

# Voices of Recidivism: A Case Study on the Causes of Reoffending

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Recidivism means a tendency to be repeatedly punished because one has frequently committed crimes, and recidivism is talking about laws that are repeated as a result of the same and similar actions (Sukma et al., 2023). According to Zara and Fallington, in their book Criminal Recidivism say that: "recidivism is the official criminal involvement (base on criminal records) of a person who, after having been convicted for a previous offense, commits a new crime for which they incur another conviction" (Sukma et al., 2023). This study answers the profiles of the participants in terms of age, sex, and criminal history; why do offenders become recidivists; what are the effects of becoming a recidivist; and how does the recidivist cope with the situation? The purpose of this study is to seek and understand the complex circumstances and underlying causes that lead to repeat offenders' recurrent engagement in criminal behavior by delving deeply into their lived experiences and views. A case study research design has been utilized in the study. The study was conducted in one of the City Jail in Region-X. The participants of this study were seven (7) male offenders who have been involved in the cycle of criminal recidivism. Yin's 5-step data analysis approach was used to analyze the data and allow researchers to analyze textual data (Yin, 2011). Participants highlighted the profound impact of peer influence and environmental factors on recidivism. The study reveals that peer pressure and environmental factors play a crucial role in recidivism among individuals in one of the City Jail in Region-X. It is recommended that the government agencies such as health, education and social services implement multifaceted interventions that address both individual and environmental factors contributing to recidivism.

**Keywords:** criminal behavior, environmental factors, offenders, peer influence, rehabilitation, recidivist

#### INTRODUCTION

Criminal recidivism, a phenomenon defined by people's propensity to commit new crimes after being released from prison, highlights the complex challenges that come with rehabilitation and reintegration procedures within the confines of the criminal justice system (Stanković et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2023). In addition, recidivism means a tendency to repeatedly punished because one has frequently committed crimes, and regarding recidivism is talking about laws that are repeated as a result of the same and similar actions (Sukma et al., 2023). Moreover, according to Zara and Fallington, in their book Criminal Recidivism say that: "recidivism is the official criminal involvement (base on criminal records) of a person who, after having been convicted for a previous offense, commits a new crime for which they incur another conviction" (Sukma et al., 2023). Criminal recidivism represents a stable behavioral pattern in the sense of assuming that personal dispositions could be one of the determinants of that kind of behavior (Molina-Coloma et al., 2022). Recidivism is an essential topic for the prevention of crime because, at the time of release, inmates with a high risk of committing crimes do not usually have the necessary tools to cope with the challenges of community life (Molina-Coloma et al., 2022). This ongoing cycle of recidivism not only

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puts a strain on the criminal justice system's resources, but it also highlights the urgent need for broad reform initiatives targeted at addressing the underlying socioeconomic and structural causes of repeat offenses (Trood et al., 2021; Aebi et al., 2021).

Recidivist comes from French, where two Latin words are taken: re and co; re means again, and *cado* means fall (Sukma et al., 2023). So, the definition above can be interpreted as a recidivist being someone who has been convicted of a previous crime, is involved in a new offense, and has official criminal law certainty based on official crime records (Sukma et al., 2023). It is well established that many individuals who are released from prison commit new offenses (Van Ginneken & Palmen, 2023). Men are more likely to reoffend than women in nearly every criminal category of offense, even when initial male-dominated offending patterns are taken into account (Yesmen & Mou, 2022). Several studies point out those recidivist offenders are characterized by antisocial tendencies and the development of criminal behavior at an early age (Molina-Coloma et al., 2022).

The Department of Justice (DOJ) of Region-X has recognized the need to address recidivism by implementing various rehabilitation and reintegration programs (Onsat & Breva, 2023). Targeted rehabilitation programs, educational chances, and career opportunities have all been shown to reduce criminal recidivism, and they are now recognized as crucial elements of a comprehensive strategy for ending the cycle of reoffending and fostering long-term society reintegration (Hodgkinson et al., 2021; Mueller & Carey, 2023). The Philippine government and BJMP Region-X launched various vocational training and education programs to improve the employment of persons deprived of liberty and reduce recidivism rates. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) of Region-X provides vocational training programs in various skills, including carpentry, masonry, and welding, to help persons deprived of liberty gain more skills and knowledge to help them find employment upon release (Onsat & Breva, 2023). Additionally, proactive investments in community assistance and evidence-based treatments can help formerly jailed people transform and successfully reintegrate back into society in addition to improving public safety (Quinn-Hogan, 2021; Toader, 2021). By doing this, society may advance a more just and equitable system that encourages rehabilitation and lessens the alarming trend of criminal recidivism (Lehman, 2023).

Recidivism is one of the most difficult to predict and difficult to regulate forms of crime, requiring a comprehensive approach to identifying its determinants and finding effective measures to prevent the commission of new crimes by persons who have a criminal record for committing premeditated crimes (Kumysheva, 2022). The purpose of this study is to discover and understand the complex situations and fundamental factors that result in their repeated involvement in criminal activity through a thorough examination of the lived experiences and perspectives of repeat criminals. In addition, it aims to shed light on the intricate interactions between social, psychological, and structural factors that contribute to recidivism through in-depth case studies and qualitative analysis. Through a detailed understanding of the complex causes that lead people to re-offend, it seeks to provide important insights that can guide targeted treatments and policies. Through an examination of the stories and experiences of recurrent offenders, the research aims to close knowledge gaps, promote more successful rehabilitation techniques, and lower recidivism rates in the criminal justice system.

