corrections. Below are their responses:

“...they gave support in terms of monitoring my movements and I have access to the social worker who helps me with psychosocial support. I am satisfied with the services offered.” – Tony

“...I get psychosocial support from this office and the monitoring and supervision helps me to stay away from the life of crime...” - Thomas

“They support us by motivating us to stay away from criminal activities and they also empower us by the work they give us around the community corrections offices like painting the walls...that helps me gain experience...” - Terry

“...the support I get is monitoring me to stay away from the life of crime...” - Thabo

“For me I love the support I get from this office, they never give me tough time...” - Tammy

From the data presented above, the parolees seem to be satisfied with the support they receive from the Community Corrections; for example, Tammy expressed that she loves the support she gets from Brits Community Corrections. The support they receive from the community corrections shows impact in their lives; for instance, Thomas and Thabo reported how the support they receive from Brits Community Corrections helps them to stay away from a life of crime. From the data depicted, it is also apparent how crucial it is for offenders to receive psychosocial support even when they are serving their sentence in the community, which helps empower them.

It also helps to equip the parolees with therapeutic services which alleviates some of the social problems they might face in the community. As mandated by The Correctional Services Act 111 of 2008, section 50(1) (a) (iii) (iv), the objectives of community corrections are to enable persons subject to community corrections to be rehabilitated in a way that best keeps them as a vital part of society; and to allow persons subject to community corrections to be fully integrated into society when they have completed their sentences. Therefore, monitoring and supervision, together with the psychosocial services parolees receive from community corrections, are an essential component for ensuring that parolees do not reoffend. Basset (2016:24) suggests that Sweden is far ahead of Canada when it comes to electronic monitoring which is considered to achieve the best results for reducing recidivism in Sweden. However, in the case of Brits Community Corrections, the data shows that

monitoring is not done electronically but the method used still empowers the offenders to stay away from a life of crime and that shows community corrections offers a good quality service to its offenders.

4.1.5.3 Improvements suggested

The parolees were asked for their honest opinion regarding any improvements that could be made to ensure that their needs are met during their sentences. Four parolees had suggestions as follows:

“I wish they could make the movement a bit flexible especially regarding jobs.” - Tony

“I wish we could be helped with jobs...sometimes we do community services around the community and they only give us food and not money, and when we get home, we don't even have toiletries. So I wish we could be helped with jobs.” - Thomas

“We wish the government can help to erase our criminal records. We know there are other people who break the laws even after being on parole but there are some of us who have changed for real but we disadvantaged to make our lives better outside due to the criminal record. I also wish community corrections could help us have a workshop because even if we have qualifications most companies do not want us due to the criminal record. I wish they could support us with getting jobs. We have kids; we need to eat so we need money.” – Terry

“I just wish the employees could stop calling us ‘Seboshwa’ [prisoner]. Yes I am an offender, however it was not my intentions and I am still human.” – Tammy

From the findings of the study, it is clear that most of the suggestions made related to curbing the poverty and unemployment issues that the parolees find themselves in. The parolees wish to be assisted with being linked to job opportunities to being able to financially support their families, like Terry expressed: *“we have kids; we need to eat so we need money”*. The emergent problem from the above data is that having a criminal record makes it difficult to be integrated into the community. That is one of the factors that contributes to parolees not being able to find a job. With that being said, while being on parole is a privilege, one is still being supervised and monitored and not completely free. That explains why Tony made a suggestion of flexibility which addresses the issue of having conditions that become a barrier when trying to make a living to sustain oneself. In South Africa, an offender can apply for an expungement of their criminal record so that there will not be a barrier to employment opportunities; however, not all offenders are eligible for it especially if they were sentenced to a direct imprisonment (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2022).

Ndike (2014:34) argues that rehabilitative programmes offered inside the correctional setting are not linked to employment opportunities in the community.

The researcher holds the notion that the South African Department of Correctional Services does put in effort to ensure that offenders are equipped with technical skills necessary for different work industries and that is education is also freely accessible. The objectives of formal education in the South African Department of Correctional Services are to offer career orientated and market related education programmes and services to offenders under their care (Department of Correctional Services, 2022). However, from the data gathered from the participants, it suggests that more effort is focussed on therapeutic programmes that help offenders to be more law-abiding citizens than on the skills needed to obtain jobs. Only a few offenders are able to get jobs through the skills they have developed inside the correctional facilities, but it is difficult for those who have no skills at all. Others find themselves in the predicament of having the skills yet, as mentioned, their criminal record becomes an obstruction to employment.

The last emergent suggestion made by Tammy addresses the issue of being stigmatized and being labelled as an offender. It can be argued that in most countries, people who break the law are viewed as criminals or offenders and this is supported by the data gathered; as Tammy mentioned, she is referred to as '*sboshwa*' which translates to a prisoner. However, that is not the case in Sweden, hence the significance in rehabilitation of their offenders. People who break the law in Sweden are primarily seen as people with needs who need to be helped for their behaviour to be corrected (James, 2014). In that country, underlying problems or factors that lead to criminal behaviour are understood and taken into consideration when trying to eliminate those problems. The researcher holds the notion that labelling a person has a negative impact as it affects their sense of self to the extent that they might not believe that they are rehabilitated and changed individuals because they are still being called a '*prisoner*', even though they are integrated in the society.

According to Teater (2014:76), social constructivism is based on the premise that individuals' realities are continually transforming and adapting to their experiences which they encounter in their lives. This is the reality of all the offenders; they led lives of crime before being incarcerated. After going through the process of rehabilitation inside the correctional centre, they found themselves being integrated back into the community where they faced a new reality of being a parolee and experienced different phases and challenges of life pertaining to now being a parolee. This demonstrates how social constructivism best describes the experiences of what the parolees go through, hence the suggestions that the parolees made that address their current experiences under Brits Community Corrections.

4.2 Findings from key informants

It was of paramount importance to interview key informants who are directly involved in the parole supervision and monitoring of parolees to ensure that parolees comply with their sentence conditions. The social worker, together with the parole officers were interviewed. This next section presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged during the interviews with them.

4.2.1 Professional background

The key informants were asked about their professional background to better understand their professional attributes; which adds value and is important to ensure that the Community Corrections functions according to its mandate. Below are the responses of the key informants:

“Ok, I have done my normal Social Work degree at Potchefstroom when it was still university of CHO, then I started working in 2000. I was few months a community service worker and child welfare for one year and 6 years in NGO Welfare. I started to work at the end of 2006 at Department of Correctional Services. I worked at the maximum facility first before I started working here [Brits Community Corrections]” - Social worker

“I have Matric. After my Matric, I have a BA degree and a post-graduate diploma in education which I obtained prior to joining the Department. So I joined the Department in 2000, I started working at the prison until 2005 and since then I have been working here at Community Corrections working as a monitoring officer. I am responsible for probationers and parolees.” - Participant A

“I am a correctional officer under monitoring, I have grade 12. I did policing, however I did not finish my studies. However when I joined the correctional services, I got training offered by the Department. So I have experience when it comes to monitoring offenders.” - Participant B

“My basic training in correctional services I did it in 1990, then from there I was working in the centre where I was guarding the offenders and taking them to do their commitments, like going to the courts or hospital. I was in also in charge of the farms for some time until 1994 when I came to Losperfontein. Then in 1997 I was appointed by the commissioner to be a monitoring official in the community corrections. In 1999 I started doing RMCS until now in

2012. My qualifications are grade 12 and I have correctional service admin. There were two modules which is 'Prison Matters' and 'Statistics Personnel and Finance'." - Participant C

From the data presented above, it shows that all the key informants have a formal educational background and all of them have more than three years' experience within working in the Department of Correctional Services. This demonstrates that Brits Community Corrections complies with hiring the relevant staff to fill the positions in the organisation. From Participants B and C, it is evident that the department also ensures that they invest in the professional development of their staff as both had training offered by the department so as to be able to monitor and supervise offenders. That assists in ensuring that the mandate of the Community Corrections is fulfilled in terms of monitoring and supervising parolees and offering quality services.

