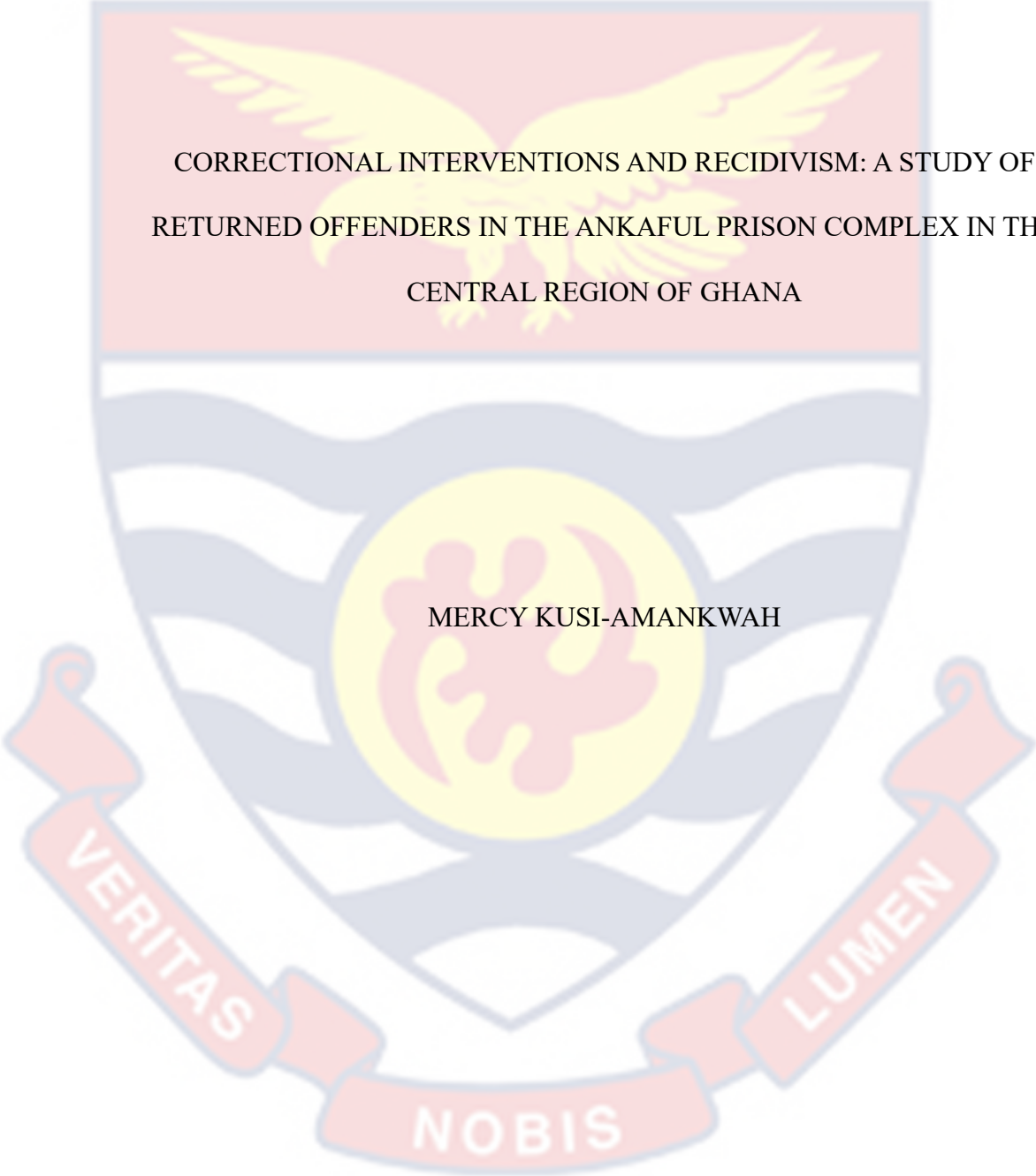


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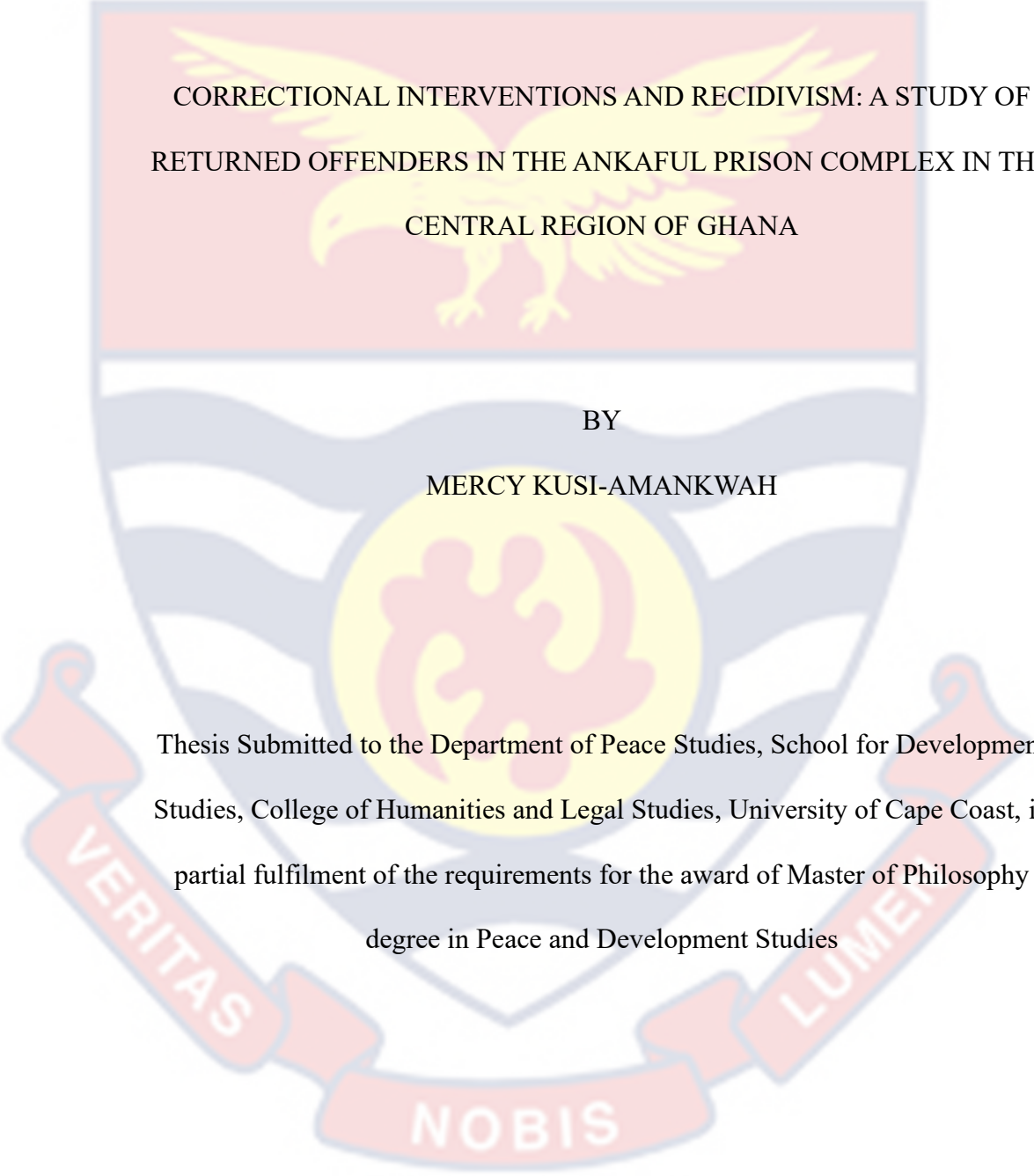


CORRECTIONAL INTERVENTIONS AND RECIDIVISM: A STUDY OF  
RETURNED OFFENDERS IN THE ANKAFUL PRISON COMPLEX IN THE  
CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA

MERCY KUSI-AMANKWAH

2023

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



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RETURNED OFFENDERS IN THE ANKAFUL PRISON COMPLEX IN THE  
CENTRAL REGION OF GHANA

BY

MERCY KUSI-AMANKWAH

Thesis Submitted to the Department of Peace Studies, School for Development  
Studies, College of Humanities and Legal Studies, University of Cape Coast, in  
partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy  
degree in Peace and Development Studies

SEPTEMBER 2023

## DECLARATION

### Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature ..... Date: .....

Name: Mercy Kusi-Amankwah

### Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of the thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Professor Stephen Bugu Kendie

Co-Supervisor's Signature: ..... Date: .....

Name: Dr Kaderi Noagah Bukari

## ABSTRACT

The study examined the nature of correctional reforms in the Ghanaian prison system and how this affects recidivism. The prison sentences pronounced on offenders of the law are meant to serve as deterrents. However, after their release from prison, some ex-prisoners continue to commit crimes and find themselves back in prison. Even though they are expected to undergo some form of training and rehabilitation programmes meant to enhance their reformation, these programmes are not reformatory enough to adequately reform prisoners. The study is informed by labelling, social learning, and rational choice theories. It employed a qualitative research design in collecting data using in-depth interviews. Purposive sampling techniques were adopted to select recidivists and prison officers in the Ankafu Prison Complex. In all, a total of 21 recidivists and nine prison officers were interviewed. The study revealed that offenders commit new crimes and return to prison because prison gives them at least a feeling of survival in light of the hardships in the outside world. Also, there is no parole mechanism in the Ghanaian prison system to guarantee controlled release over time. There are inadequate rehabilitation programmes in the prisons. The study recommends that the penal system should shift its focus from punishment to rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into society. This should include providing effective education and vocational training for inmates, counselling services and job placement assistance to help them successfully re-enter society after release.