### **METHODS**

A case study research design was employed in the study. A case study is the detailed scrutiny of a specific phenomenon within its contextual setting to provide a descriptive account of the experiences, the occurrence of events, and processes (Amadi, 2023). A case study thoroughly assesses the analytical unit (case). This design not only reveals the complex network of events that result in recurrent criminal activity, but it also permits the investigation of subjective experiences, illuminating the human elements of the criminal justice

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system that are frequently disregarded. The study was conducted in one of the City Jail in Region-X, a facility known for housing a diverse population of inmates with varying criminal backgrounds. This jail, located in a densely populated urban area, is designed to hold both pre-trial detainees and convicted offenders.

In order to obtain data for the study, certain procedures were implemented in gathering the participant's needs for analysis. The participants of this study were seven (7) offenders who have been involved in the cycle of criminal recidivism. The participants were chosen through purposive sampling from the following criteria: (1) detained for 2 or 3 times of the same title of Revised Penal Code and; (2) willing to participate in the study. As to the sex, all seven (7) participants are male recidivists as the jail facility only allows the researchers to conduct their study at the jail male dormitory. A structured interview guide was used to obtain information from the offenders who have a criminal history of recidivism. The tool contained questions that will be based on the relevance and significance of the study that focuses on the criminal recidivism of the offenders. The instrument will compose a set of open-ended questions and close-ended questions that obtain the needed information. Henceforth, during the conduct of the interview, the researchers used notetaking for future reference during the data interpretation.

Ethical standards were always observed by the researchers. The study respects the dignity of the research participants and promise to keep it confidential unless disclosed by the law. The researchers observed Data Privacy throughout the process of data collection and rules and guidelines set by the Republic Act No. 10173, also known as "Data Privacy Act of 2012). The participants participated based on informed consent. The principle of informed consent involves researchers providing sufficient information and assurances about taking part to allow individuals to understand the implications of participation and to reach a fully informed, considered, and freely given decision about whether to do so, without the exercise of any pressure or coercion. Participants were voluntary and informed of their rights as research participants, including the option to decline or limit participation at any time. The assessment was conducted in a comfortable area during the allowed time visitation of the participants in jail.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

# **Profile of the Participants**

Participant	Age	Sex	<b>Number of Convictions</b>
1	41	Male	2
2	36	Male	2
3	51	Male	2
4	45	Male	2
5	50	Male	2
6	50	Male	2
7	23	Male	9

The profiles of the participants were detailed in terms of age, sex, and criminal history. As to their age, the researchers found out that P3 is the oldest having two (2) convictions, 51 years old, and the youngest of age is P7 who is 23 years old and has nine (9) times convictions. This shows that offenders, regardless of their age, have the capacity and tendency to commit crimes repeatedly. Moreover, the study reveals that younger offenders tend to commit more crimes repeatedly, likely due to their longer remaining lifespan (Van Hazebroek et al., 2019), while older offenders tend to commit fewer crimes (Augustyn et al., 2020). According to Bell et al. (2019), there are some correlates of recidivism that were gender specific, but that they predicted higher recidivism for men and not for women. As to their criminal history, Participants 5 and

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6 are four (4) years behind bars for two (2) convictions of violation of RA9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002). Moreover, Participant 4 is also four (4) years behind bars but committed different crimes such as homicide and illegal possession of firearms. Participant 1 is serving his sentence for one (1) year for twice convictions of RA9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Acts of 2002). Participants 2 and 3 have been convicted twice for two (2) serious crimes and found guilty of the crime of frustrated homicide, Participant 2 has been sentenced to five (5) months for another violation of RA9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002) and Participant 3 is almost two (2) years in jail for another violation of illegal possession of firearms. Participant 7 has been nine (9) times convicted of crimes such as frustrated murder, robbery, physical injury, and violation of RA 9165, he is now serving his sentence of one (1) year and two (2) months. This suggests that violations of RA9165 are widespread and frequently committed by the offenders, even after their release from incarceration (Jamin et al., 2021). The persistent nature of these offenses highlights the challenge of deterring repeat violations among those previously convicted.

#### **Influence of Peers and Environment**

The influence of peers and the environment significantly impacts recidivism, often perpetuating a cycle of re-offending among individuals (Mareda, 2020). Peers can exert considerable pressure, encouraging behaviors that lead to repeated criminal activity (Confer et al., 2023). The three (3) participants in the study pointed to friends as a major factor in their continued engagement with illegal activities. For example, P3 mentioned how their friends' influence and alcohol usage led them to lose control, resulting in further criminal behavior. This highlights how peer pressure can undermine efforts to reform and reintegrate into society. Additionally, environmental factors such as living in neighborhoods with high crime rates, poverty, and limited access to education and employment opportunities contribute to recidivism (Jacobs & Skeem, 2021; Yanney, 2022). They relapse back to the same neighborhoods, 5 habits, and environments that led to their arrest in the first place (Yanney, 2022.). According to Billings & Schnepel (2022), more often than that, released offenders have no choice but to return to their old neighborhoods due to such issues as insufficient money, housing discrimination, and post-release supervision requirements. Therefore, these conditions create an environment where criminal behavior becomes a normalized or even necessary means of survival. Addressing recidivism, therefore, requires a comprehensive approach that includes not only individual rehabilitation but also broader social and environmental changes to disrupt the cycle of reoffending (Latessa et al., 2020). This means creating supportive communities, providing educational and employment opportunities, and fostering positive peer relationships that encourage lawful and constructive behaviors. According to Maruna et al. (2009), community-based programs provide alternative pathways for offenders and eliminate the root causes of recidivism (Brass, 2021). The theme influence of peers and environment is composed of two sub-themes which are properly presented and discussed below:

#### **Peer Pressure**

Participants highlighted the profound impact of peer influence and environmental factors on recidivism. P1 described how academic pressure and the influence of friends led to becoming a recidivist. The persistent stress from schoolwork, coupled with the need to fit in with their peers, made it difficult to break free from this cycle of misconduct. The combined pressures kept them trapped, leading to a pattern of repeated offenses. This highlights the dual pressures of academic demands and peer dynamics in perpetuating criminal behavior. Similarly, P2 emphasized the significant role of friends in their decision to turn to recidivism. They discussed how the actions and attitudes of their peers influenced their own conduct, ultimately leading them back into a criminal cycle. According to Aziz et al., (2020), this impression makes the offenders believe that turning to anti-social behavior, and criminal activities could give them the attention, sense of belonging, and respect they sought. This response underscores the importance of choosing friends wisely, as peer pressure can heavily impact behavior. P3 shared that the influence of friends, along with excessive alcohol consumption, motivated them to commit new crimes. They pointed out

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the difficulty in resisting peer persuasion and the pressure to join in on wrongful activities. This highlights the challenges individuals face when trying to resist negative influences within their social circles. P7 also acknowledged the role of friends in their engagement in criminal actions, while taking personal responsibility for their choices. They mentioned how peer pressure and financial problems drove them to make regrettable decisions. P7 advised others to avoid friends who could have a negative impact, emphasizing the importance of surrounding oneself with positive influences to prevent recidivism. These are evident in the responses of the participants during the interview:

"Academic pressure and friends led me to become a recidivist. The influence of my friends also contributed significantly to my further decline into difficulty. The pressure of my studies and the influence of my friends kept me trapped in a serious cycle of misconduct." (P1)

"The influence of friends was a major factor in my decision to turn to recidivism. Their deeds, and attitudes, such as poor grades, substance use, and ignoring rules and decisions had a significant influence on my own conduct and finally brought me back into a criminal cycle. Peer pressure can be and how much of an impact it can have on a person's conduct. Selecting the appropriate friends is essential since they frequently act as a mechanism for our behavior towards one another." (P2)

"The factors that motivate me to commit new crimes are my friends' influence and excessive drinking of alcohol. It is hard to resist the urge to join in when my friends persuade me to join them, and I sometimes feel pressured by their influence to do things that I know were wrong." (P3)

"Factors that led me to engage in criminal actions were influenced by my friends but, it was still my choice. The peer pressure and financial problems such as the stress and challenges in affording basic necessities caused me to do a number of things that I now regret. I can only advise everyone to stay away from friends that could have a bad impact on you." (P7)

#### **Environmental Factors**

Participants expressed deep feelings of disappointment and sadness stemming from their actions and their impacts on their families and communities. P1 discussed the immense pressure of scholastic standards and societal expectations as the eldest and most devoted family member. They highlighted how the shock and disturbance from friends, neighbors, and family served as a painful reminder of the high expectations placed upon them. This response underscores the heavy burden of familial and societal expectations that can contribute to a person's sense of failure and disappointment. P2 noted the worry and pain their family must now endure due to their imprisonment. The uncertainty about the future and the realization of how their decisions have impacted their loved ones highlight the emotional toll that recidivism takes not only on the individual but also on their family (Maier et al., 2023). This acknowledgment of the broader consequences of their actions emphasizes the interconnected nature of personal decisions and familial well-being. P4 shared that their actions left their family devastated, saddened, and confused. They struggled to comprehend why such a heinous act was committed.

During their incarceration, they were forced to confront the gravity of their actions and their repercussions, which speaks to the intense emotional and psychological struggle involved in coming to terms with one's mistakes and their impact on others. P6 reflected on their parents' worry and frustration over their future, feeling that they had wasted their efforts and failed to uphold family unity. This response highlights the internal conflict and guilt felt by individuals who perceive themselves as letting down their families, which can exacerbate feelings of disappointment and sadness. P7 recounted the challenges of growing up in a poor household and how money problems exacerbated their difficulties. When their family learned of their misbehavior, they were disappointed, saddened, and upset, struggling to reconcile their actions with their

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upbringing. These are evident in the responses of the participants during the interview:

"The pressure of scholastic standards and downgrade from the people was too much to bear. As the eldest and most devoted member of the family, the reaction I received from my friends, neighbors, and family served as a heartbreaking reminder of the heavy expectations placed upon me. They were shocked and extremely disturbed of my involvement in these situations, as they considered me as a hardworking son in the family and who obeyed the parents." (P1)

"Now that I am in prison, they must deal with the uncertainty of what is ahead for me. Their worry and pain are evident because they realize how much my decisions have affected not only my life but also the lives of the people who matter most to me." (P2)

"My actions left my family devastated, saddened, and confused, struggling to understand why I could commit such a heinous act. During my time behind bars, I faced tough times that forced me to confront my actions and their consequences." (P4)

"My parents got worried about my future because they saw that I had been wasting their efforts and as well as they got mad at me. They are still frustrated, driven by our constant attempts to maintain our family's unity as siblings, and I feel like I have failed them." (P6)

"Growing up in a poor household came with many challenges and difficulties that had a significant influence on my life, money problems made things harder. Naturally, when my family found out about my misbehavior, they were disappointed, saddened, and upset because they never thought me to be capable of such things considering my upbringing." (P7)

Under Peer Pressure, participants emphasized how the influence of friends and peers contributed significantly to their engagement in criminal activities. Academic pressure and peer influence were cited as key factors that trapped individuals in cycles of misconduct (Ferguson et al., 2022). Participants also pointed out that peer attitudes and actions influenced their decisions to re-offend, underscoring the powerful role peers play in shaping behavior. The difficulty of resisting peer pressure and the impact of negative peer influence on criminal behavior were common themes in their narratives. In contrast, Environmental Factors focused on broader societal and familial influences on recidivism. According to Aziz et al. (2020), parents either neglected them, spoilt them, or did not pay enough attention to the children, hence, allowing them to act at will and opening a window for them to be engaged in unlawful acts as a form of rebellion or expression of pent-up emotions, or to seek attention. Participants described how societal expectations, family reactions, and economic challenges contributed to their criminal behavior. The heavy burden of familial and societal expectations, the emotional toll on families due to incarceration, and the economic difficulties exacerbating challenges growing up were significant factors highlighted in their experiences.