4.2.2 Experiences working at Community Corrections

The social worker was asked about her experiences working at Brits Community Corrections. She is the only professional social worker working for the Department of Correctional Services at Brits Community Corrections. The role of social workers in correctional facilities are critical, and with only one social worker carrying the social work caseload, it can be envisaged that this will cause a backlog in cases and professional burnout. In the interviews with the social worker, the following themes emerged:

Table 6: Experiences working at Brits Community Corrections
Sub-themes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Differences between Maximum Facility and Community Corrections• Roles and responsibilities

4.2.2.1 Differences between maximum facility and community corrections

The above-mentioned was a sub-theme that emerged when the social worker was asked of her working experience. This is what she had to say:

"It was a big frustration for me when I moved because when I was working in the maximum facility in the Free State they told me that Free State is the worst but there we were able to do skills development. They had a centre there at Olifantsfontain and people could do their internship in prison, they literally become qualified plumbers and builders and whatever the offenders could have done. That's the environment I come from in the DCS, that's where I

used to work. So that maximum is very much different from the medium facilities we've got here, its people with very long sentences. That is the people I used to work with so I enjoyed the work there... when I went to a pre-release centre [Brits Facilities] it was different, there was no challenge with therapy because it's mostly people with petty crimes and most struggling with substance abuse even though drugs are not allowed inside prison but that was the reality so at Community Corrections it's challenging and I get to work with children who are on supervision to prevent them from being sent into the correctional facility and work with both genders." - Social worker

From the social worker's comments, it is clear that even though all prison facilities in South Africa fall under the Department of Correctional Services, the facilities differ and are not standard in terms of resources. The social worker compared the three correctional facilities that she has worked in. She emphasised how the facility she worked in at the Free State had a development centre which had a positive impact towards the reintegration of the offenders. She stated that: *"they had a centre there that Olifantsfontain and people could do their internship in prison, they literally become qualified plumbers and builders and whatever the offenders could have done"*. However, that is not the reality of all maximum and medium facilities in South Africa.

The social worker's observations support the statement by Magadze (2016:2) that where correctional facilities and community resources exist and can be mobilised, the offenders' re-entry process can be more effectively managed in order to alleviate the likelihood of recidivism (Magadze, 2016:2). The researcher holds the same view as Paulson (2013:7), that recidivism is a combined societal failure that is due to barriers and limited resources.

The social worker also reported how the pre-lease centre was mostly populated with offenders who had committed petty crimes and therefore she mostly deals with substance abuse. She further alluded that even though drugs are not allowed within the correctional facility, she deals with offenders who still have access to them within the facility. That raises a question regarding control within South African correctional facilities, and how the centres provide an environment that aids offenders to become fully rehabilitated. This is particularly concerning given the myriad of social issues within the centres like substance abuse and gangsterism. Nel (2017:2-3) also states that although Correctional Services has solutions to combat gangsterism, the solutions cannot be merely managed because of the predominance of gangs that remain a threat. The social worker also stated how she enjoys working with community corrections where there is flexibility in terms of the offenders she interacts with, as she works not only with parolees but with probationers as well.

4.2.2.2 Roles and responsibilities

It was important to highlight the roles and the responsibilities of the key informants to further gain an understanding of the phenomenon of parole and the role it serves in ensuring that offenders are rehabilitated. Below is what the key informants had to say about their roles and responsibility at Brits Community Corrections:

"...I do 'Anger Management' programme and 'Life Skills', so what I do, I concentrate on relationships, self-image that's inside life skills. I even give them training on entrepreneurial skills trying to teach them how a budget works because others don't. I do 'Substance Abuse' programme, those are the type of things I concentrate on. I also do the 'Restorative Justice'. I am also working with the families to give them psychosocial support." - Social worker

"My daily responsibilities are ensuring that all parolees and probationers who are to be released on a particular day, are called in and have an exit interview with them and discharge them from the system. Any other parolees and probationers who came to the office, it is my primary job to admit them into the system and to explain the parole conditions, as well as referring to the RMCS and social worker for further management." - Participant A

"My duties are to report to my supervisor and that's where I will get directives as to where I will be conducting monitoring according to the schedule used in the office, so we go to different places to go monitor the offenders. We have different categories of offenders from low-risk to high-risk offenders, so it depends on that day which category of offenders we are monitoring; sometimes we can even monitor 50 offenders in a day. When I do monitoring, I meet the offenders to make them sign and I meet the caregiver to get collateral information on the offender's behaviour at home. If we find that the parolee is not behaving or breaking his parole conditions then we warn that person, however if that parolee is a risk then we revoke him. " - Participant B

"As a parole officer my duties is to see to it that the parolees do their parole sentence as prescribed. As I am a parole officer, I meet them monthly in consultations to check if they are right with their caregivers at home and to check how we can adjust their house arrest. We give them house arrest, however we give them time to go seek for work, time to go to church, however when the parolee is employed we adjust their house arrest. The house arrest works like this on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday we give them 7- 3 to seek for work, on a Tuesday and Thursday is full day arrest, they don't go anywhere. On A Saturday we give them only 4 hours for shopping and on a Sunday only if they affiliate to a church or sport activity, we give them time but we need proof of affiliation. With the employed we change adjust their house arrest to fit their work schedule. We also look into corrective measures

maybe when the parolee does not comply then we can change their house arrest conditions and if the parolee violated their parole conditions, then we do investigation and we see that person is not suitable to be on parole then we refer report to the Parole Board and they decide to revoke that parolee” - Participant C

From the key informants' statements, it is apparent that the parole officials have different duties that complement one another to ensure that community corrections achieves its goals, the ultimate being to ensure successful reintegration of offenders in the community and to keep the community safe. The social worker's role is pivotal as she offers psychosocial support to the offenders as they continue the journey of rehabilitation outside the correctional facilities in the community. There are social problems that parolees face as highlighted above, hence the essential role the social worker plays in running therapeutic programmes and linking offenders to relevant services outside of the correctional centre.

Participant A highlighted the important role of orientation. Offenders are orientated when they are admitted into community corrections so that they gain full insight of all their parole conditions and what to expect going forward. The researcher is of the impression that orientation is an important part of admission to community corrections to ensure successful reintegration and to build relationships with the parolees.