**KEYWORDS**

Correctional interventions

Labelling

Penal reforms

Recidivism

Social learning

Rehabilitation



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## DEDICATION

To my beautiful family: Auntie Mina, Ben Kusi, Brother Kwesi, Dada Dauda, Mummie, Naana and Auntie Mercy



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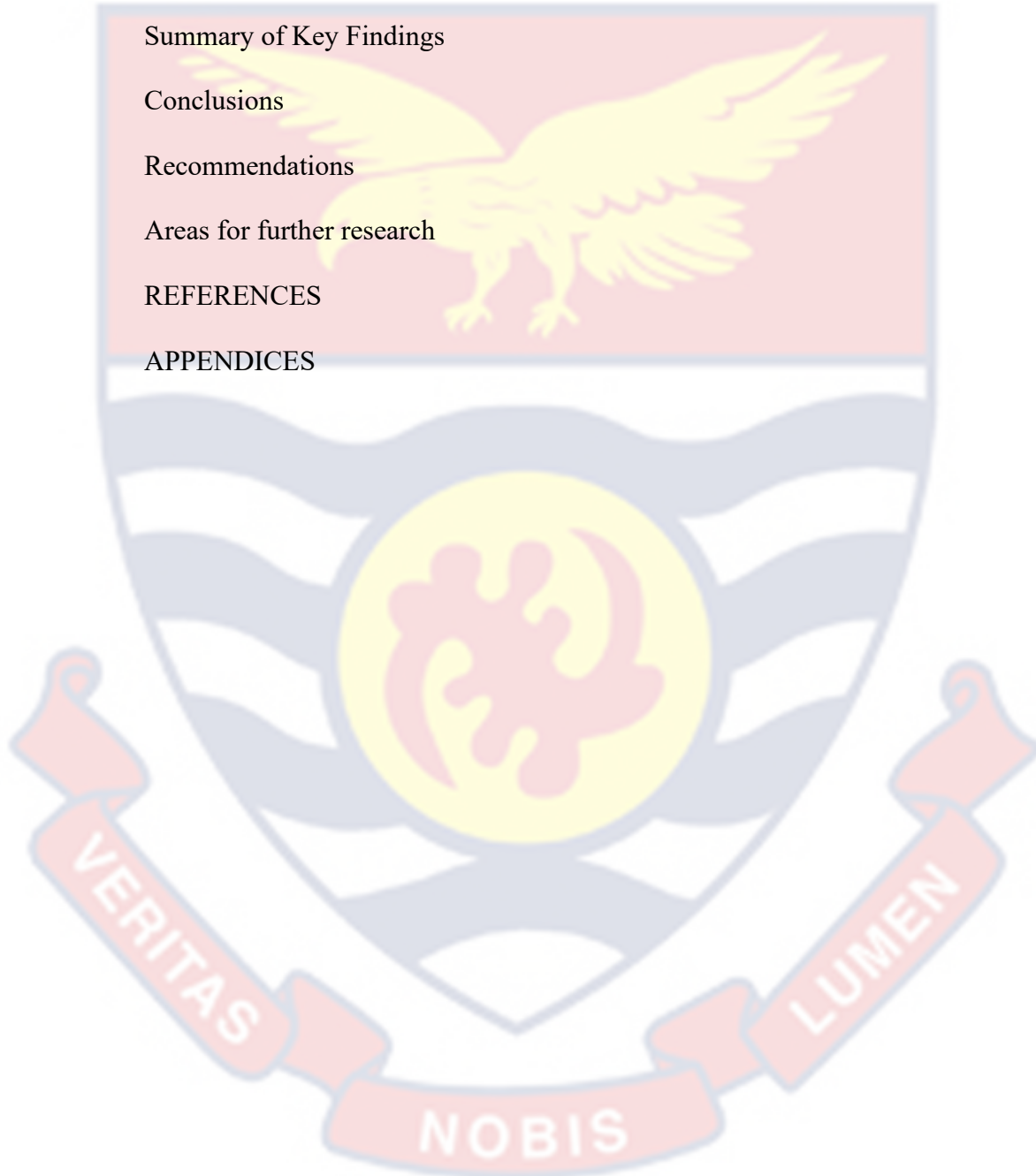
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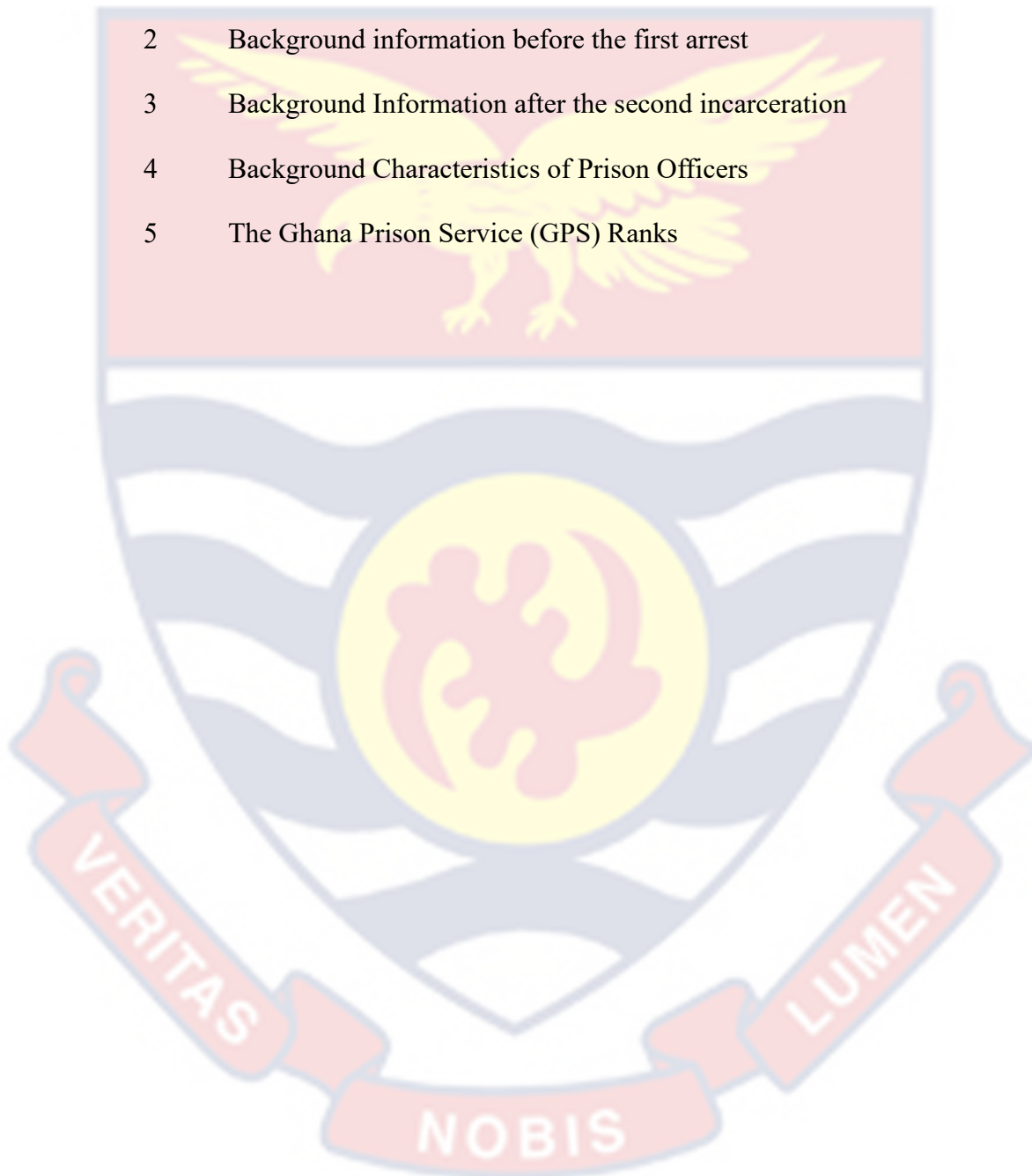
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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AMCP	Ankaful Main Camp Prison
AMSP	Ankaful Maximum Security Prisons

APA	Ankaful Annex Prison
APC	Ankaful Prisons Complex
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DCS	Department of Correctional Services
GPS	Ghana Prison Service
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations





## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Over the past years, the attention to studying the effectiveness of correctional interventions and sanctions has been the prime focus of many scholars. Regardless of this, recidivism has been on the increase in many countries of which Ghana is not an exemption. This chapter provides background to the study, highlighting the factors that influence correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms in Ghana. This is followed by a statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions. The study's limitations and delimitations are also discussed. The chapter concludes with the organization of the study.

### Background to the Study

According to Kuuire (2021), Prisons are now used in all countries to punish and reintegrate people to keep them from reoffending. In most countries, it is the most severe punishment that courts can impose on those who break the law (Albert, 2017). The International Centre for Prison Studies (ICPS) found that more than 10.2 million people were in prison custody around the world as of December 2021. Owens (2009) also concluded that prisoners make up 5% of the world's population. Comparing the levels of imprisonment in various countries yields a rough estimate of the world's total inmate population. The data includes both pre-trial detainees and remand inmates and those who have been convicted and sentenced (Jardine, 2022). Over 2.2 million individuals are incarcerated in the United States out of over 10.35 million people worldwide (World Prison Brief, 2019). Since World War II, there has been a significant increase in the number of people imprisoned around the

world. The foregoing statistics vary across countries (Taylor, Tan, Coyle, Ndumele, Rogan, Canavan, & Bradley, 2016).

The data on the prison population in specific countries gives a clear understanding of how crime rates are higher in some countries as compared to others. Even though this study is not interested in first-time prisoners, prison data (which includes both first-time offenders and re-offenders), helps to understand why recidivism is a social problem. Recidivism connotes the relapse into criminal behaviour and is typically measured by a former prisoner being sent to prison for a new offence (Catt, 2020). Rates of recidivism reflect the degree to which released inmates have been rehabilitated and the role of correctional programming in reintegrating prisoners into society (Ganapathy, 2018). The rate of recidivism in Ghana is estimated to increase every year, which means that the rate of recidivism in 2020 will be higher than that of 2015 (Baffour, 2020). According to Hayes, Joosen and Smiley (2018), high rates of recidivism have a severe negative social impact on the communities and families of offenders as well as personal consequences for the offenders.

The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS, 2019) estimates that as of 2019, there were 2,068,800 people incarcerated in the country or 629 out of the estimated 329.1 million people living in the country. 38,570 people were incarcerated in Canada in 2019 (including pre-trial detainees and remand inmates); of these, 37,854 were adults and 716 were juveniles in juvenile detention (Canada World Brief, 2019). Based on a national population estimate of 37.25 million at the beginning of October 2018, the prisoner population rate was 104 per 100,000 (Canada World

Brief, 2019). As a proportion of all prisoners, pretrial detainees and remand prisoners made up 39.0%. As of 29 April 2022, the Ministry of Justice in the United Kingdom projects that there will be 79, 729 prisoners overall (including pre-trial detainees and remand prisoners). This translates to a prison population rate (per 100,000) of 132 out of 67.44 million people living in the country. According to the Federal Statistical Office (Duvergen, 2021), Germany's overall prison population (including pre-trial detainees and remand prisoners) stood at 59,056 on June 30, 2021. Based on a projected national population of 83.1 million as of June 30, 2021, the jail population rate (per 100,000) was 71. Pretrial detainees and remand prisoners account for 20.0% of the total prison population. The prison population in different African countries varies.