These discussions suggest that addressing recidivism requires a multifaceted approach that includes both individual rehabilitation efforts and broader social interventions. Effective strategies could include providing support systems to help individuals resist negative peer influences, navigate challenging environments, and create opportunities for education, employment, and community support to mitigate the environmental factors contributing to criminal behavior. Understanding these influences and their implications can inform more effective strategies for reducing recidivism and supporting successful reintegration into society.

### **Family Reactions and Impact**

Family reactions to recidivism often include a complex mix of disappointment, sadness, and frustration

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(Rankins, 2022). When a family member engages in criminal behavior, it can be perceived as a betrayal of familial trust and values, leading to strained relationships and a deep sense of hurt. "Trust was a critical precursor of close relationships in a wide variety of settings". Vick (2020) found out that trust is an active part of the reintegration process between the offender and family. Family members may struggle to comprehend why such actions were taken, often feeling a profound sense of disappointment in the individual's choices. They may also experience sadness, grieving the loss of the future they had hoped for their loved one. Moreover, frustration can arise from the knowledge that these actions have long-lasting consequences, not only for the individual but for the entire family unit. These reactions can significantly impact the individual's motivation for change and their efforts to rebuild trust and support upon reintegration into society. Pacheco (2019) added that there is the impact on the victims, the cost of crime on the neighborhood, the impact of criminal behavior on the economy, the financial and psychological impact on the family, and the impact of incarceration on the individual once released.

Family members may oscillate between anger and forgiveness, hoping to see genuine remorse and a commitment to rehabilitation from their loved one (Renz et al., 2020). Some families may face financial hardships or social stigma as a result of their family member's criminal behavior, adding further stress to an already challenging situation. Despite these challenges, many families remain committed to supporting their loved ones through the criminal justice process and beyond, recognizing the importance of familial bonds in fostering positive change and resilience. Pacheco (2019) found out that having strong family ties, including positive influence from the family of origin, can be a major protective factor against recidivism. This theme is composed of two sub-themes which are properly presented and discussed below:

### **Disappointment and Sadness**

Participant responses highlight the profound impact of family reactions to their criminal behavior. Participant 1 expressed a sense of being trapped in a cycle of misconduct due to the pressure of studies and the influence of friends, noting that their family's disappointment reflected shattered expectations and dreams. Participant 2, now in prison, conveyed the uncertainty, worry, and pain their family is experiencing, recognizing the far-reaching effects of their decisions on loved ones. In addition, according to Benisty et al. (2021), another aspect is mental and emotional hardships, including high levels of distress and anxiety caused by worrying about the prisoner, as well as feelings of loss of control and ability to assist the loved one. Participant 3 discussed feeling ashamed and perceived ongoing anger and frustration from their family, possibly exacerbated by public scrutiny. The aspect of stigma and shame has negative effects on the relationship with the prisoner, when family members might avoid having telephone or physical contact with the prisoner due to fear of their surroundings' reactions (Benisty et al., 2021). Participant 6's family is worried about their future and frustrated by their actions, emphasizing the strain on family unity. Finally, Participant 7's family was deeply disappointed, saddened, and upset upon learning of their misbehavior, which they did not expect given their upbringing. As a result, according to Mareda (2020), this consequently makes it easy for one to re-offend because they think that their life only matters for themselves and not any other person or family members. These responses illustrate how family reactions encompass a range of emotions from disappointment and sadness to frustration and shame, underscoring the significant impact of criminal behavior on familial relationships and dynamics. These are evident in the responses of the participants during the interview:

"Even though I really wanted to break free from the influence of drugs, the pressure of my studies and the influence of my friends kept me trapped in a dangerous cycle of misconduct. Their disappointed emotions reflected the expectations and dreams they had for me which my decisions had damaged their expectations and perception of me." (P1)

"Now that I am in prison, they must deal with the uncertainty of what is ahead for me. Their worry and pain

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are evident because they realize how much my decisions have affected not only my life but also the lives of the people who matter most to me." (P2)

"I felt ashamed of what I had done. They appear to be still furious, though, maybe because they feel ashamed of the incident, especially because neighbors saw the entire thing when I was caught by the police at home. Additionally, maybe they are still frustrated because of this extra public search and gossiping of neighbors." (P3)

"My parents got worried about my future because they saw that I had been wasting their efforts and as well as they got mad at me. They are still frustrated, driven by our constant attempts to maintain our family's unity as siblings, and I feel like I have failed them." (P6)

"Naturally, when my family found out about my misbehavior, they were disappointed, saddened, and upset because they never thought me to be capable of such things considering my upbringing." (P7).