Participant B provided an idea of how the practical monitoring of offenders within the community works. This brings the question of how the Department deals with high-risk offenders who might reoffend or abscond. The researcher highlighted in Chapter 2 how a lot is not mentioned about the significance of electronic monitoring of offenders. Sweden shows evidence that electronic monitoring serves the ultimate purpose of parole, which is to ensure that the offender is reintegrated into society because it is believed that they are rehabilitated (Basset, 2016:24). Participant C also detailed some of the restrictions that parolees face while finishing their sentence in society. The participant mentioned that the conditions are linked to the parole sentence and that in essence the parolees should not consider themselves completely free as parole is an alternative to incarceration. Therefore, parolees are still serving their sentence in the community and should still comply with the rules as they were taught to comply while they were still inside the correctional centre.

4.2.3 Challenges faced by parolees

The key informants were also asked to provide their professional perspective on the challenges faced by parolees. This section provides that information with a discussion on each of the emergent sub-themes.

Table 7: Challenges faced by parolees

Sub-themes:

- Lack of facilities
- Substance abuse
- Socio-economic challenges
- Capacity

4.2.3.1 Lack of facilities

Lack of facilities was one of the sub-themes that emerged when the social worker was interviewed and asked about the challenges that the parolees face. Below is what she had to say:

“The challenge is that there is no resources...in the beginning when I started working here I was able to send people to SANCA [South African National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence] in Klerksdorp if they have a substance abuse problem. It doesn't work like that anymore, there is no facility in the whole of North West that is taking them in if they come through government because remember they do not have money to pay. So there is one facility in the area where they need to pay R3,000 a month but my clients still cannot afford. There are people who try to start NGO's but they got no training and no qualification and they do not reach anything. I did have contact with NA [Narcotics Anonymous] and AA [Alcoholics Anonymous], there is one at Haarties and they used to help me but the problem with them it is rehabilitated people, all of them used to be drug addicts, there is no consistency because they backslide. How can I use people like that to teach the offenders? If they need to go through the court system, they must say they want to help and that is the one thing and it is difficult for them to say they need help and second thing there is no place and it discourages the probation officers from doing through the court system because we need to wait for Gauteng to have an opening, so they help the whole of Gauteng first and if there is a space available that is when they admit a person from North West.” - Social worker

The social worker highlighted the challenges that impact directly on the process of rehabilitation of the parolees. The rehabilitation journey still continues even after reintegrating into society, therefore resources are needed to aid the offender to become fully rehabilitated. However, from what the social worker reiterated, there is a lack of facilities in North West

especially in terms of drug rehabilitation centres which is problematic as most offenders struggle with substance abuse.

The social worker also highlighted how some of the available facilities do not have the capacity to fulfil the needs of an offender who has a substance abuse problem. For instance, she mentioned how NGOs have been established in the community to address the substance abuse pandemic. Magadze (2016:93) proves how NGOs are helpful in terms of assisting and giving support to offenders to ensure that they are fully rehabilitated; however, that is not the case in Brits where most NGOs do not have the capacity to assist in drug rehabilitation because their staff are not qualified professionals who can provide holistic treatment for addiction and give proper support.

Another challenge that the social worker spoke of was the procedure that must be followed to receive help and the challenge that lies in the demarcation of areas. For example, when a rehabilitation organisation has space for admission in Gauteng, a Gauteng resident would be prioritised over someone seeking admission from North West. Therefore, parolees find themselves in the predicament of having difficulties with admission to a drug rehabilitation centre. With that being said, the social worker explained the reality of her challenges according to how she experiences them, which confirms the social constructivism theory which is based on the premise that individuals' realities are continually transforming and adapting to the experiences in their lives (Teater, 2014:76).

4.2.3.2 Substance abuse

It makes sense that substance abuse was one of the emergent sub-themes as previously the lack of drug rehabilitation centres was discussed. Below is a description of the substance abuse challenges that parolees face:

“The biggest issue I see, especially with substance abuse that happens with a lot of offenders, is that they never quit using dagga when in prison, so they are already busy with the entry drug when they are released so it is easy to go back to 'nyaope' [local slang for substance mixed with dagga, herion and other unknown substances]. Then the clinics try to help by giving methadone and the offenders become addicted to the methadone and there are pharmacies that make methadone easily available in small packages for something like R30 so if they are not on 'nyaope' then they are on that. That's the reality of what we are working with, you fighting a battle you cannot win when it comes to substance abuse. And because they are inside the community and if they got a substance abuse problem then I cannot see all of them at once. Remember, our area is big so I cannot see all of them at once then I must go to different areas so it is difficult to secure a place where they will be willing to

accommodate me or I would send out letters with the monitoring officials to invite them to come for substance abuse programme and others would not come.” - Social worker

The above description shows how substance abuse is a prominent challenge amongst parolees. The social worker highlighted how the problem starts when the offenders are still incarcerated, because when they are still inside the centre, they do not quit smoking. Magadze (2016:34) proves *“that two in five male ex-offenders and three in five female ex-offenders released from correctional facilities reported a combination of physical, mental, and substance abuse problems”*. Magadze (2016:34) further asserts that even among those who are in good health, the issue of substance abuse can be a stumbling block to a successful transition from correctional facilities to the community.

Therefore, when offenders get released, they are more prone to go back to a more addictive drug like ‘*nyaope*’ and clinics usually provide methadone which is a drug medication that helps people who are trying to quit smoking. However, some offenders find themselves being addicted to the methadone itself because it is also easily accessible. According to American Addiction Centres (2022), methadone is a long-acting synthetic opioid painkiller that is mostly utilised to treat people who suffer from addiction. American Addiction Centres (2022) further alludes that methadone is easily accessible due to its reasonable price. Hence most offenders can afford methadone and tend to become addicted to it.

4.2.3.3 Socio-economic challenges

Socio-economic challenges was another of the sub-themes that emerged when the key informants were interviewed. In the interviews, they described some of the parolees’ experience of the myriad socio-economic challenges.