At the end of April 2021, Egypt's prison population (including pre-trial detainees and remand prisoners) was estimated to be 120,000 (Arabic Network for Human Rights Intervention, 2022), with a prison population rate (per 100,000) of 117 out of a total population of 101.7 million. According to the National prison Administration (NPA), Morocco's overall prison population (including pre-trial detainees/remand prisoners) was 84,990 in 2021. With a predicted national population of 36.64 million by the end of 2020, the prison population rate (per 100,000 people) was 232. Kenya's general prison population (including pre-trial detainees and remand prisoners) stood at 42,596 in 2020 (NPA, 2021). Based on a national population estimate of 52.5 million in September 2020, the prison population rate was 81 per 100,000 (United Nations data, 2020). Nigeria's total prison population (including pre-trial detainees and remand prisoners) was 70,797

as of January 24, 2022, with a prison population rate (per 100,000) of 33 based on an estimated national population of 214.36 million in January 2022 (United Nations data, 2020). As of 2021, South Africa's total prison population (including pre-trial detainees and remand prisoners) stood at 140,948. The jail population rate (per 100,000 of the national population) is 235, with a national population projection of 60.01 million by the end of March 2021.

Pretrial inmates and remand prisoners together, there were 13,480 inmates in Ghana's prison system as of June 2021. (National Jail Administration, 2020) shows that, out of an expected 31.28 million people living in the country, the prison population rate (per 100,000 individuals) is 43. The government provides funding to correctional facilities because it wants to see a decrease in crime rates throughout the world. This could be the reason for the decrease in the number of people incarcerated in comparison to the prior year in the majority of the above-mentioned nations (Levitt, 2004). The \$81 billion annual cost of mass incarceration in the US may be underestimated, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

The interesting issue is that according to the Prison Policy Initiative (PPI,2017), the cost of incarceration to the federal government of the United States, as well as to affected families, was over \$182 billion. In 2020/21, the United Kingdom spent 5.63 billion British pounds on its prison system, one of the highest amounts in the last ten years and an increase from the previous year. Following this expense, the prison population dropped from 82,773 in 2018 to approximately 79,000 in 2020. The coalition government's austerity policies resulted in the UK spending around 60 million pounds less than it did in 2010/11 (Desmond Dawes &



Davidson, 2019). The cost of incarceration in Australia is among the highest in the world. Australia had the fifth-highest yearly prison expenditure per prisoner among countries with accessible data in 2014. One year of incarceration costs \$109,500 (Desmond Dawes and Davidson, 2019).

It is crucial to understand that just because the prison population has decreased does not necessarily mean that crime has decreased. What it means is that there might be changes in correctional interventions in these countries. Thus, an important question is, does the decrease in prison population infer that there is a decrease in crime as well as re-offending? Does it mean that those who are released from prison facilities do not return in the space of three years? Prison sentences are widely known in Ghana and the rest of the world as a means of deterring crime as well as reforming and rehabilitating individuals convicted of crimes in society (Sechrest, Murphy, Senapati, Goldberg, Park & Kolandaivelu, 2020). The overarching goal of prison facilities is to provide a safe environment for offenders to learn how to be law-abiding citizens after they are released. This means that, if the goal of the prison system is achieved, then there should be no re-offending because the offender should have been reformed before leaving the rehabilitation centre. Thus, the rate of recidivism can be linked to correctional interventions. Correctional interventions in this context, are those policies that are seen to be effective to reduce crime.

While the majority of criminology's attention has been on how laws are made, broken, and how society responds to lawbreakers (Friedrichs, 2018), little is known about how key stakeholders characterise the results of institutional, social,

and community support services for people who are incarcerated. Former offenders repeatedly come into contact with the criminal justice system, despite efforts to help them live lives free of crime through prison-based interventions. This suggests that the services they receive while in and after prison are inadequate or non-existent. It is noted since the founding of prisons, that there have been issues with prisoners moving to and from prisons. Hundreds of incarcerated criminals escape and then return to prison every year (Travis, Solomon & Waul, 2001; Edwards, 2021).

The term "recidivism" refers to the process of ex-offenders returning to the criminal justice system after being granted bail, whether for minor breaches or new offences (Duwe, 2017). In 2004, the recidivism rate in Australia was projected to be 38% (Payne, 2007), however, it climbed by 20% (58%) in 2017 (Bushnell, 2018). A nine-year follow-up study of convicts released in 2005 from 30 states in the United States of America found that five out of every six inmates were re-arrested (US Department of Justice, 2018). In the United States, the average national recidivism rate is predicted to be 66.7%, up from 2005 (Re-entry Policy Council, 2008). Recidivism in England was reported to reach 55% in 2007 (Abotchie, 2008). The 2011 recidivism rate in South Africa was 47% (South Africa Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2012).

Re-offending among ex-offenders can be caused by a multitude of factors, including the lack of access to education, jobs, mental health services, prison life, societal stigmatisation and substance abuse (Mears & Mestre, 2012). Beijersbergen, Dirkzwager and Nieuwbeerta (2016) argued that some prisoners feel they are being treated fairly and decently in prison as compared to society. Some



ex-offenders accept the label of a criminal and as a result, many ex-offenders are unable to change their life for the better due to society's perceptions of them (Hollingsworth, 2019). This finding is consistent with findings of the Finder newspaper report (2022) that over 7,181 ex-convicts re-offend and are sent back to prison within five years and over 1000 cases are recorded each year.

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Credibility

World Bank cuts growth forecast to 3.2%, citing Russia-Ukraine war, COVID-19 surge in China **P5**

NRSA to publish compliance audit report on transport operators — Koduah Atuahene **P6**

Stop GRA from collecting E-levy-3 NDC MPs pray Supreme Court **P4**

**OVER 7,181 EX-CONVICTS RETURNED TO PRISON IN 5 YEARS**  
**- Over 1000 cases recorded each year**

ADB donates food items to Chief Imam and others **P8**

**Petroleum Price Indicators (As of 11th April, 2022)**

	April 2022 (per litre)	April 2021 (per litre)	% Change
P5 Rate of Repatriation Bank	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Standard Oil	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Shell (Domestic)	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Shell (International)	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Shell (Domestic)	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Shell (International)	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Shell (Domestic)	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%
Shell (International)	1,000.00	1,000.00	0.00%

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Figure: Evidence of recidivism in Ghana

Source: The Finder Newspaper (2022)

When ex-offenders leave prison, they are often affected by the lack of employment and advancement opportunities they face which are also seen as a major cause for reoffending (Polaschek & Kilgour, 2017). A high recidivism rate is one of the most critical difficulties facing the criminal justice system, despite

government efforts to prepare inmates for reintegration into society as law-abiding individuals (Cooper & Mansfield, (2020). Some scholars have proposed ways of curbing recidivism which include services such as mental health and substance addiction treatment (Drake, Wallach & McGovern, 2005; Polaschek, 2016). Correctional agents such as re-entry counsellors, probation officers and community leaders may assist ex-offenders with reintegration into society if they have a better understanding of offenders' highest criminogenic needs in a more streamlined counselling programme (Higley, Lloyd, & Serin, 2019).

The experiences of inmates upon their release from jail and strategies for assisting them in reintegrating into society are subjects of growing interest to scholars and professionals. This interest stems from the realisation that reducing the likelihood that previously incarcerated individuals will commit new crimes might improve community safety (Walsh, 2007). Thus, an offender's propensity to commit new crimes is influenced by both the degree to which they were successfully rehabilitated while in detention and the ease with which they were reintegrated into society after their release. Therefore, it is imperative to examine the correctional interventions and their effectiveness since the goal of incarceration is far from achieved if reoffending is ascending.

As stated in Articles 65 and 66 (p.11) of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (1955) or the prison's rules, "the purpose of training and treatment of convicted persons shall be to establish in them the will to lead a good and useful life upon discharge and to fit them to do so. Treatment shall be such that it will encourage their self-respect and develop their sense of

responsibility” (Sarkin, 2008). It is additionally stated in Article 71 (3) and (4) that there is enough work available to keep the inmates engaged in productive labour for an ordinary working day. The work offered ought to improve the inmates' capacity to make a decent living once they are released (UNODC, 2015). However, this injunction has not been fully applied in most correctional systems in Africa and the world at large (Duwe, 2017).

Murhula, Singh, and Nunlall (2019), discovered that in South Africa, the implementation of rehabilitation programmes was not successful because the psychological, social work and healthcare services were not adequate. Rehabilitation, as a correctional intervention, lacks effectiveness in most correctional systems in most parts of Africa of which Ghana is no exception (Manganye, 2016). Antwi (2015) conducted a study in Ghana that established that offender rehabilitation in Ghana is ineffective due to the absence of offence-focused treatments, insufficient state funding, insufficient skilled personnel, overcrowding, short sentences, a lack of interest, inconvenience, and security protocol, as well as a lack of programme intensity and integrity. Against this background, it is imperative to study the nature and role of correctional interventions in Ghana and how this affects reoffending since there has been limited research in that area.

According to a 2017 study conducted in the US by Mitchell, Murray, Hoon, Hackett, Prvan, & O'Connor, incarceration had no effect in lowering recidivism. Prison challenges tend to enhance recidivism rather than dissuade offenders, claim Chamberlain and Wallace (2016). convicts in Ohio, USA, were sampled by Listwan, Sullivan, Agnew, Cullen, and Colvin (2013) and it was discovered that



the notion that prison lessens the desire of offenders to commit crimes in the future is not accepted by the convicts. This corroborates the basic tenets of rational choice theory which argues that individuals use rational calculations to make rational choices and achieve outcomes that are aligned with their objectives (McCarthy & Chaudhary, 2014). The theories of sociologists and political scientists centre on the premise that people weigh the potential advantages and disadvantages of each course of action before taking it and that all behaviour is essentially "rational." Recidivism will happen if the hardships inside prisons are compared to those outside and the results are favourable. Recidivism will be discouraged if the outcome is unfavourable Bulmer (Ed.). (2021). The second theory that helped to explain recidivism is the labelling theory. Labelling theory, according to Uggen, Manza, and Behens (2004), the labelling theory holds that once a person is labelled as an "ex-convict," that individual bears a lifelong stigma even after the perpetrator has been sentenced. The criminal justice system's use of official and informal designations leads to the perpetuation of criminal activity (Bernburg, Thorlindsson, & Sigfusdottir, 2009). When prisoners are released and they tend to be labelled as "ex-convicts" and discriminated against by society, reintegration becomes difficult despite all the skills they have acquired. This discrimination can lead them to re-offend.