### **Continued Support and Frustration**

In the midst of their challenges, the participants have shared profound reflections and perspectives on their experiences. P2 expresses deep gratitude for their family's unwavering support during difficult times, emphasizing the importance of unity and collective effort in navigating through adversity. According to Rankins (2020), the continued support of family and friends plays a crucial role that significantly influences the chance to re-offend, parole decisions, and successful reentry outcomes. P4 offers invaluable insights gleaned from their ordeal with drug use, advising others on the inherent dangers and encouraging thoughtful decision-making. P5 reflects on their journey towards redemption, recognizing the transformative power of humility and the strength found in acknowledging mistakes. Meanwhile, P7 maintains a positive outlook, advocating for the importance of making sound decisions and fostering growth and trust within their relationships and communities. Together, their stories underscore the resilience, introspection, and determination that shape their paths toward personal growth and rebuilding their lives with integrity. These are evident in the responses of the participants during the interview:

"Despite the challenges I face, I am still grateful that my family united during this difficult time to work together to get through this difficult chapter find answers for my future, and never leave my side. In the middle of this trying circumstance, we can support one another and strive toward finding a solution together." (P2)

"Through my ordeal, It has gleaned invaluable insights, recognizing the inherent dangers of drug use. Reflecting on my experiences, I can give a poignant piece of advice to others grappling with similar challenges." (P4)

"It ignited within me a fervent desire for redemption and a commitment to rebuilding my life on a foundation of integrity and purpose. This situation has made me realize how important humility is. Acknowledging our mistakes because at the end it is a sign of great strength." (P5)

"But despite everything, choose to have a positive attitude because I know that one day I will be in a better place. It is important to have the courage to choose what is right and appropriate decision rather than stubbornly continuing the incorrect path. By doing this, we promote growth, trust, and respect in our relationships and communities while also upholding our own values." (P7)

Family reactions to recidivism are characterized by a complex mix of disappointment, sadness, and frustration. Criminal behavior is often seen as a betrayal of familial trust and values, leading to strained

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relationships and a profound sense of hurt. Family members struggle to comprehend the reasons behind these actions, feeling deep disappointment and sadness over shattered expectations and lost dreams for their loved ones. Additionally, they experience frustration due to the long-lasting consequences of criminal behavior, which can include financial hardships and social stigma. Despite these challenges, many families remain committed to supporting their loved ones through the criminal justice process and beyond, hoping for genuine remorse and a commitment to change to rebuild trust and support. In the face of these challenges, participants have also shared reflections and perspectives on their experiences, emphasizing the importance of family unity and collective effort in navigating adversity. Insights gained from personal ordeals include recognizing the dangers of drug use, the importance of humility in acknowledging mistakes, and the need to make positive choices to promote growth and respect within relationships and communities. These insights underscore the resilience and determination necessary for personal growth and rebuilding a life with integrity.

The implications of these family reactions and personal reflections on recidivism are profound. They highlight the critical role of familial support and understanding in the rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals who have engaged in criminal behavior. Furthermore, Mareda (2020) emphasized that inmates as members of a family also expect family members to visit them during their incarceration period because their presence helps to strengthen the rehabilitation processes. Lack of family support during incarceration derails the rehabilitation process and as such contributes to re-offending behavior, both inside and outside the prison (Mareda, 2020). The disappointment, sadness, and frustration experienced by families underscore the need for comprehensive support systems that address both the individual's needs and the impact on their loved ones. Recognizing the transformative power of family unity and collective effort in navigating challenges can inform interventions and policies aimed at reducing recidivism rates. Moreover, the insights gleaned from personal reflections emphasize the importance of resilience, humility, and making positive choices in promoting personal growth and rebuilding lives with integrity. By fostering environments that support rehabilitation and reconciliation within families and communities, it becomes possible to break the cycle of recidivism and empower individuals to lead fulfilling and law-abiding lives.

### **Personal Realizations and Growth**

Personal realizations and growth are pivotal in the journey of individuals who have engaged in criminal behavior (Gajwani & Lesser, 2019). Through their experiences, they often come to recognize the impact of their actions on themselves and others, fostering a deep sense of introspection and personal growth. These realizations may include understanding the root causes of their behavior, such as peer pressure, environmental factors, or personal struggles, and acknowledging their role in making positive changes. Many individuals express a desire for redemption and a commitment to rebuilding their lives with integrity and purpose, often emphasizing the importance of humility and taking responsibility for their mistakes. This process of self-reflection and growth is instrumental in breaking the cycle of recidivism, as it encourages individuals to seek rehabilitation, make amends, and strive towards becoming productive members of society (Evans, 2024). Personal growth also involves learning from past mistakes and advocating for positive decision-making, resilience, and trust within relationships and communities (Mees & Collins, 2022). By sharing their insights and experiences, these individuals contribute to broader efforts in supporting rehabilitation and preventing future criminal behavior. This theme is composed of two subthemes which are properly presented and discussed below:

"After giving it some thought, I have realized how deeply depressing a life directed in drug addiction can be, the lost opportunities and broken relationships, served as my reminders of the devastation caused by addiction. Since starting this difficult road, I have had to face the harsh truth that the temptation of illegal narcotics is not beneficial and will only cause chaos and unhappiness consequently." (P1)

"Overcoming this judgment can be extremely difficult when interacting with narrow-minded people,

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especially if you have a record of grave mistakes like previous incarceration. Despite the difficulties, it is possible to promote forgiveness and understanding by being open about one's conduct and compromise to improve." (P3)

"It ignited within me a fervent desire for redemption and a commitment to rebuilding my life on a foundation of integrity and purpose. This situation has made me realize how important humility is. Acknowledging our mistakes because in the end, it is a sign of great strength." (P5)

"But despite everything, choose to have a positive attitude because I know that one day I will be in a better place. It is important to have the courage to choose what is right and appropriate decision rather than stubbornly continuing the incorrect path." (P7)