“With COVID, there is no job, there is no facilities in North West, there is nowhere we can help with skills development to work. What I do to help those who are old enough with old age grants and others don’t have IDs and with Department of Home Affairs, they need to prove that they are South African but now there is this man who was 20 years incarcerated and 5 years on parole and they have to trace which primary school so it would take 2-3 years for that person to get help meanwhile they cannot get a grant. At least with the Department of Health they have access to health care even when they don’t have ID so with medical report of the prison they manage to get medications, but it is difficult to use medication when you have nothing to eat. Poverty is also a reality so they do not come from families that can take care of their basic needs, it is one of the reasons they go back to prison.” - Social worker

“Most parolees would be excited to go home and to join their families but some of them would not find the situation the way they expect it to be like. Some of them are involved in family feuds over maybe accommodation or whatever conflict that would be in the family. The most common problem is adaptability, where there are no longer parents in that particular homestead, there is a serious problem with siblings or relatives concerning the ownership of the particular place.” - Participant A

“Most challenges faced by the offenders is being released to a family that is financially struggling and we know that those parolees won’t find a job immediately and that can lead the parolees to reoffend.” – Participant B

“The common challenge is acceptance in the community, those are the challenges when we integrate the offenders in the community... we sometimes find that the community is prepared to integrate with offenders then you find other offenders are not ready to integrate in the community. But sometimes we win through making an awareness though community services being done and the community can see that that person is a parolee and their serving the community. The other challenge is reoffending, they reoffend with serious crimes, the modus operandi is the same. Those who have stolen they steal, those who killed, kill. They repeat their previous offenses.” - Participants C

From the above statements of the key informants, a myriad of socio-economic challenges were highlighted and can be grouped under the following sub-themes:

- Unemployment/ poverty
- Identity Documentation issues
- Family issues
- Stigma
- Recidivism

The social worker mentioned how parolees face unemployment which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. From the social worker’s description of the problems that offenders face, she mentioned how some struggle with getting identity documents because the procedure is lengthy. Participant B also mentioned how parolees might return to their families and find them financially deprived which confirms what the social worker said about parolees experiencing poverty. Participant A described how other parolees return to families where there is conflict, especially in homes where the parents or elders are no longer alive and the remaining family members do not want to accommodate the parolee. This can also

pose a risk of offenders reoffending when they find themselves in home environments that do not offer support. Hence the White Paper (2005:34) also claims that dysfunctional families provide circumstances for ex-offenders to relapse to a life of crime; which is evident that families and the community at large are also responsible for ensuring that offenders do not go back to a life of crime by offering a conducive space for them. Having full support from the community and family plays in an important role in encouraging the offender not to reoffend.

Participant C also mentioned how communities would not accept offenders into them which goes back to the problem of offenders being stigmatized instead of being seen as rehabilitated people. The researcher holds the same sentiments of Lekalakala (2016:1) who said that when dealing with criminal behaviour, the restorative justice system is of paramount vitality in terms of addressing issues relating to stigma attached to offenders. Hegger (2015) suggests that in all efforts to reduce the escalating rate of recidivism, community corrections officers can use the restorative justice model to bring those under supervision directly in contact with victims. Although this method does not work in all cases, as was depicted in the data presentation, some victims might still not be ready to forgive the offender.

4.2.3.4 Capacity

Capacity was one of the concerns that the social worker raised and below is what she had to say:

“We have 365 people on parole; however, I cannot see all of them, I use monitoring officials to help me identify those who might need my services. Parolees see themselves as already rehabilitated therefore they would say they do not need programmes. Some parolees would have recommendations from the Board to attend programmes, however the Board doesn’t always recommend that. I encourage some to attend the programmes and they would enjoy once they start. With the number of parolees we have, and being from different places, I cannot reach everyone.” - Social worker

It makes sense why the social worker would highlight that not all parolees are reachable, and that challenge might not only negatively impact the social worker, but also impact on parolees who most need social work services but are not reachable. The social worker reported that Brits Community Corrections has 365 parolees (as of 2022), but as she is the only social worker, she does not have the capacity to reach out to all of them. Having parole officers also helps in terms of ensuring that monitoring and supervision is done to reach all parolees. The social worker also described how other parolees already viewed themselves as rehabilitated, not taking into cognisance that they were still serving their sentence in the community and that their journey of rehabilitation was still ongoing. Matetoa (cited by Fourie, 2015:80)

argues that South African DCS is faced with staffing challenges, with social workers and psychologists falling under the top vacant positions. This confirms what the social worker at Brits experiences in terms of not being able to reach all parolees to render services as she is the only social worker.

4.2.4 Views on the parole system

This section of the study sought to conceptualise the views of professionals regarding the effectiveness of the parole system, as they work directly with the parolees. Two sub-themes emerged, namely the successes of parole to rehabilitate offenders and suggestions that the key informants had to ensure that the needs of the parolees are met to achieve the purpose of parole.

Table 8: Views on the parole system

Sub-themes:

- Successes
- Suggestions

4.2.4.1 Successes

The study also sought to identify the successes of the parole system to determine its effectiveness. Below, the key informants describe the successes that they have had with parole in rehabilitating offenders.

“We got successful offenders, there’s only one lifer that I know who has reoffended.” - Social worker

“Most parolees who are old are successfully integrated, especially those who are 40 years and above.” - Participant A

“According to me, the parole system works and it depends on the offender. The offender can declare that they are rehabilitated only to find out that that person is not rehabilitated and they might only spend two months complying and then we have to that process of revoking the offender. So according to me, the success of parole depends on the willingness of the offender to comply.” - Participant B

“The success of community corrections or parole is for those have studied and have empowered themselves in the prison, are better off when on parole but those who did not

empower themselves, they commit recidivism. But we encourage parolees to seek for employment or to empower themselves. We also have a register where we have all the parolees and their skills and we submit it at Department of Labour and when we meet with kings and ndonas [traditional leaders] we are able to link them to parolees who have skills for the services they need.” - Participant C

From the above data representation, it is seen that despite all the challenges that offenders face with being reintegrated into the community, there are still success stories. The social worker declared that she knew of only an insignificant number of offenders who had reoffended. That suggests that recidivism is not such a significant problem at Brits Community Corrections even though there are many risk factors that can lead parolees to reoffend. There is a correlation between crime and age; other researchers like Farrington (1986) as cited by Cornelius et al. (2017) and cited earlier when discussing the biographical details of offenders, argue that the rate of criminal behaviour increases throughout the adolescent stage and then decreases as the person ages. This is supported by Participant A who said that most parolees who are 40 years and above are successfully reintegrated into their communities.

According to Participant B, the success of parole is also dependant on the individual and specifically if they are willing to change. Hence the Department puts effort into ensuring that offenders get therapeutic services to assist them to make better decisions. Participant C also stated that parolees who have received formal education or gained skills inside the correctional facility are better off than those who did not empower themselves for the job industry, because those that did not empower themselves end up reoffending. Participant C also described how the centre works with different stakeholders to ensure that they assist parolees in terms of jobs. Lekalakala (2016:1) argues that the Department of Correctional Services has a challenge to provide support to offenders beyond the reintegration programmes; further adding that support may be through other stakeholders to monitor offenders. However from what Participant C said, it shows that effort is made to provide support beyond the reintegration programmes.