Bandura (1977) on social learning theory asserts that, behaviour is learned through model observation. Bandura selects models based on criteria such as appearance, status, and perceived likeness to the observer. The observed effects of a model's activities determine whether or not it is emulated. This has two parts, the

environment within the prison can improve the prisoner's understanding of self-worth or reduce their self-worth while increasing his proclivity to reoffending (Johnson, Hallett, & Jang, 2021). If the correctional facilities do a good job, provide the skills, etc. and then all prisoners are being given this correctional training, that environment is positive. The prisoner now comes out into the society at large. Is the environment welcoming? If the environment is welcoming, then the calculations will be positive and the person will be reintegrated. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate recidivism, correctional interventions and penal reforms in Ghana.

### **Problem Statement**

The issue of offenders returning home safely to live a law-abiding life has been a difficult task in Ghana (Antwi, 2015). Hundreds of ex-convicts relapse into criminal behaviour after being released from jail or prison and the majority of them become more hardened criminals than they were before going to prison. In 2021, Ghana's total prison population (including pre-trial detainees and remand prisoners) was 13,480 with a prison population rate (per 100,000 of the national population) of 43 out of an estimated national population of 31.28 million (National Prison Administration, 2021). The rate of recidivism, on the other hand, has remained consistently high over time, according to research findings (Appiah-Hene, 1995; Asiedu, 1999; Wehrman, 2010).

The rate of recidivism in Ghana has risen significantly over the years (Ayamba, Arhin, & Dankwa 2017 & Antwi 2015). It was 9.2% in 1992, 14.1 percent in 1996, 23% in 2013 and 24 % in 2018 (Asiedu, 1999). According to the Ghana

Prison Service's (GPSAR, 2018) annual report. As much as these are not the most recent data, they give an overview of how recidivism is increasing in Ghana. A 2022 “Finder” newspaper report shown in Figure 1 is illustrative of the increasing rate of recidivism in Ghana. The newspaper reports that over seven thousand ex-convicts were returned to prison in 5 years and over one thousand cases are reported each year. If this rate continues to rise as anticipated, it will hurt both individuals and society. Incarceration keeps offenders away from their communities for a long time and prevents them from making significant contributions to their ‘communities’ development (Clear, 2011). The primary concern about recidivism in Ghana is the problems that arise as a result of recidivists being absent from society. For example, it is assumed that recidivists have families and owe certain roles and responsibilities to their families and society in general. As a result, re-incarceration creates a void by imposing a burden on those who fill these roles and responsibilities in their absence.

Ghana's criminal justice system is designed to maintain social order and deter criminals and other individuals from breaking the law. The Prison is one of the institutions charged with carrying out criminal justice functions such as, incarcerates offenders, reforming, rehabilitating and reintegrating them back into their communities. The harsh prison sentences meted out to lawbreakers are intended to serve as a deterrent (Andersen, 2012). The primary goal of incarceration is to reform and rehabilitate criminals so that they can return to society as law-abiding citizens. Even though the state devotes resources to helping rehabilitate offenders to reintegrate them back into society (Appiahene-Gyamfi, 1995), many



convicts are released into their respective societies in a worse state than before, posing challenges to other individuals, their families, the community and the state as a whole (Freeman, 2003).

This issue has received insufficient government and academic attention. The cost of incarcerating offenders is extremely high; money and resources spent on incarcerating offenders leave less money for other social services like education and health care (Nunes, Firestone, Wexler, Jensen, & Bradford, 2007). According to the Centre for Impact Research (2004), recidivism creates insecurity in the environment of ex-offenders. Ex-convicts who revert to criminal behaviour will always put the community of origin in jeopardy when they return. Recidivism is a social problem for these and other reasons, necessitating research into the phenomenon and the development of immediate and practical solutions to help reduce recidivism to the bare minimum.

However, very few studies have explored the interconnections among correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms in Ghana. Antwi (2015) in his study, for instance, focused on the social reintegration of offenders and recidivism in Ghana using Nsawam as a study. Darkwa (2016) conducted a study on factors contributing to recidivism among inmates in the Nsawam Medium Security Prison. These studies did not address the nature of correctional interventions, as well as, the types of correctional interventions offered by the prison. The aforementioned empirical evidence grosses over Ankaful Prison Complex which is the largest and houses the most hardened criminals, hence the consideration of Ankaful Prison as the study area. In this regard, the research aims

to investigate the nature of correctional interventions and recidivism in Ghana, with the Ankaful Prison as a study site.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study was to explore the nature of correctional reforms in the Ghanaian prison system and how this affects recidivism. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. Examine the causes of recidivism in Ghana
2. Examine the types of correctional interventions within the Ghanaian prison system
3. Assess how repeat offending is related to the types and nature of correctional reforms within the prison system.
4. Make recommendations toward penal reforms to reduce recidivism

### **Research Questions**

Based on the research objectives above, the following research questions were proposed.

1. What are the causes of recidivism in Ghana?
2. What are the types of correctional interventions within the Ghanaian prison system and how do they influence recidivism?
3. How is repeat offending related to the types and nature of correctional interventions in the Prison system?
4. What are the types of penal reforms needed to reduce recidivism?

### **Significance of the study**

Research in academia is often intended to yield new information and validate or disprove previously held beliefs. The findings of this study will help establish a theoretical framework for explaining recidivism and formulating policies to reduce reoffending in Ghana. The social sciences have the potential to give scientific responses to the problems of society. Recidivism is one such social issue that requires new insight because it does not appear to be reducing. The study's findings from the perspective of the recidivists and prison officers in Ghana will also contribute to the research on recidivism. Finally, the findings will lead to new research interests in the field of repeat offending and inform penal reforms. It will also be useful in pointing out the deficiencies in the correctional system as well as public policy on incarceration.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

The study focused on understanding the correctional interventions in the prisons and how those interventions affect recidivism. In other words, when people are incarcerated, they go through various kinds of interventions that are aimed at reforming their character. However, the rate of recidivism is high. The question now is why is that high. The focus is on the correctional interventions which are happening. To what extent are they adequate or inadequate such that there is return offending? Thus, the study focused on correctional interventions and recidivism in Ghana with data from the Ankaful Prison Complex. This study did not cover the pre-criminal life history of the offenders. Finally, this study did not include the

causes of first-time offending and how released prisoners are integrated or are not integrated into society.

### **Limitations of the study**

The Ankaful Prison Complex is an all-male prison hence the study lacks the voices of females. The findings are therefore not generalisable to the prison population. Methodologically, the study leaned on a qualitative lens to unpack the issues regarding recidivism, correctional interventions and penal reforms in Ghana. A survey using mixed method approach could have expanded the sample size to cover also the female prisoners.

### **Organisation of the study**

This study is organised under five chapters. Chapter one comprises the introduction which is subdivided into the background, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations and the organization of the study. The second chapter covered the literature review which consisted of related theoretical literature and empirical literature on themes including; the nature of correctional interventions, the causes of recidivism, correctional reforms and penal reforms. Chapter Three discussed the methodology that was used for the research. It comprised the research design, the target population of the study, the sample size, the sampling techniques, the data collection instrument, and the analytical tools which would be used in the data analysis. Chapter Four presented the findings and discussions of the study. Chapter Five also presented conclusions derived from the findings, as well as recommendations and areas for further research.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Prisons are designed to reform and rehabilitate individual offenders so they become law-abiding individuals after being released from prison but in most cases, returning citizens are seen to be going back to prison for reoffending. The process of reoffending and being re-incarcerated is referred to as recidivism. Recidivism has emerged as a serious socioeconomic issue, attracting several studies throughout the years. This chapter reviews the concepts in the following areas: Correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms. It also examines the theoretical framework within which this study can be explained.

#### Review of Concepts

Every scientific study requires the review of concepts to help in the comprehension of its findings. The concepts used in this study are derived from the problem and research question. These concepts are (i) correctional interventions, (ii) recidivism (iii) penal reforms have been explained as follows:

##### *Correctional Interventions*

Corrections are terms that describe a variety of functions typically performed by government agencies that involve punishment, treatment and supervision of people who have been convicted of crimes (Latessa, & Lovins, 2019). Correctional interventions are thus policies or measures that are thought to be effective in reducing crime within or outside of correctional institutions (Cullen, & Gendreau, 2000). Correctional interventions are a network of agencies that



functions related to rehabilitating convicted persons through either institutional-based or community-based interventions (Heinrich, 2014). Institutional-based interventions are where incarcerated individuals are confined and are going to serve their sentence inside prison. Here, they are supervised and monitored by custodial forces that look after their welfare and also supervise the treatment programmes that have been designed for them. They are not exercising their rights of their free will but are being confined inside the correctional facility (Barry, 2000).

In terms of corrections, this is where government agencies play a role, which includes the punishment of offenders as a form of deterrence (Gunnison, & Helfgott, 2019). It is a type of sentence service that occurs inside a penal institution and after an individual has been confined in prison. The government had systemized treatment under correctional interventions in a specific programme and mechanics to treat or rehabilitate offenders. The Bureau of Corrections in Ghana, the Bureau of Jail Management in the UK, and the Bureau of Criminology in the USA are just a few examples of institutions that are designing a variety of programmes specifically for their respective fields (Chamberlain, 2012). Therefore, the treatment provided here is tailored to every person who is robbed of their freedom. The majority of the time, it leads to flaws or failure on the side of jail or bureau workers in terms of rehabilitation and reforming the person deprived of liberty because it is frequently not suitable or perfectly intended for these offenders.

The term "supervision of persons guilty of a crime" refers to the management of the custodial forces by the bureau of jails while the condemned person is imprisoned, deprived of their liberty and serving their sentence (Hogan,

2008). When it comes to institutionalizing or providing therapeutic programmes inside prison institutions, they make sure that everyone who has had their rights violated will receive the appropriate attention, programmes, design and oversight.

Peer supervision is included in this particular monitoring, both about the activities and the daily routine that the prisoner is required to construct. (Swartz, Lurigo & Slomka, 1996).

Correctional intervention attempts to modify offender behaviour through some combination of treatment and external controls (Palmer, 1992). Treatment, according to Palmer (1992 p. 3), attempts to “affect the individual’s future behaviour, attitudes toward self and interactions with others by focusing on such factors and conditions as the individual’s adjustment techniques, interests, skills, personal limitations, and or life circumstances”. Correctional intervention programs can be context or gender-bound such that, measures that may work well in reducing crime among men may not necessarily work for women. This explains why researchers such as Lipsey and Cullen (2007) indicated that there is now established literature on the effectiveness of correctional programmes in reducing rates of reoffending for males.