### **Commitment to Change**

Participants in the study reflect deeply on their personal growth and commitment to positive change following their involvement in criminal behavior. Participant 1 recognizes the devastating impact of drug addiction, citing lost opportunities and broken relationships as reminders of the need to abstain from substances that dim their inner light. According to Holloway et al. (2022), initiation of substance use most often occurred within a peer group and continued use was sustained through the peer group. They emphasize the negative effects of drug misuse on loved ones and are dedicated to a life free from drugs and filled with positive influences. Participant 2 shares insights gained through self-reflection, emphasizing the dangers of pride leading to criminal activities and their commitment to cultivating humility and patience. Participant 4 reflects on their experiences with drug use, offering poignant advice to others and highlighting the transformative power of self-reflection and resilience. They are committed to using their journey to support others facing similar challenges. Participant 7 maintains a positive attitude, stressing the importance of making the right decisions and promoting growth, trust, and respect in their relationships and communities. They are driven by a belief in a better future and a commitment to change for the better. The strength of the individual's commitment to change had a strong impact on deterring re-offending even in an environment with social influences to engage in deviant behavior (Pacheco, 2019). These reflections underscore a journey of personal growth, resilience, and dedication to positive life changes beyond past mistakes. These are evident in the responses of the participants during the interview:

"After giving it some thought, I have realized how deeply depressing a life directed in drug addiction can be, the lost opportunities and broken relationships, served as my reminders of the devastation caused by addiction. Therefore, it serves as a reminder of the need to abstain from substances that only serve to dim our inner light and shows how drug misuse can negatively affect the people, we care about the most, a lesson we had to learn the hard way in the crucible of experience. Through my daily habits, thoughts, and actions, I stay committed to a life free from drugs and devoted to positive influences." (P1)

"Through self-questioning and reflection, I came to a realization about the need for patience and the dangers of letting pride lead me astray towards criminal activities. Moving forward, I am dedicated to cultivating humility and patience in my life. My actions now reflect a commitment to positive change, prioritizing healthy relationships and a stable lifestyle." (P2)

"Through my ordeal, It has gleaned invaluable insights, recognizing the inherent dangers of drug use. Reflecting on my experiences, I can give a poignant piece of advice to others grappling with similar challenges. My journey serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of self-reflection, resilience, and the potential for positive change. I am committed to using my experiences to guide and support others who face similar battles." (P4)

"But despite everything, choose to have a positive attitude because I know that one day I will be in a better place. It is important to have the courage to choose what is right and appropriate decision rather than stubbornly continuing the incorrect path. By doing this, we promote growth, trust, and respect in our

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relationships and communities while also upholding our own values. My commitment to change is driven by a belief in a better future and the importance of making the right choices." (P7)

In the study, participants deeply reflected on their personal realizations and growth following involvement in criminal behavior. They acknowledged the devastating impact of drug addiction, highlighting how it leads to lost opportunities and broken relationships, serving as stark reminders of the havoc caused by substance misuse. For instance, some participants expressed their realization that the allure of illegal narcotics only brings chaos and unhappiness, leading them to commit to a drug-free life filled with positive influences. Others discussed the challenges of overcoming judgment, emphasizing the importance of promoting forgiveness and understanding through openness and a commitment to personal improvement. There was a strong desire for redemption and an emphasis on the significance of humility in acknowledging past mistakes as a foundation for rebuilding life with integrity and purpose (Huge, 2020). In results, participants maintained a positive attitude, emphasizing the importance of making the right decisions and fostering growth, trust, and respect within their relationships and community.

In addition to recognizing the impact of their actions, participants demonstrated a commitment to change and positive growth. Some reflected on the dangers of pride leading to criminal activities and committed to cultivating humility and patience in their lives moving forward. They prioritized healthy relationships and a stable lifestyle as part of their personal transformation. Others drew invaluable insights from their experience with drug use, offering poignant advice to others grappling with similar challenges. They emphasized the power of self-reflection, resilience, and the potential for positive change, pledging to use their journey to support others in similar situations. These journeys underscored a commitment to personal growth, resilience, and a dedication to living a meaningful life beyond past mistakes, contributing to efforts in supporting rehabilitation and preventing future criminal behavior.

The study's findings have significant implications for rehabilitation and prevention efforts concerning criminal behavior and drug addiction. Participants' profound reflections underscored the importance of acknowledging the devastating impact of substance misuse, leading to a commitment to a drug-free life and positive influences. Their emphasis on humility, self-reflection, and resilience highlights key factors in personal transformation and growth. These insights are crucial for developing effective rehabilitation programs that prioritize forgiveness, understanding, and community support, fostering an environment conducive to healing and recovery. Moreover, their commitment to sharing their experiences to support others underscores the potential for positive change and the importance of community involvement in preventing future criminal behavior.

# **Advice and Warnings to Others**

The study emphasizes the value of professional help and effective treatment when providing guidance on managing drug addiction and criminal behavior. It also forewarns the dangers of untreated problems, which might affect one's own health, and legal consequences. It highlights the destructive impact of substance misuse, often leading to lost opportunities and fractured relationships. Committing to a drug-free life and surrounding oneself with positive influences are identified as crucial steps toward personal transformation. The study underscores the importance of openness, forgiveness, and humility in acknowledging past mistakes, which are essential for healing and growth. Additionally, the study warns about the dangers of illegal narcotics, emphasizing their potential to bring chaos and unhappiness into one's life. It advises individuals to prioritize healthy choices and avoid the pitfalls associated with substance abuse. Making informed decisions and fostering trust and respect within relationships and the community are seen as effective paths toward positive change. These insights highlight the significance of self-reflection, resilience, and community support in overcoming challenges and rebuilding a meaningful life beyond past mistakes. This theme is composed of two sub-themes which are properly presented and discussed below:

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#### **Avoiding Negative Influences**

Participant 1 reflects deeply on the profound impact of their experiences with drug addiction, recognizing the devastating consequences it brought to their life. They emphasize the importance of abstaining from substances that dim one's inner light and negatively affect loved ones. Substance use disorders impose large health and economic burdens on individuals, families, communities, and society (Uhl et al., 2019). This realization serves as a powerful motivation for their commitment to a drug-free life filled with positive influences, demonstrating resilience and personal growth. Participant 4 shares invaluable insights gleaned from their own journey with drug use, offering poignant advice to others facing similar challenges. Their experience underscores the transformative power of self-reflection and resilience, highlighting the potential for positive change even in the face of adversity. By using their experiences to support others, Participant 4 exemplifies a dedication to personal growth and community support. Participant 6 discusses the importance of humility and self-awareness in their journey towards change and recovery. They acknowledge their mistakes as a sign of strength and are committed to building a better future for themselves and those around them. Participant 6's commitment to guiding and supporting others facing similar battles underscores their resilience and determination to make a positive impact. Participant 7 maintains a positive attitude despite their struggles, emphasizing the importance of making the right decisions and fostering growth, trust, and respect within relationships and communities. Their dedication to upholding their values and promoting positivity serves as a beacon of hope and encouragement for others on similar paths. Participant 7's resilience and commitment to personal integrity highlight the transformative potential of choosing a positive outlook and making responsible decisions. These are evident in the responses of the participants during the interview:

"After giving it some thought, I have realized how deeply depressing a life directed in drug addiction can be, the lost opportunities and broken relationships, served as my reminders of the devastation caused by addiction. Therefore, it serves as a reminder of the need to abstain from substances that only serve to dim our inner light and shows how drug misuse can negatively affect to the people, we care the most, a lesson we had to learn the hard way in the crucible of experience. Through my daily habits, thoughts, and actions, I stay committed to a life free from drugs and devoted to positive influences." (P1)

"Through my ordeal, It has gleaned invaluable insights, recognizing the inherent dangers of drug use. Reflecting on my experiences, I can give a poignant piece of advice to others grappling with similar challenges. My journey serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of self-reflection, resilience, and the potential for positive change." (P4)

"I am committed to using my experiences to guide and support others who face similar battles. This situation has made me realize how important humility is. Acknowledging our mistakes because at the end it is a sign of great strength. My commitment to change is fueled by a desire to build a better future for myself and those around me." (P6)

"But despite everything, choose to have a positive attitude because I know that one day I will be in a better place. It is important to have the courage to choose what is right and appropriate decision rather than stubbornly continuing the incorrect path. By doing this, we promote growth, trust, and respect in our relationships and communities while also upholding our own values." (P7)

### **Emphasizing Positive Change and Hope**

The reflection of Participant 2 emphasizes the importance of cherishing positive influences and striving for a life free from drug dependence, highlighting the significance of making constructive choices and fostering a healthy lifestyle for personal growth and recovery. Participant 4 shares invaluable insights gained from their

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ordeal with drug use, recognizing the transformative power of self-reflection, resilience, and positive change. They are committed to using their experiences to guide and support others facing similar battles, demonstrating a dedication to community support and personal growth. According to Pacheco (2019), faith-based organizations can help to reduce recidivism on several levels, by providing resources, and a prosocial support system, and can help to support a positive identity that does not solely focus on being an exoffender. Participant 5 expresses a commitment to a life of integrity and purpose, focusing on positive actions and relationships, which underscores their determination to cultivate a meaningful and fulfilling life. Participant 6 emphasizes the strength found in acknowledging mistakes and committing to change, driven by a desire to build a better future for themselves and their community, demonstrating resilience and proactive personal growth. These are evident in the responses of the participants during the interview:

"This event emphasizes how vital it is to cherish positive influences and strive for a life devoid of drug dependence. It taught us the essence of embracing constructive choices and fostering a healthy lifestyle." (P2)

"Through my ordeal, I have gleaned invaluable insights, recognizing the inherent dangers of drug use. My journey serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative power of self-reflection, resilience, and the potential for positive change. I am committed to using my experiences to guide and support others who face similar battles." (P4)

"I am committed to a path of integrity and purpose, focusing on positive actions and relationships." (P5)

"Acknowledging our mistakes because at the end it is a sign of great strength. My commitment to change is fueled by a desire to build a better future for myself and those around me." (P6)

The study on advice and warnings to individuals grappling with drug addiction and criminal behavior provides a comprehensive exploration of the transformative journeys shared by participants. It underscores the destructive impact of substance misuse, emphasizing lost opportunities and fractured relationships as powerful reminders of the devastation caused by addiction. Committing to a drug-free life and surrounding oneself with positive influences are highlighted as crucial steps toward personal transformation (Robertson & Nesvåg, 2019). The study advocates for openness, forgiveness, and humility in acknowledging past mistakes, essential for healing and growth. It also warns about the dangers of illegal narcotics, stressing their potential to bring chaos and unhappiness into one's life, and advises prioritizing healthy choices to avoid the pitfalls of substance abuse. Making informed decisions and fostering trust and respect within relationships and communities are seen as effective paths toward positive change, supported by the significance of self-reflection, resilience, and community support in rebuilding a meaningful life beyond past mistakes (Wheeler et al., 2020).