4.2.4.2 Suggestions

The key informants also made suggestions in terms of ensuring that Brits Community Corrections achieves its objectives when it comes to successful reintegration of offenders into society. Below is what they had to say:

“You know what is lacking with us, we got a risk assessment but it is very broad, it is something that they use in the office to assess offenders when they admit but it is not

therapeutic and DCS spent a lot of time for social workers in prison than here in community corrections. There is that most assessment documents used are documents used in prison are given to us to use here. So, when I do a different programme, it means I didn't get that programme from DCS. The social workers working in prison, they get programmes from DCS but it cannot be used here, they have done something for youth on parole but there is nothing for any other groups to use for people that are outside. Everything is designed for people incarcerated. I am doing the programme that I developed myself because I didn't get any material from DCS. It is the same with risk assessment tool, there's got an assessment that we've got, the first level assessment and we can use it and it can work for therapeutic, but it is not developed for somebody that comes out for parole. I think we need something else that we can use because we see them for orientation so it must not be a long thing that is gonna take 2-3 hours. We need to make a quick risk assessment this could be the possibilities, this is the intervention I need make then it can help but we do not have something like that, I have been asking for it for many years...and their other lack is that we do not get files to see the therapeutic process that comes from prison so the social workers do not send those files. So, when I do orientation, then I do not have the history so I need to start from scratch and there is no time.” - Social worker

“As Community Corrections we are doing everything with the amount of resources we have, we monitor them, we do offer them programmes and we visit them at their places. Unfortunately, we cannot do it alone, we need the involvement of the family, stakeholders and community members. The family needs to be involved, because other families give all the responsibility to the community corrections and we cannot monitor parolees for 24 hours, we only do visits, so it is better when the families and the community at large do assist.” – Participant A

“According to me, I believe that things can be better if the Department can assist in terms of creating jobs for the offenders being released. I wish if the Department could work with various companies to assist offenders to serve in those companies with the skills that they have learned inside prison, so as to create job opportunities.” - Participant B

“I think what can be done is upon admission they should check their educational level and they should not release those who have not acquired any skill because those without skills most the time they idle and they end up committing crime. And if we could build a relationship with public sector and they can employ our parolees, because most the time parolees don't get employed because of criminal record and criminal record stays for long, sometimes for life, and it is unfair because those offenders would have been rehabilitated and they can be monitored.” - Participant C

From the above data presentation, the key informants' suggestions can be summarised as follows:

- Have social work tools and programmes that are specifically designed for community corrections instead of using tools that are designed for use inside correctional centres.
- Develop quick risk assessments and social work reports in prison that can be sent to community corrections so that the social worker has the history of the offender who is being admitted.
- Have families be involved in giving support to monitor and supervise offenders.
- The Department should try and create job opportunities for offenders by partnering with some private companies that would be willing to employ offenders and by building relationships with public centres to assist offenders with jobs without their criminal record being a hurdle.

The comments clearly show that despite both the correctional centre and community corrections having the same purpose, which is to rehabilitate offenders, they are environmentally different. Therefore, it makes sense that some of the tools used to assess and admit an offender straight into a prison programme might not necessarily be effective for someone who is being admitted into a community reintegration programme. The social worker suggested that as much as programmes and tools are developed for prisons, tools and programmes must also be developed and implemented for community corrections. The social worker also suggested that thorough social work reports, including the history of the offender, should be transferred to community corrections with the offender. This will reduce the time spent on the process of admission and will provide the social worker with an idea of the therapeutic interventions that the offender has already received. Participant A emphasized how families should also play an active role when it comes to ensuring that monitoring and supervision is successful.

Ndike (2014:31) argues that successful social reintegration cannot be achieved by legislation and institutions alone. Families of offenders and the community at large have an important role to play in assisting and supporting offenders to adjust in the community (Ndike 2014:31). According to the White Paper (2005:36), the Department of Correctional Services is willing to work with other societal institutions in advocating for restoration of families and communities; however, the question is: does the community fully understand the responsibility that they have when it comes to societal responsibility?

From what Participant A said, it would suggest that families might not understand that they are also responsible for ensuring that parolees are well reintegrated and abide by the parole condition rules. Participants B and C both suggested that to solve the most common problems of unemployment and poverty, it is necessary to strengthen relationships with other stakeholders who could employ parolees. They also identified the need to make adjustments to the screening process of offenders eligible for parole. The most important factor identified was to ensure that parolees leave the centre with either a formal education or skills that will give them an advantage when looking for a job.

4.3 Conclusion

The data that was gathered from all the participants shows that Brits Community Corrections plays an important role in ensuring that parolees are successfully reintegrated into society. The data showed that there are a myriad of challenges faced by offenders; however, with the support of the centre they are to get the assistance that they need. All participants had insight of the phenomenon being researched and more information was drawn from that.

The next chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations emanating from the research.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the conclusions drawn from the study and makes recommendations therefrom. The conclusions and recommendations made are based on the themes and sub-themes that emerged from discussions with the participants during the study. The overall objectives and aims of the study have been met and the results in chapter four answer the research questions that were raised.

5.2 Re-establishing the aims and objectives of the study

The study aimed to explore how parole assists in rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders in the community of Brits in the North West Province.

To achieve this aim, the following objectives were set:

1. To explore the role of parole in successful rehabilitation of parolees and reintegrating them into the Brits community.
2. To explore the experiences of parolees concerning rehabilitation and reintegration into their community.
3. To conceptualise the views of parole officials concerning the parole system in rehabilitating offenders and reintegrating them in the community.

5.3 Major findings

The study sought to explore the experiences of parolees, to describe how it feels to be on parole, and to ascertain whether parole is an effective method of rehabilitating offenders. Furthermore, the study aimed to conceptualise the views of professionals working with parole regarding its effectiveness and the challenges associated with its implementation.

By exploring the experiences of parolees, the study unpacked the purpose of parole and the role that Brits Community Corrections plays in ensuring that society stays safe and the offenders are successfully reintegrated into the society. Surprisingly, the study found that parole does not serve as an effective method of rehabilitating offenders in the Brits area as recidivism is rife amongst parolees.

The major finding was that all parolees who were interviewed experienced similar challenges. Amongst the myriad challenges they face, all parolees confirmed that economic ones were the most dominant. This finding was verified by the key informants who work in the parole system and who admitted that parolees face a host of economic challenges. The study found that parolees are prone to poverty and unemployment as their criminal records hamper them from seeking employment. With the high rates of poverty in the Brits area, parolees are forced to commit crimes to deal with economic issues. This is confirmed as a predictor of possible criminal behaviour by the social disorganisation theory (Bond, 2015).

The study also found that parolees are prone to stigma in the Brits communities in which they are reintegrated. Community members in the area do not seem to get over the crimes the parolees have committed and hence continue to stigmatise parolees when efforts are made to reintegrate them into the community. Ecosystems theory connects the hostile environment around the parolee as being influential for recidivism, hence stigma as a hostile response from the community towards the parolee can be linked to recidivism (Paulson, 2013).

Another major finding of the study was that the parole system used in Brits is old and does not meet global technological standards to prevent recidivism and reoffending (Basset, 2016). The Brits Community Corrections staff; however, are supportive and work hard to implement the rehabilitation mandate. However, it is unclear if the whole country has such an old parolee monitoring system. Whilst the parole system is old, crime seems to be advanced which renders the parole system less effective in rehabilitating offenders in the Brits area. Parolees did, however, make some suggestions on how some aspects of the parole system could be improved.

5.4 Limitations of the study

A limitation of the study is that the study initially intended to involve at least five key informants, including two social workers and three parole officers. The study, however, could only include one social worker because Brits Community Corrections only has one social worker. This meant that only one social worker participated in the study. However, the study managed to gather all essential information from the social worker as she had a wealth of information due to her intense involvement in the parole system. It is fortunate that the data saturation point was met with four key informants.