Prisons are designed to reform and rehabilitate individual offenders. Maltz (1984) highlighted that “Correction or rehabilitation of the offender is but one of the goals that society specifies for prisoner custodial and treatment programmes.” One of the correctional interventions in the United States is the solitary confinement reform. Younger and less educated prisoners are more likely to spend time in isolation, as are most racial minority groups (Beck, 2015). This reform is seen to

be biased towards people with poor backgrounds and racial minorities. It is also reported that people with mental illness are at a particularly elevated risk of solitary confinement. According to a call from the American Psychiatric Association to greatly restrict the use of solitary confinement, isolation makes mentally ill persons worse as well as causes new mental illness in those without prior mental health problems (American Psychiatric Association, 2012).

According to Thomas and Zaitzow (2006), the number of years prisoners serve at the facility is a major reason why there is a need for prison programmes. The essence of these programmes is to help prisoners deal with the problem of inactivity; which can turn into resentment. Aspects of these programmes aim at rehabilitating and reintegrating offenders into the society. Prisons across the world have similar programmes such as vocational or skill training, formal education, and individual and group counselling. Baumer, O'Donnell and Hughes (2009) assert that drug treatment, life skills, and educational and vocational preparation are some of the many programmes designed for inmates in an attempt to minimize the propensity to recidivate. Specifically, prisoners learn weaving, catering, carpentry, sewing, and masonry among other economically driven activities. It is expected that once inmates learn from these programmes, they can at least provide jobs for themselves upon their release from prison, especially when institutions deny them access to employment.

Thomas and Zaitzow (2006) and Yin (2018) have also mentioned that religious activities in prison serve as alternative programmes for inmates. Getting involved in the formation of prayer camps, singing groups, individual faith-based

exploration and spiritual peer counselling could desist inmates from gang-related activities. Hence, focusing on these vocational, religious and educational programmes is critical in prisoner rehabilitation.

Cullen and Gendreau (2000); and Wilson, Gallagher and MacKenzie (2000) have revealed that academic and vocational programmes in prison could reduce recidivism. The potential benefits of these programmes and the implications for inmates' prison adjustment and reintegration into the community, as well as its implications for institutional management, are enormous (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006). Nevertheless, not all inmates enrol due to the pain of imprisonment (Abotchie, 2008).

### ***Recidivism***

According to Maltz ([1984] 2001), recidivism in the context of criminal justice, is the return of a person to criminal activity following a prior offence for which they were found guilty, sentenced, and (hopefully) made amends. It is the result of a series of failures, including the individual's inability to live up to societal expectations or the society's inability to provide for them; the individual's subsequent failure to stay out of trouble; the individual's failure as an offender to escape arrest and conviction; the individual's failure to take advantage of correctional programmes or the institution's failure to provide rehabilitative programmes; and additional failures on the part of the individual to continue in a criminal career after release (Maltz, 2001).

Recidivism is the act of committing the same undesired action after receiving negative feedback for it, receiving treatment for it, or receiving training



on how to prevent it. Recidivism has definitional issues, though, just like a lot of other social science topics. This is because while the operational definition is complex, the conceptual definition is straightforward. The definition of recidivism and its inclusions have a significant influence on the reported rate of recidivism (Nunez-Neto & James, 2007). This is because statistics on re-arrests, reconvictions, re-incarcerations, and technical violations/revocations may be used to quantify the idea. Thus, the method used to measure re-offending has an impact on determining the recidivism rate. Furthermore, the measurement of recidivism might occur at many stages during a known offender's involvement with the criminal justice system (Lievore, 2004). Some criminologists are of the view that an ex-offenders subsequent involvement with the criminal justice system, regardless of how minor the case may be, should be seen as recidivism (Maruna, Immarigeon, & LeBel, 2013).

According to Glover, Obodai, Forkuor, and Abaitey (2018), recidivism is a global issue that affects all governments and parties involved in the welfare of ex-offenders. According to a media story from 2012, the recidivism rate in the US was over 70% (Baffour, 2016). Similar to the United States of America, several Western European nations, including the United Kingdom and Ireland, have high rates of recidivism (Glover et al., 2018). Recidivism statistics are difficult to come by in Africa due to the challenges associated with maintaining records, however estimates are generally believed to be very high. Ghana's recidivism rate has fluctuated, going from 21% in 2004 to 19.3% in 2008 to 22.2% in 2011 (Baffour, 2021). James Agalga, a former deputy minister for the interior, observed that



recidivism is rising in Ghana as a result of the feeling of ex-offenders rejection (Glover et al., 2018).

The aforementioned descriptions of recidivism are imprecise because they incorporate minor infractions of probation or parole (such failing a drug test or skipping a meeting) into the overall statistics on recidivism (Doherty, 2015). Technical infractions are therefore not new crimes, but rather a continuation of the offender's initial prison sentence. The inclusion of people who are found not guilty of the charges in re-arrest statistics is another flaw in the recidivism measure. Legally speaking, a suspect should not be taken into custody until a court of competent jurisdiction has found them guilty (Glover et al., 2018).

Recidivism should therefore be more precisely defined for the sake of this study as a relapse into criminal behaviour that results in another arrest, conviction, or period of imprisonment. A more accurate indicator of recidivism is the emphasis on re-incarceration with a new prison sentence. This is because, in contrast to re-arrest, reconviction necessitates a plea from the defendant, which lowers the possibility of prosecuting the wrongfully accused individual and provides evidence that the former criminal has committed a new crime (Doherty, 2015). Since recidivism has grown to be a significant social issue, it has drawn many different kinds of studies over time (Tegeng & Abadi, 2018).

### ***Penal Reforms***

The term 'penal reform' refers to changes to a country's or a region's penal system. The goal of prison reform is to enhance prisoner circumstances, increase the efficacy of the criminal justice system, or introduce alternatives to incarceration.

Additionally, it emphasises making sure those whose lives have been harmed by crimes are reinstated (Duce & Perdomo, 2003). "Penal" denotes "pertaining to or involving punishment." As a result, in addition to prisons, the penal system also consists of (where appropriate) components like parole boards, probationary services inspectorates, and conventional and informal penalties systems, as well as alternatives to detention including bail and community service orders (Petersilia, 2014). It is important to note that the term "penal reform" encompasses a broad range of procedures, including both slow and quick adjustments, straightforward conditional improvements and structural governance reforms, as well as modifications implemented by local prison authorities and international actors (Garland, 2018).

When discussing prisons alone, it may be more appropriate to refer to "prison reform" or "support to prison development" instead of "penal development," noting that change occurs gradually. Penal reforms can be broadly interpreted as an attempt to get the offender ready for reintegration into society, viewing criminal penalties as a chance to change the offender (Petersilia, 2014). Each country has traditions that influence how these various principles are represented in sentencing, accessible programmes and punishments, and prison policies. According to Coyle et al. (2016), many developing countries that were formerly ruled by colonial powers lack an Indigenous understanding of incarceration. Different environments have different criminal reform procedures with respect to actors, timelines, and objectives. Critics within a country may talk

about penal reform in light of the continuous, gradual modifications to the penal system.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This section focused on the theories that underpin this study. Several theories have been used to explain correctional interventions, recidivism, and penal reforms. However, this study selected three theories which are: rational choice theory, labelling theory and social learning theory. The reasons for selecting these theories are explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### ***Rational Choice Theory***

Rational choice theory is a set of concepts concerning how people's preferences influence the decisions they make (McCarthy & Chaudhary, 2014). This theory holds that people engage in activities or act in ways that will benefit them. There are various versions of rational choice theory, although scholars use the term "Rational Choice Approach" (RCA). This is more appropriate especially when you are using it to explain crime-related activities. The philosophical roots of the RCA stem in Cesare Beccaria's 1764 essay *On Crimes and Punishments* and Jeremy Bentham's 1789 work, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Paternoster, 2010).

The contribution of Bentham of the RCA centres on Bentham's formalization of the idea that the incentives for actions, criminal or otherwise, are universally anchored in individual self-interest and the desire to maximize pleasure and reduce pain (McCarthy & Chaudhary, 2014). RCA has the following key

assumptions according to Bentham and Beccaria (1764). These key assumptions are:

- People have preferences for outcomes,
- People's preferences are influenced by the expected benefits of an outcome, relative to its costs,
- People can order their preferences for outcomes from most to least valued,
- People's assessments of the benefits and costs of outcomes are influenced by the information they collect,
- Preferences are also influenced by people's orientation to time,
- Preferences are further modified by attitudes toward risk and uncertainty,

Rational behaviours are those that are consistent with the above assumptions. The RCA does not exclude people from acting irrationally and people may choose a path of action discordant with their preferences for a variety of reasons conclusion, the RCA does not claim that people do literal calculations (Tenenbaum, 2020).

In contrast to biological, psychological and sociological theories of crime, RCA assumes that crime may be understood "as if" people chose to offend by applying the same principles of cost-benefit analysis they use when selecting legal actions (Dahlbäck, 2003). That to say, people decide to commit crimes based on their estimate of illegal opportunities availability, the cost and benefit, as well as the potential to realise the same or comparable outcomes. In other words, people commit crimes when the subjectively expected return to crime (i.e., the benefits-costs ratio) outweighs what they believe they will get by devoting the same time and resources to legal activity (Mehlkop & Graeff, 2010). The RCA varies from



many other crime theories in that it describes how people's preferences influence their decisions rather than describing the source of their preferences (McCarthy & Chaudhary, 2014).

The RCA was selected to help guide this research in the exploration of the causes of recidivism and also how correctional interventions can be well implemented to curb recidivism. As part of the objectives of this study, this study will investigate whether correctional interventions have a role to play in recidivism. Since this theory argues that people offend when they assume that the benefits attached to the crime outweigh the cost, some researchers using the RCA suggested that the punishment should be harsh enough to deter others (McCarthy & Chaudhary, 2014).

Levitt and Miles (2006) investigated the deterrent effects of capital punishment and they found that such a punishment has little deterrent effect. This implied that capital punishment cannot curb crime. Studies conducted on prisoners reveal that the certainty of punishment has a strong deterrent effect, but the harshness of punishments has a lesser, typically negligible effect (Grogger, 1991). This study will add to knowledge from data collected from the Ghanaian context on the relationship between rational choices and re-offending.