The sub-themes within the study further illuminate these insights. "Avoiding Negative Influences" showcases participants' reflections on the profound impact of their experiences with addiction, emphasizing the importance of abstaining from destructive substances and maintaining a commitment to positive influences. Meanwhile, "Emphasizing Positive Change and Hope" underscores the transformative power of self-reflection, resilience, and the potential for positive change. Participants express a dedication to using their experiences to guide and support others, demonstrating resilience, humility, and a proactive commitment to personal growth. These discussions collectively highlight the importance of learning from past mistakes, fostering supportive relationships, and cultivating a hopeful and proactive mindset in overcoming challenges and promoting recovery.

The implications drawn from the study on advice and warnings for individuals struggling with drug addiction and criminal behavior are profound. The findings underscore the critical importance of early intervention and support systems that foster positive influences and healthy lifestyles to prevent substance

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misuse and its devastating consequences. Emphasizing the transformative power of self-reflection, resilience, and community support suggests that rehabilitation efforts should prioritize these factors to facilitate personal growth and recovery. Moreover, the study highlights the need for comprehensive programs that promote forgiveness, understanding, and the rebuilding of relationships to prevent recidivism and support individuals in rebuilding their lives. These insights are crucial for developing effective strategies and policies aimed at both preventing drug addiction and supporting rehabilitation, ultimately contributing to healthier communities and improved well-being for individuals affected by substance abuse.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

### Participants' Profile

The study reveals that the age, sex, and criminal history of the recidivists in one of the City Jail in Region-X do not influence their propensity for recidivism. The criminal history of the recidivists shows how environmental, social, and economic factors affect the rates of recidivism and the chances of reoffending of the individuals.

#### **Influence of Peers and Environment**

The study reveals that peer pressure and environmental factors play a crucial role in recidivism among individuals at one of the City Jail in Region-X. Participants cited peer influence and challenging social environments as significant contributors to their criminal behavior. This study highlights the significant roles of peer influence, environmental factors, and family reactions in influencing recidivism. Peer pressure and environmental conditions contribute to the perpetuation of criminal behavior, while family reactions play a crucial role in supporting individuals through rehabilitation efforts. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive interventions that address these factors to effectively reduce recidivism rates and support successful reintegration into society.

# **Family Reactions and Impact**

This study highlights the transformative journey of individuals who have engaged in criminal behavior, emphasizing the impact of drug addiction and personal challenges. Their reflections underscore the importance of humility, resilience, and fostering healthy relationships in rehabilitation. These insights contribute to understanding recidivism and emphasize the potential for individuals to rebuild their lives with integrity and purpose. Moving forward, tailored rehabilitation programs should prioritize personal growth, community support, and positive decision-making to effectively break the cycle of criminal behavior.

#### **Personal Realizations and Growth**

Personal growth is pivotal for individuals who have engaged in criminal behavior. Through self-reflection, people become aware of the consequences of their behavior, comprehend the underlying reasons—such as peer pressure or personal hardships—and resolve to make a change for the better. Many emphasize accountability and humility while seeking atonement. This procedure encourages rehabilitation, making amends, and turning into contributing members of society in order to interrupt the cycle of recidivism. By sharing their stories, people can contribute to larger initiatives aimed at rehabilitation and deterring criminal activity.

### **Advice and Warnings to Others**

The study provides deep insights into the transformative journeys of individuals dealing with drug addiction and criminal behavior. It emphasizes the devastating impact of substance misuse, the importance of

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committing to a drug-free life, and the value of positive influences for personal transformation. The study highlights the significance of openness, forgiveness, and humility in acknowledging past mistakes, essential for healing and growth. It also warns about the dangers of illegal narcotics and stresses the importance of making informed decisions and fostering trust and respect within relationships and communities. Overall, these findings underscore the need for early intervention and comprehensive support systems to prevent substance misuse and support recovery effectively.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that government agencies such as health, education, and social services implement multifaceted interventions that address both individual and environmental factors contributing to recidivism. Community-based rehabilitation programs and family reintegration and counseling services should focus on providing support systems to help individuals resist negative peer influences, navigate challenging environments, and rebuild family relationships. Additionally, efforts should be made opportunities in active communities, enhance access to education and employment opportunities, and reduce socioeconomic disparities that contribute to criminal behavior. Strengthening family support systems and fostering positive peer relationships are crucial for promoting rehabilitation and reducing recidivism rates effectively.

It is recommended that the correctional institutions develop comprehensive rehabilitation programs that prioritize family and community integration, promoting understanding, forgiveness, and empathy. Emphasizing positive decision-making and fostering healthy relationships, these programs should also provide education, vocational training, and job opportunities to support reintegration. Addressing underlying mental health issues through counseling and support groups is crucial, alongside establishing community support networks like peer groups and mentorship programs. Continuous evaluation and adaptation of these programs based on participant feedback will ensure they remain effective in reducing recidivism and fostering long-term positive outcomes for individuals and their communities.

It is recommended that the government and correctional institutions enhance accessible and comprehensive rehabilitation programs that prioritize mental health support and skills development. Public education efforts should focus on raising awareness about the dangers of substance misuse and promoting healthy decision-making. Policies should be developed to support forgiveness, understanding, and the rebuilding of relationships within communities affected by criminal behavior. Furthermore, efforts should be made to create environments that discourage illegal narcotics and foster positive influences, enabling individuals to rebuild their lives with integrity and contribute positively to society.

It is recommended that future researchers conduct further studies on the causes and effects of recidivism, exploring a wide range of factors including socio-economic conditions, psychological influences, the efficacy of rehabilitation programs, and the impact of community support systems. Additionally, longitudinal studies that track individuals over extended periods could provide deeper insights into the long-term effectiveness of different interventions and policies aimed at reducing recidivism rates. Understanding these dynamics in various demographic groups and geographic regions will be crucial for developing targeted strategies that address the unique needs of diverse populations.

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