Another limitation of the study was that the venue which the researcher used to interview the participants had a lot of disturbances. However, proper arrangements and interview times were scheduled such that participants' privacy was maintained and disturbances were

reduced to allow proper gathering of the information. Further, all interviews were audio-recorded to ensure that information was not lost when there were disturbances.

Finally, it was not always possible to establish whether the parolees were in fact being truthful in their responses.

5.5 Conclusions of the study

Several conclusions based on the information provided by the participants can be drawn from the study. Conclusions drawn from discussions with the parolees are presented first, followed by those emanating from the interviews with the key informants.

5.5.1 Conclusions drawn from parolees

5.5.1.1 Theme one: Background

As different factors contribute to criminal behaviour, it was important for the study to record the parolees' backgrounds in order to understand their experiences. The biographical information collected also presented the criminal behaviour that the offenders had before they entered the rehabilitation process. It can be recognized from the findings of this study that most of the offenders interviewed were youths from dysfunctional families who came from areas where crime is rife. They had committed crimes of murder, attempted murder, theft and robbery. The background of the offenders demonstrated that they faced numerous challenges that might have contributed to their criminal behaviour. The study also found that none of the offenders had completed their Matric; they have all dropped out of school.

5.5.1.2 Theme two: Factors that led to crime

The study concludes that there are many factors that lead people to commit crime. The research found that the parolees had committed crimes of murder, attempted murder, theft and robbery, and that the parolees had circumstances which led them to situations where they committed those crimes. The most common factors that led to crimes being committed were alcohol abuse and anger issues. The two parolees that had committed the crimes of murder and attempted murder attested to having committed those crimes while under the influence of alcohol. The parolees also attested to having anger issues that they could not control and that was why they found themselves in situations where they harmed other people.

Two other leading factors that contributed to criminal offences being committed were poverty and peer influence. Poverty is the most common cause of crime and it was not surprising that

the offenders mentioned it as one of the factors that led them to commit the crimes of theft and robbery so as to be able to maintain themselves and their families. The impact of poverty and peer influence confirm how the ecosystem theory is relevant in understanding how environments and the interactions thereof influence human behaviour.

5.5.1.3 Theme three: Rehabilitation process

The study concludes that the rehabilitation of offenders is a long process and not a single incident or activity. This was apparent when the parolees revealed that their rehabilitation journey started when they were incarcerated. They reported that through behaving well they became eligible for parole. During the rehabilitation process, the role of the parole officials of Brits Community Corrections is to monitor and supervise the parolees to ensure they adhere to the prescribed parole conditions. Part of the role of the parole officers is to ensure reintegration of parolees into the communities. Whilst this may happen without difficulty, some parolees experience discrimination and the 'Victim Offender Dialogues' do not always work. Some victims do not forgive the parolees which makes reintegration into the communities difficult.

5.5.1.4 Theme four: Challenges experienced

One of the important aspects of the study was to conceptualise the challenges the parolees of Brits Community Corrections face. From the findings, it can be concluded that parolees at Brits Community Corrections face unemployment with the majority of them being restricted because they still carry their criminal record which deters potential employers from employing them. Besides the criminal records, most of the parolees dropped out of school before completing Matric which substantially reduces their employability.

The study concludes that social stigma associated with criminal offenses is prevalent among parolee reintegration communities. Whilst some community members may be receptive to parolees, many parolees face stigmatisation associated with their offences and hence experience limited social interaction.

Another conclusion reached is that parolees have restricted movements which they are generally not happy about. They are required to report their movements they make to the parole officials which reduces their interactions with people.

5.5.1.5 Theme five: The quality of community corrections

The study found that there were various rehabilitative programmes offered at Brits Community Corrections. To determine the quality of the programmes, parolees were asked to

express their views and they reiterated their optimal satisfaction with the programmes offered. However, the study concludes that to some extent, the programmes offered could be improved to meet more of the rehabilitative needs of the parolees. The parolees gave suggestions which they felt would help Community Corrections to improve its services to ensure that their needs are met. Those suggestions included:

- Having a viable system that allows parolees to be flexible, especially when it comes to finding job opportunities.
- Putting in place measures to ensure that their criminal record does not become a hurdle when applying for job opportunities.
- Asking the Department to assist with the creation of job opportunities as most parolees face unemployment.
- Requesting that the Department's employees stop negatively labelling the parolees.

The common solution to the challenges that parolees face is job creation and for the Department to provide direct assistance for the employment of parolees.

5.5.2 Conclusions drawn from key informants

The conclusions drawn in this section of the study relate to the findings from the interviews with the key informants. From the professional information provided, the parole officials at Brits have the necessary professional qualifications and experience to execute their duties. This is key to ensuring that psychosocial support and reintegration of offenders into the community is effective.

5.5.2.1 Experiences of working at Brits Community Corrections

The study sought to investigate the experiences of parole officials working at Brits Community Corrections. From the findings, it can be concluded that there is lack of resources needed to support the mandate of parole services. The social worker reiterated the lack of resources and how it affects the quality of parole services provided to parolees at Brits Community Corrections. The major role and responsibilities of the key informants from Brits Community Corrections are to administer the admission process of parolees into the centre; to orientate the offenders for reintegration into the society; to monitor and supervise offenders, and most importantly, to give support. This requires an arsenal of resources which Brits Community Corrections does not have.

5.5.2.2 Challenges faced by parolees

This study concludes that parolees at Brits Community Corrections face a host of challenges which impinge on the quality of the parole processes. The key informants highlighted the challenges that parolees face at the institution as follows:

- *Lack of facilities* - Brits Community Corrections has a lack of facilities, especially drug rehabilitation centres.
- *Substance abuse* - From the research findings, most parolees are addicted to drugs and most of them started taking drugs while inside prison facilities. Therefore, the rehabilitation process becomes disrupted due to substance abuse.
- *Socio-economic challenges* - The parolees face myriad socio-economic challenges with the primary one being unemployment. The findings indicate that the criminal record of the parolees is the greatest impediment to being able to secure a formal job.
- *Capacity restraints* - Brits Community Corrections currently has high capacity of 365 parolees but not all of them are reachable to receive psychosocial services from the centre because the centre has only one social worker.

5.5.2.3 Views on the parole system

One of the objectives of this study was to conceptualise the views of the key informants with regards to the phenomenon under study. Below are the conclusions drawn from the theme.

Despite some challenges such as stigma and lack of resources, it is concluded that key informants view the parole system as a viable system for rehabilitating offenders and reintegrating them into the community. The key informants' perspective of the parole system is that the mandate of parole, which is to reintegrate offenders back into community as law abiding citizens, is successful. This is in sharp contrast to the views from the parolees who lamented facing a lot of challenges. One of the findings that stood out from the successes identified by the key informants is that the social worker could only recall one offender out of all the parolees who had recommitted a crime.

The other conclusion drawn is that most older parolees do not reoffend. Rehabilitation actually depends on how willing the individual is to change. Interestingly, the parole officers admitted that the parole system could be improved to meet the needs of the parolees. The most common suggestions made were for the Department to link offenders to work opportunities without the criminal record being a hurdle; to have standard assessment tools and programmes specifically for offenders serving in the community, and to have family and society at large involved in monitoring and supervision.