Thus, the findings from recidivists in Ghana will probably support this discourse of criminals analysing the cost and benefit of an act or probably as a result of other components like a family tie and societal disintegration among others which are seen to be irrational causes of crime. The idea of recidivist going back to their criminal behaviour is a result of the fact that they are rational and they look at



the cost-benefit of doing it and as a result, they engage in criminal activities. The next theory to be discussed is the labelling theory.

### *Labelling Theory*

According to Bernburg (2009), labelling theory offers a unique sociological perspective that emphasises the part that social branding plays in the emergence of criminality and deviance. This theory's central premise is that, while deviant behaviour may initially result from a variety of circumstances, once someone has been classified as a deviant, they frequently encounter new issues brought on by their own and other people's reactions to the stigmatising stereotypes (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1967). Furthermore, this theory provides the greatest explanation for recidivism because it requires a first offence before a person is tagged by society. Following this, they embrace the negative stereotype they have been given by society and go on to commit further crimes.

In popular culture, negative stereotypes about criminals can be found in a variety of contexts, including films, books, the media, and even common speech (Becker, 1963; Goffman, 1963; Scheff, 1966). Criminals accept this label not necessarily being pointed at them directly but through indirect means as listed above and then these offenders accept this status and act accordingly. People who are labelled as criminals or delinquents are typically stereotyped as having undesirable features or characteristics and are seen as essentially different from other people (Goffman, 1963; Link & Phelan, 2001; Simmons, 1965-6). For this reason, Becker (1963) contended that a person's deviant status may turn into their

master status; that is, the stigma associated with the deviant designation could overwhelm any beneficial traits an individual may possess.

Also, it is worth noting that labelling can be formal or informal. Labelling theorists have highlighted that formal labelling, namely in the context of law enforcement and criminal justice, is a significant source of labelling (Awotula, 2022). The state has a formal monopoly on sanctioning criminals in modern society (Garfinkel, 1956). The formal institutions that are responsible for dealing with criminal offenders are seen as the source that is responsible for formal labelling. This is officially accomplished by labelling them as delinquents or criminals, thereby attesting to and drawing attention to their immorality and failure to adhere to significant societal norms (Salsman, 2023). According to Erikson (1966), "the criminal trial, with its elaborate formality and exaggerated ritual," is one example of a ceremony, or "rite of transition," that signifies a shift into a deviant status.

The labelling theory argues that when the argument is done no ceremony changes the status of the criminal and therefore the status conferred on the person remains on them and they are seen as such by the society. As a result, the stigma associated with having undergone formal criminal processing tends to "stick" with the individual. This theory in a way links correctional interventions to being a cause of recidivism. This is because some of these correctional interventions (punishment and incarceration) come with the social stigma of society. It may be noted that, from the vantage point of labelling theory, this notion of rational decision-making ignores the reality of stigma and its consequences on individual development (Bernburg, 2009). The labelling theory was selected to underpin this study in

addition to the rational choice theory because of the contribution it makes to criminal research.

With much emphasis given to formal labelling, the notion of informal labelling is at the heart of labelling theory (Gibbs, 1975). This is when social audiences impose deviant labels on actors in the absence of formal labelling (Paternoster & Iovanni, 1989; Matsueda, 1992; Triplett & Jarjoura, 1994). It is argued that informal labelling preceded formal labelling. For instance, when the police arrest an offender without making it known to the public through the media and other sources, it will probably be unknown to the public. Since it is always known to the public who offends, society gets and knows and continues as well.

Labelling theory has received a lot of criticism about the vagueness of its discussion. This study, will add to knowledge and expand the theory and will employ the specific process of how labelling triggers the criminogenic characteristics of the offender as espoused by (Bernburg, 2009). These processes include; engagement in deviant groups, the process of rejection and withdrawal, and the formation of a deviant self-concept. Symbolic interactionism is the foundation for the emphasis on how labelling affects one's self-concept (Lemert, 1967; Scheff, 1966; Schur, 1971). This is when the offender interprets the behaviour of others towards them as being seen as deviant and therefore, they accept that and behave likewise.

There are two distinct and analytically distinct ways in which labelling might result in social exclusion (Link, 1982). Peers, neighbours, and educators ignoring the person with a label in society is the first step. Second, because labelling

can cause one to fear rejection or devaluation, it can cause social disengagement. According to Goffman (1963), social interactions between stigmatised individuals and "normal" people frequently involve anxiety, shame, ambiguity, and strong impression control efforts.

The very anticipation of being rejected and stigmatized by others causes offenders not to associate with others. Bernburg, Krohn, and Rivera (2006) assert that deviant communities provide a source of social support in which deviant labels are accepted, while also providing collective rationalisations, attitudes, and opportunities that encourage and assist deviant activity. This stage precedes the rejection and stigmatizing stage. Offenders then look for associations that can help them rationalize their behaviour and feel accepted as well. These processes will be compared to what will be identified from the field, to see the association.

Therefore, this study argues that labelling offenders as criminals in society has a greater influence on whether they will re-offend or not. The above argument is supported by the proposition that People assume that the labelled individual is incapable or reluctant to “act as a moral being and therefore might break other important rules” (Bernburg, 2009). The stigma associated with criminal labelling fosters widespread distrust and contempt for those with criminal labels (Travis, 2002). Therefore, labelling contributes to the idea of recidivism. People who are labelled criminals, and rejected by society, are seen already as criminals and therefore think that they stand to lose nothing once they are labelled so if they are labelled as criminals, the best thing for them to do is to always engage in crime. It is also a result of the social reforms that are not available within societies. Life after



prison becomes very difficult and this is something that affects them so they go back to committing crimes and return to prison (Baldwin, 2020). The next theory selected will be the social learning theory.

### ***Social Learning Theory***

The Social Learning Theory (SLT) maintains Sutherland's (2018) original assertions that the learning of criminal behaviour involves the learning of techniques to commit crimes, the learning of motives, drives, rationalizations and attitudes (Akers, 2011). Even though this theory is ascribed to Albert Bandura, it is believed that it has its roots in Sutherland's differential associations. Even though the critical element of the differential association was founded on learning content rather than the actual learning process, this criticism of the classical publications on the theory persisted. The actual learning mechanism in another differential association reinforcement theory was defined by Burgess and Akers (1966b). This theory redefines Sutherland's prior theory while retaining the differential association element and incorporating the learning principles of B.F. Skinner's respondent and operant conditioning research. This is why this study will employ the contribution of Akers rather than the original writings of the theory.

The following terms and concepts from behavioural learning theory were introduced into the learning process by Burgess and Akers (1966b): schedules of reinforcement, discriminative stimuli from classical or response conditioning, differential reinforcement, and symbolic interactionism. Differential reinforcement is defined by Burgess and Akers as follows: schedules of reinforcement are the rates and ratios at which rewards or punishments follow behaviour; classical or



responders are based on involuntary behaviour; environmental cues are the subject of discriminative stimuli; and symbolic interactionism theory is based on the cognitive process through which an individual imagines committing the act. To incorporate sociology and social behaviourism into psychology and broaden the theory into the social learning theory, Akers keeps modifying differential association (Carvalho & Ossorio, 2021). This study will focus on integrative Social Learning to explain correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms in Ghana.

Akers (2017), indicates that social learning theory is a comprehensive theory of deviance that emphasises not only the acquisition of criminal skills but also the significance of drives, motives, and rationalisations (Akers, 2011). This theory does not only focus on the learning aspect of criminal behaviours but also focuses on the association between punishment and reward. According to Li, Galley, Brockett, Spithourakis, Gao, and Dolan (2016), the theory's primary ideas are differential association, definitions, differential reinforcement, and imitation. The theory was presented in the context of four hypotheses by Akers and Jennings (2015). These hypotheses stated that an individual is more likely to violate social and legal norms when they associate with people who violate, model, and support these norms; when violative behaviour is differentially reinforced over norm-compliant behaviour; when they are exposed to and witness more deviant than conforming models; and when their learned definitions are favourable towards engaging in deviant behaviour.

Recidivism rates are high among convicts because they interact with other inmates and create criminal networks that help them keep afloat (Nsanze, 2007). Put another way, inmates establish relationships with one another and pick up new techniques for committing crimes (Nsanze, 2007). An improved location would be the prison, where many types of criminals congregate and casually share criminal techniques. Inmates' attitudes and behaviours in prisons are different from those of the general public, creating an illegal environment that encourages inmates to learn violence as a norm, interact with other hardened criminals, which they then continue, and commit more serious crimes after being released from prison (Crewe, 2012). Thus, by fostering an environment that is favourable to criminal affiliations and increasing criminal contacts, the jail functions as a kind of criminal college (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992). As a result, insufficient amenities in the APC may cause inmates to pick up a variety of habits when they first enter the jail system and may cause them to emerge from it more resolute.

This theory was selected because some literature indicated that some inmates re-offend after interactions with other criminals. Through this interaction, they can learn different values and motives which influence them to re-offend after being released from prison. As indicated above, Akers focused on differential reinforcement and imitation which implies that offenders repeat criminal behaviours that are reinforced by others.

### **History of Penal Reforms and Incarceration in Ghana**

The early 1800s saw the erratic establishment of the Gold Coast's penitentiary system when a group of merchants led by Captain George Maclean

took up the responsibility of maintaining the forts along the coast (Antwi, 2015). In order to house debtors, a type of prison had been established in the Cape Coast Castle by 1841. By 1850, 129 inmates were housed in prisons at James Fort, Ussher Fort, Cape Coast Castle, and Anomabo Castle. As a result, colonisation produced Ghana's criminal justice system (Antwi, 2015). There has not been much change in the post-colonial prison from how it used to be during the colonial era. Kuuire (2021) asserted that “African prisons are considered as another legacy of colonialism hence, to understand the present, one must cast an eye towards the past and consider the development of penal institutions throughout the continent”.

In Ghana, the Castles and Forts used for trading slaves continued to be used until their physical integrity was called into question as they posed a danger to both prisoners and prison staff working there (Kuiire, 2021). Examples of such a prison were the Cape Coast Castle, used as a prison until 1990 when it was handed over to the Museums and Monuments Board and Tourism Authority for other uses. The Anomabo prison was also handed over to the same authorities. The notorious Ussher Fort and James Fort prisons were abandoned by the Ghana Prisons Services because of weak structures. The Keta prison which was housed in a fort close to the Atlantic Ocean was claimed by the sea in the early 1980's (Kuiire, 2021).