5.6 Recommendations

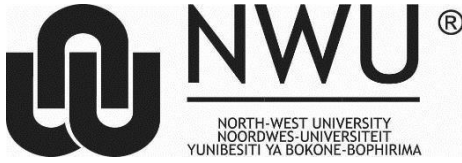
In line with the conclusions that have been drawn from the study, the recommendations are as follows:

- With the challenge of unemployment, the Department of Correctional Services should prioritise building a strong relationship with companies that can absorb qualified parolees and probationers without the criminal record being a hurdle.
- To lessen the rate of crime, the Department of Correctional Services should adopt an element or division of punishment for more serious crimes to deter those who have not yet offended so as to lessen the rate of crime.
- '*Victim Offender Mediations*' which are there to promote restorative justice should have a holistic approach whereby the victims also receive enough psychosocial support and education to prepare for cases where their offender is released into the same community.
- More non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be encouraged to partner with community corrections and to adopt their objectives to establish a more holistic approach to societal responsibility for rehabilitation of offenders.
- More awareness campaigns, such as: '*an offender is still my brother or sister*', should be developed to curb the rate of stigma and labelling that offenders receive.
- Finally, our societies need to be educated about the mandate of correctional services and that it is there to rehabilitate offenders to be better people rather than to punish them.

For further research, the following should be considered:

- Further research should focus on how the community at large views the phenomenon of parole to rehabilitate offenders.
- Further research should also focus on how the rate of recidivism can be lessened through the restorative justice system and the correctional system.

ANNEXURE A



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**Health Sciences Ethics Office for Research,
Training and Support**

**North-West University Health Research Ethics
Committee (NWU-HREC)**
Tel: 018 299-1206
Email: Ethics-HRECApply@nwu.ac.za

26 November 2020

To whom it may concern

APPROVAL OF THE RESEARCH STUDY FROM THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY HEALTH RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NWU-HREC) OF THE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Ethics number: NWU-00479-19-S1

Kindly use the ethics reference number provided above in all future correspondence or documents submitted to the administrative assistant of the North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC).

Study title: Exploring parole in rehabilitating offenders: A study of Brits Area in the North West Province

Study leader/supervisor: Dr M Dube

Student: O Letlape - 25382225

Application type: Single study

Risk level: Medium

You are kindly informed that this application was reviewed at the meeting of the North-West University Health Research Ethics Committee (NWU-HREC), Faculty of Health Sciences, North-West University, held on 24/04/2020. Following review of the application, it has been decided that the study is approved. Approval in this letter means that **final ethics approval** was indeed granted for the **research methodology and the ethical aspects** of this study and that the NWU-HREC has **no further ethical concerns** relating to the research ethics process, except for the outstanding documentation indicated below, which must be provided to the NWU-HREC by the researcher. It is important to mention that this letter indicates that there are no further ethical concerns that exist, regarding the execution of the research. A final ethics letter will be issued upon the receipt of the following documentation:


- a. A copy of the permission letter from you as the provincial Department of Correctional Services, indicating that the study can proceed.

The mentioned document, as indicated above, should be submitted to Ethics-HRECProcess@nwu.ac.za by the researcher, for review before the ethics approval certificate can be provided. This approval is provided *for a year*, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt of an annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation for another year.

Please note: Due to the nature of this research study i.e. (face-to-face in-depth interviews with the parolees, social workers and parole officers within governmental correctional facilities), *this study will have to be placed on hold until the appropriate alert level is reached for the study to proceed*. In order for it to proceed, the researcher will have to *apply to the appropriate REC using the appropriate template* to request that the **study can resume**, once the appropriate alert level is reached. If the researcher has not implemented a *COVID-19 research risk assessment and management analysis and amended the study accordingly*, they will first have to **amend** their study, before they can apply for their research to continue (as setup according to the attached document entitled "COVID-19 research risk assessment and management approach" (Prof Minrie Greeff, 29 June 2020)).

If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact the Faculty of Health Sciences EthicsOffice for Research, Training and Support at Ethics-HRECApply@nwu.ac.za.

Yours sincerely

 Digitally signed
by Prof Petra
Bester
Date: 2020.11.27

Chairperson: NWU-HREC

Current details: (23239522) G:\My Drive\9. Research and Postgraduate Education\9.1.5.3 Letters
Templates\9.1.5.3.6_Gatekeepers_Letter_HREC.docm30 April 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.3.6

ANNEXURE B



correctional services

Department:
Correctional Services
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X 82101, RUSTENBURG 0300 Biblio Plaza, Cnr Nelson Mandela and President Mbeki, RUSTENBURG
Tel (014) 592 5180, Fax (014) 592 1533

FAX COVER SHEET

REFERENCE: 5/10/4

TO:	Ms Letlape O & Head Community Corrections Brits
ORGANISATION:	Department of Correctional Services
FAX:	(014) 592 1533
ATTENTION:	Ms Letlape O & Head Community Corrections: Brits
ENQUIRIES:	Ms Maela RP
FROM:	Area Commissioner: Rustenburg
TEL:	(014) 592 5180
NO. PAGES:	01

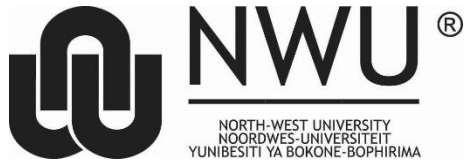
SUBJECT: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON EXPLORING PAROLE IN REHABILITATING OFFENDERS: LETLAPE O :ID NUMBER: 9606190506084 : 10 JANUARY 2022 TO 10 FEBRUARY 2022: RUSTENBURG MANAGEMENT AREA

1. The above matter refers.
2. This office would like to confirm the placement of the above mention NWU Student at Brits Community Corrections: Rustenburg Management Area for collection of data on paroles.
3. The placement will be in line with the attached approval from Head Office and should be adhered to. Ms Gomba MB will be appointed for coaching and mentoring for the specified period.
4. No remuneration or Stipend will be paid to the student by the Department of Correctional Services. Transport allowance will also not be claimed against the Department by the student.
5. Covid 19 regulations should at all times be adhered to.
6. For your attention and further handling.

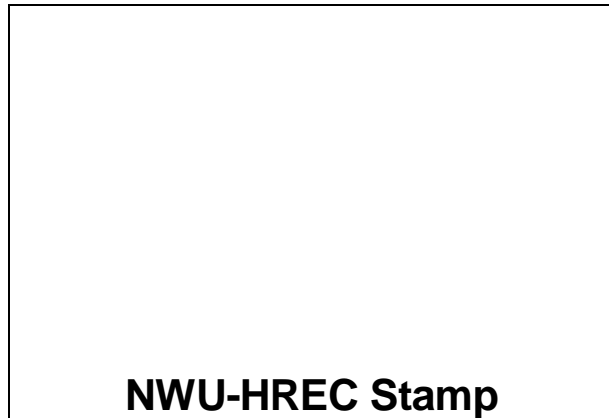

Acting Corporate Services: Rangaka MD
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES: RUSTENBURG

DATE: 2022/01/04

ANNEXURE C



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INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION FOR PAROLEES

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY: Exploring parole in rehabilitating offenders: A study of Brits Area in the North West Province.