The Gold Coast became a colony in 1875 and the remaining part of Ghana's southern region was progressively brought under British law enforcement authority. The English Prison Act of 1865 served as the inspiration for the 1876 enactment of the Gold Coast Prison Ordinance (GCPO). The ordinance established prison regulations and standing orders (Appiahene-Gyamfi, 2011). The Prisons

Department (PD) was reorganised under the Director General of Prisons after some problems caused it to split from the Police Administration. In 1964, the Prisons Department separated from the Civil Service to become the Ghana Prisons Service. After 1844, a number of laws were passed to control the behaviour of the guards and prisoners, according to Appiahene-Gyamfi (2009). A few of these statutes described prisons as a distinct system with nightly solitary confinement, daytime labour, and a set diet.

The Ghana Prisons Service is a partner in the criminal justice system, responsible for ensuring convicts' safety as well as their reform and rehabilitation (Addo, 2018). Adult offenders are sent to prison, but juvenile offenders are under the supervision of the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). Industrial Schools, as well as Remand and Probation Homes, are under the control of the DSW. In Ghana, the industrial schools are divided into three categories: Junior and Senior Boys Industrial Schools, as well as Girls Industrial Schools. Juveniles are placed in these institutions based on their age and gender. The Junior Boys Industrial School is located in Sekondi and serves young offenders under the age of 14. The Senior Boys Industrial School is located in Agona Swedru and serves boys aged 15 to 17. The Girls Industrial School is located in Osu, Accra, and serves girls under the age of 17. Boys aged 17 to 21 are held at the Ghana Borstal Institution, which is operated by the Ghana Prisons Service. Between the ages of 8 and 16, incorrigible juveniles may be transferred from Industrial Schools to the Mamobi Borstal Institute in Accra (Abotchie, 2008).



Reform, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society are the fundamental objectives of institutional treatment, along with the efficient, humane, and safe care of convicted criminals (Antwi, 2015). The President receives policy advice from the Prisons Service Council (PSC) on matters pertaining to the administration and upkeep of Ghana's prison system (Antwi, 2015). The promotion of senior officials to Assistant Directors of Prisons and supervision of prison operations fall under the purview of the PSC. The PSC is composed of a chairman chosen by the President of Ghana, the Minister of the Interior, the Director-General of Prisons, a physician recommended by the Ghana Medical Association, and an attorney nominated by the Ghana Bar Association, as per the 1992 constitution.

In addition to the Attorney General or his representative, other members include two members of the Prisons Service, one of whom must be a junior rank, two other members appointed by the President, a representative from the Ministry or Department of State responsible for Social Welfare, and a representative from religious bodies (Ghana Prison Service Annual Report, 2011). Prison officers are classified into three primary groups within the Service: escort, trades, and staff. Personnel responsible for general administrative and financial tasks include jail wardens, senior officers, and officers-in-charge. There are many different careers available, including those in crafts, plumbing, mechanics, masons, carpenters, basket and cane weavers, and makers. Appiahene-Gyamfi (2011) states that the escort is responsible for both guarding and escorting.

The four main sections and a few specialised departments of the Service are general administration, prison establishment, training, and the Ghana Borstal



Institution. Other departments include accounts, legal, operations, records, industries, farms, and people. Apart from the newly inaugurated Ankaful Maximum Prison on November 8, 2011, the organisation operates 47 prisons dispersed throughout Ghana's ten regions. At the pinnacle of the institutional structure is the Prisons Headquarters in Accra, which also houses the offices of five Directors of Prisons, the Director-General of Prisons and his two deputies, and other major office holders.

The Headquarters is the service's administrative hub, where prison policies are developed for efficient administration of all jail facilities in Ghana. The only goal of the Prison Officers Training School (POTS) in Accra is to guarantee the development of the human resources of the Senior Correctional Centre (Borstal Institution) and Ghana Prisons Service in order to effectively rehabilitate offenders in Ghana. According to the Ghana Prison Service Annual Report, 2011, there are seven Central Prisons (CP), thirteen Local Prisons (LP), seven Female Prisons (FP), three open Camp Prisons, nine Agricultural Settlement Camp Prisons (ASCP), one Medium Security Prison, and one Contagious Disease Prison (CDP).

All female prisons are connected to male prisons, with the exception of Nsawam Female Prison. One maximum-security facility, six medium-security prisons, and twenty-five minimum-security prisons are for male inmates (Appiahene-Gyamfi, 2011). Ghanaian jails are characterised by large walls, a watchtower, and all the equipment of a dungeon (Appiahene-Gyamfi, 2009). It thus features a panopticon as an internal security precaution.

Yin (2018) in his study stated that the Ghana Prison Service faces several challenges, including limited budget allocation, prison overcrowding, inadequate officer housing, and society's unwillingness to aid in the welfare, rehabilitation, and resettlement of convicts. Prison traffic becomes worse as the number of prisoners increases. Overstaying remand prisoners contributed to the 5.9 per cent increase in the prison population, as did a rise in the average daily lock-up (Hagwanama, 2020). The growing number of people incarcerated as a result of high rate of recidivism among ex-convicts. In 2008, 19.3% of admitted offenders, for instance, had one or more prior convictions (Kuire, 2021). Antwi (2015), Darkwah (2016), and Yin (2018) all state that the average age of inmates upon admission in 2008 was 29.4 years. According to estimates from the Ghana Prison Annual Report (2008), 88.7% of the prisoners are between the ages of 18-25.

While some prisoners receive educational and vocational training, insufficiently qualified teachers and a scarcity of supplies and equipment make effective rehabilitation extremely difficult to achieve. For prisoners, there is formal education available at the junior and senior levels in addition to non-formal (functional literacy) and practical training in trade skills. It is challenging to guarantee an effective transition into productive humans, nonetheless, because of these obstacles. Unfortunately, a lack of funds has impeded the GPS's efforts to set up after-care programmes for ex-offenders to aid in their seamless reintegration (Ghana Prisons Service Annual Report, 2008). It's important to note that there are separate male and female sections in Ghanaian jails. The Assistant Directors of Prisons are the Chief Administrators.

Sites for men and women each have an administration building, a telephone exchange, a criminal records office and a chapel/mosque. Individuals incarcerated for a variety of crimes include petty theft, first-time offenders, gangsters, professional racketeers, psychopaths, armed robbers, murders, manslaughterers, fraudsters, kidnappers, remand prisoners, and others. These groups are held in separate prison blocks. Declared prisoners with infectious diseases are kept in different blocks, while political detainees are condemned prisoners (Pete, 2000).

### *Penal System in Ghana*

Ghana's penal system has its roots in the social compact known as the Bond of 1844, which was signed by a number of coastal chiefs and England (Danquah, 1957; Appiahene-Gyamfi, 1995). Chapter 4, Article 11 of the 1992 Constitution lists the sources of Ghanaian law as the Fourth Republican Constitution, as well as existing laws, common law, and laws, orders, and regulations made by individuals or authorities exercising their constitutionally granted powers. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana will be the ultimate legislation of the land. The Criminal Code of 1960 (Act 29) and the Criminal Procedure Code (Act 30) are examples of existing laws, which are those that were in place prior to the adoption of the Constitution.

It is important to remember that the Criminal Procedure Code specifies how an arrest should be made, how an investigation should be conducted, what kind of court should hear the case, and what penalties the court may impose (Appiah-Hene 2009). The fundamental ideas of Ghanaian law are due process, equity, fairness, natural justice, the rule of law, and human rights (1992 Constitution, Chapter 4-5).

The statute requires police to inform suspected offenders of their right to a public defender and the circumstances behind their arrest or detention. Based on the idea that justice delayed is justice denied, the law requires that such suspects be arraigned before a court of competent jurisdiction within 48 hours of their arrest.

The Ghana Police Service and the Attorney General's Department handle the prosecution of all criminal cases in Ghana. Criminal penalties include the death sentence, incarceration, fines, expulsion from office, and disqualification from holding and enjoying any office in Ghana. Consequently, the criminal justice system in Ghana is composed of the police, courts and prison services. These institutions are the backbone of the state's social control systems since they help with criminal investigation, arrest, trial, conviction, punishment, and rehabilitation. Consequently, suspects are apprehended by the police, judges render decisions and apply penalties, and prisons hold both inmates and suspects (Appia-Hene 2011).

### ***Some Penal Reforms Implemented in Ghana***

As of January 2022, Ghana has been undertaking various penal reforms aimed at improving its criminal justice system and tackling problems like overcrowding in prisons, human rights violations and inefficiencies in the administration of justice. Some key areas of focus in Ghana's penal reforms include:

#### **Decriminalization of Minor Offenses**

Ghana has been reviewing its laws to decriminalize certain minor offences, particularly those related to petty offences and non-violent crimes. This approach aims to alleviate the strain on the criminal justice system and prevent the unnecessary incarceration of individuals for minor infractions.



### **Promotion of Alternative Sentencing**

Efforts have been made to promote alternative sentencing options, such as community service, probation, and restorative justice programs, as alternatives to imprisonment. These measures seek to reduce prison overcrowding, promote rehabilitation, and talk about the underlying causes of criminal behaviour.

### **Improvement of Prison Conditions**

Ghana has been working to improve the conditions within its prisons, including efforts to address overcrowding, improve sanitation and healthcare facilities, and ensure the humane treatment of inmates. These reforms are aimed at upholding human rights standards and promoting the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into society.

### **Legal Aid and Access to Justice**

Ghana has been working to enhance access to legal aid and representation for indigent defendants, ensuring that all individuals have access to a fair trial and legal assistance regardless of their socio-economic status. This includes initiatives to expand the provision of legal aid services and support for vulnerable groups inside the criminal justice system.

### **Rehabilitation and Reintegration Programs**

Ghana has been implementing various rehabilitation and reintegration programs aimed at supporting the successful reintegration of ex-offenders into society. These programs may include vocational training, education, counselling, and support services to help individuals transition back into their communities and lead productive lives after serving their sentences.

Overall, Ghana's penal reforms reflect a commitment to promoting a more effective, humane and rights-based approach to criminal justice, with a focus on reducing recidivism, promoting rehabilitation and upholding the rule of law.

However, challenges remain in fully implementing these reforms and addressing systemic issues within the criminal justice system. For Ghana's penal reforms to be improved upon and for everyone's human rights to be protected within its criminal justice system, cooperation and ongoing efforts between government agencies, civil society organisations, and foreign partners are vital.

### **Empirical review**

This section reviewed publications applying the theories to the issue of return offending. The review looked at the methodological approaches employed by prior researchers, the unit of analysis, their findings as well and the recommendations.