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU-00479-19-S1

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr M. Dube

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: Olebogeng Letlape

ADDRESS: 318 Moseja Section, Hebron , 0193

CONTACT NUMBER:063 180 9715

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of a Masters study. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in

any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **NWU-Health Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University (NWU-00479-19-S1)** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

- *We plan to:
Explore how parole rehabilitates and reintegrates offenders in the community of Brits in the North West Province.
To achieve this aim, the following objectives are set:*
 - *To explore the role of parole in successful rehabilitation of parolees and reintegrating them into the Brits community.*
 - *To explore the views of parolees concerning rehabilitation and reintegration into their community*
 - *To conceptualise the views of parole officials concerning the parole system in rehabilitating offenders and reintegrating them in the community**This study will be conducted at Brits Community Corrections and will be done by experienced health researchers trained in ethics and collecting research data by interviewing participants to get the information needed for the study.*

Why have you been invited to participate?

- *You have been invited to be part of this research because you are relevant to ensure that the objectives of this study are achieved as you are knowledgeable about the community correction programmes.*

What will be expected of you?

- You will be expected to sign consent forms if you agree to be part of the study and you will answer the questions asked. The interview will take approximately 25 minutes however it is not limited to 25 minutes. However you may withdraw should you not feel comfortable.

Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

- The gains for you if you take part in this study will indirect in that it will provide recommendations to the Department of Correctional Services about parole services which may catalyse needed changes in the programmes.

This study will also make contribution to the academic field in terms of developing existing body of knowledge and theoretical frameworks on criminal justice. The study

will inform social work practice based on the findings on what can be improved to enhance the parole system for rehabilitation of offenders and enhance their re-integration into society.

Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

- *There are more gains for you in joining this study than there are risks.*

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

Anonymity of your findings will be protected by using alphabetical letters instead of their titles or names or positions in the Department of Correctional Services. This will ensure anonymity of the participants. Your privacy will be respected by ensuring that interviews are done in private spaces where people will not disturb or interrupt the interview process. Your results will be kept confidential by ensuring that the information that the researcher finds from the participants will be used for academic purposes only and will not be shared with the public except for the supervisor of the study. Only the researchers and the research supervisor will be able to look at your findings. Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and for electronic data it will be password protected. (As soon as data has been transcribed it will be deleted from the recorders.) Data will be stored for 5 Years.

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- The findings will be disseminated. The researcher will communicate the findings to the Department of Correctional Services who are the main audience of the findings as well as the community leaders so that they can understand the role of the community to ensure successful re-integration of offenders and lastly the academics. This will be done by sending the bound hard copy of the research to the Department of Correctional Services on the findings of the study. The researcher will also publish the results of the study as articles in Department of Higher Education and Technology (DHET) accredited journals such as Social Work/Maatskaplike. The research data will be stored in the password protected computer only accessible to the researcher. A backup of the information will be stored in the researcher's Google drive that will ensure safety and minimise the loss of the information for the study.

How will you know about the results of this research?

- We will give you the results of this research when the findings have been analysed and approved by the university by communicating the findings to the Department of Correctional Services who are the main audience of the findings as well as the community leaders so that they can understand the role of the community to ensure successful re-integration of offenders and lastly the academics. This will be done by sending the bound hard copy of the research to the Department of Correctional Services on the findings of the study.
- You will be informed of any new relevant findings by email or a printed document will sent to your address should you request for it.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

This study is funded by the university as well as the NRF. You will not be paid to take part in the study because the funds are limited to the tuition fee and research costs such as books. If you incur costs of travelling to the interview venue, the researcher will pay back the money. You will also receive R15 airtime as a token of appreciation for taking part in the study. Refreshments will be served when take part in this study. However, there will be no costs for being in the study.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- You can contact Olebogeng Letlape at 0631809715. If you have any further questions or have any problems.
- You can also contact the NWU-Health Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Carolien van Zyl at 018 299 1206 or carolien.vanzyl@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.
- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study titled:.....

I declare that:

- I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Signature of witness

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (*name*) declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to
.....
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of person obtaining consent

Declaration by researcher

I (*name*) Olebogeng Letlape declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
or I had it explained by who I trained for this purpose.
- I did/did not use an interpreter

- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them
or I was available should he/she want to ask any further questions.
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....
Signature of researcher

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ANNEXURE D

D1. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PAROLEES

THEME	QUESTIONS	PROMPTS
A. BACKGROUND	1. Can you please tell me about yourself?	-Age -Place of residence -Educational background -Family
B. FACTORS THAT LEAD TO COMMITTING CRIME	2. Share with me on the circumstances and experiences in crime.	-Kind of crime committed and factors leading to committing crime
C. REHABILITATION PROCESS	3. Can you share with me your experience since you have been on parole?	-Parole officials roles and responsibilities -Re-integration into the family and community. - Care and support system
D. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED	4. Detail the challenges of being on parole	-stigma -mode of survival
E. QUALITY OF COMMUNITY CORRECTION SERVICES	5. Can you tell me about the programmes that you went through to be rehabilitated? 6. Can you share with me on the kind of support you get from community corrections?	-pre-release programme/ life skills/ anger management etc. -From social workers -From parole officers -Satisfaction towards services received -Suggested improvements

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

D2. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

THEME	QUESTIONS	PROMPTS
A. PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION	1. Share with me about your professional background?	-Qualifications -Any special training -Length of time working for Brits Community Corrections
B. EXPERIENCES OF WORKING AT BRITS COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS	2. How has your experience been in working in the Brits community corrections? 3. How is your experience working with parolees?	-Quality of services -resources needed. -personal professional development -Complying with parole conditions -recidivism rate
C. CHALLENGES FACED BY PAROLEES	4. Share with me on the challenges faced by parolees in the parole system.	-parole conditions -family conditions - community conditions
D. VIEWS ON THE PAROLE SYSTEM	5. What is your view of the parole system in terms of rehabilitating parolees? 7. Share on your experience of parole in meeting the needs of parolees.	-successes and short in rehabilitation -satisfaction with the results of parole service -meeting the needs of parolees
E. SUGGESTIONS	10. What are suggested solutions for parole services to be better? 11. Is there anything you would like to add to what we have covered in the discussion?	

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

D3. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PAROLE OFFICERS

THEME	QUESTIONS	PROMPTS
A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION, ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES	1. Tell me about yourself 2. Can you tell me about your roles and responsibilities?	-qualifications and experience -your duties and involvement
B. CHALLENGES FACED BY PAROLEES	3. What are the most common problems that parolees face?	-in communities -in families
C. VIEWS ON THE PAROLE SYSTEM	4. What are your views with regards to the parole system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Successes and failures - Meeting the needs of parolees - Updatedness of the system
D.SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OF PAROLE SERVICES	5. What are suggested solutions for parole services to be better?	

Thank you very much for your time and participation.

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