Hull (2014) investigated the effects of prison programming on recidivism rates in the USA. Upon examination of three states for each programme type, the results showed that prison programming has a positive impact on reducing recidivism rates for participants. Programmes, such as Ohio's faith-based one, reduced programmed participants' recidivism rate to as low as twelve per cent over twelve years. Similar results were observed with Wisconsin's work programmes and North Carolina's educational programmes that respectively lowered three-year recidivism rates down to as little as ten and eighteen per cent (Drammeh, 2022). Hull (2014) recommended that there should be implementation and expansion of these programmes throughout the state and nation. According to the social learning

theory, prison contamination (bad influence) is likely to be minimised once the prisons are provided with adequate facilities to train and effectively rehabilitate inmates in the facilities. When occupied in this manner, inmates are less likely to learn or pick up bad habits.

Antwi (2015) investigated recidivism and the social reintegration of criminals in Ghana. To answer this question, in-depth interviews were used to purposefully collect primary data from a sample of recidivists, case managers, social workers, prison evangelists, and recidivists' families. According to Antwi (2015), institutional push and pull variables as well as social and community push factors, along with individual traits, family dynamics, community context, and penal policies, account for the majority of reoffending among ex-offenders. The institutional push elements result from Ghana's punitive policies, which prioritise punishment over rehabilitation by emphasising detention, deterrent, and retaliation.

The study also discovered that because governments are not required to fund rehabilitation programmes, prison-based treatments are ineffectual at turning prisoners into law-abiding citizens. Social rejection is an indication of the push factors that are social and community-based. Outside of prison, the social structure is unsupportive and coercive. Even if the majority of ex-offenders reunite with their families, they still have to deal with coercive interpersonal connections and sometimes lack the necessary assistance from society at large because of the stigma associated with having a criminal record. Drawing from the aforementioned findings, it was suggested that penal policy reforms should prioritise rehabilitative measures over punitive ones, with governments being held accountable for funding

rehabilitation efforts in Ghanaian prisons. In order to improve their acceptance back into Ghanaian communities, ex-offenders should also be re-engaged in civic activities.

About the theories used for this study, the author employed the Differential Association theory in their study of recidivism. The theory implies that people learn deviant or criminal behaviour through their interactions with others. This theory posits that individuals acquire values, attitudes and behaviours associated with crime or deviance from the people they associate with, such as family, friends or peers.

Afari, Osei and Adu-Agyem, (2015) looked into the adequacy and effectiveness of the guidance and counselling services in reducing recidivism in Kumasi Central Prison, Ghana. Afari et al (2015) employed qualitative research methods to gather primary data. The study revealed that the major setback in the Guidance and Counselling section of the Ghana Prisons is the lack of competent and adequate professional counsellors in the prison. Further findings indicated that there are no separate offices for the counsellors, neither are there counselling rooms, thus there is no privacy during counselling sessions. Besides, the prison is overcrowded making it very difficult for counsellors to meet the counselling demands of inmates. The study recommended that the government should resource the Prison Service to attract qualified youth to reduce the problem of recidivism.

Similarly, Darkwah (2016) explored the factors that influence recidivism in Nsawam Prison. A qualitative study design was also used by Darkwah (2016), and a purposive sample of twenty individuals was chosen. Ten recidivists, five Nsawam



community members, three prison staff, and two police officers had their data collected using an interview guide. According to Darkwah (2016), there are three main elements that contribute to recidivism: situational, structural, and personal/lifestyle factors. The study also found that the Nsawam prison's overpopulation and inadequate facilities were the biggest obstacles to recidivist rehabilitation and reform.

Furthermore, it was discovered that recidivists face discrimination in the workplace, housing market, and from being placed in positions of trust in society since they are seen as evil people who steal and commit crimes. The criminal justice system should build new prisons and expand the ones that already exist in order to minimise jail congestion, according to the study's recommendations. The use of probation and parole as alternatives to incarceration by the justice authority was suggested as well. In addition, there is a pressing need for public awareness and education regarding the goals of incarceration as well as ways that society might contribute to a reduction in the nation's recidivism rate.

In a related study, Yin (2018) investigated prisoners' de facto religious endeavours as a way for them to deal with their incarceration and practise self-reformation in preparation for potential reintegration. In an attempt to better understand how prisoners deal with their incarceration by engaging in de facto religious activities, Yin (2018) employed the social constructionist theory of reality and some functionalists' perspectives on religion. The study was gathered primarily using a semi-structured questionnaire. Yin (2018) unlike Antwi (2015) and Darkwah (2016) employed mixed research methods. The quantitative data were

analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences software while qualitative data were transcribed and analysed thematically using the word search feature in Google Docs. Ankaful Maximum Security Prison (AMSP) has succeeded in keeping criminals behind bars, according to the report, but it has fallen short in terms of the rehabilitation and reintegration of its inmates.

Additionally, religion was perceived as a tool used by prisoners to control their impressions and reconstruct their ruined identities. Reentering their families and religious communities was a completely different experience for formerly incarcerated individuals than they had anticipated from their release. The report suggested that all religious CSOs work together to create a much-needed transition house to help formerly incarcerated individuals reintegrate into society. Yin's (2018) study on inmates' de facto religious pursuits and coping mechanisms in prison, as well as their experiences upon reintegration, can be analysed concerning the Rational Choice Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Labelling Theory.

Murhula and Singh (2019) critically analysed the Offender's Rehabilitation Approach in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) of South Africa. The DCS is required by the constitution to offer rehabilitation initiatives that deal with the criminal behaviour of offenders. The current strategy to fulfilling this requirement is based on the needs-based model, which aims to cure offenders' criminal behaviour by systematically addressing dynamic elements linked to recidivism. In actuality, though, systemic issues make it difficult for the DCS to uphold its legal obligation to rehabilitate convicts as well as to deliver its moral message.

Because DCS has not been able to lower recidivism, its purpose is far from being fulfilled. In light of this, it is crucial to create and put into practice fresh strategies that satisfy the objectives of the South African Green and White Papers on Corrections. Murhula and Singh (2019) showed that the DCS has to implement new offenders' rehabilitation programmes based on the Restorative Justice and Good Lives Model approach to successfully rehabilitate offenders. We propose these two approaches to offenders' rehabilitation as the conceptual resources to tackle the aforesaid challenges faced by the DCS in order to fulfil its mission on offenders' rehabilitation, taking into account post-Apartheid governments' commitment to human rights.

### **Conceptual Framework**

This framework is predicated on the knowledge that certain programmatic frameworks have been essential in improving the lives of prisoners and reforming the criminal justice system since the beginning of prisons and up until the present day. The conceptual framework is presented in Figure 2.

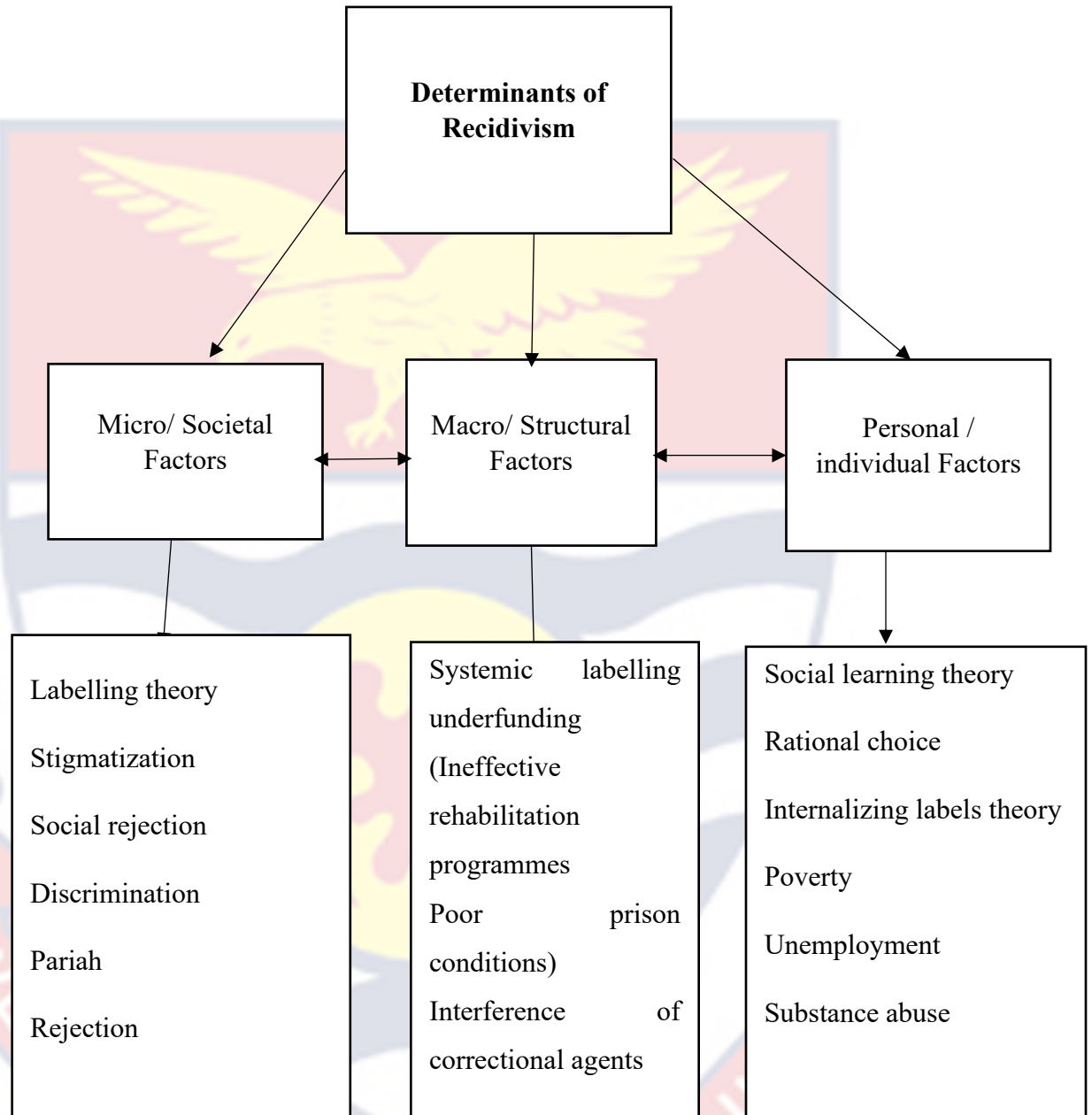


Figure 2: Causes of Recidivism in the Ankaful Prisons Complex

Source: Author’s construct, 2022



### *Societal factors*

Societal factors refer to issues in society that make freed prisoners re-offend and return to prison. Some of these factors are stigmatization, rejection and discrimination (Mohammed, 2011). The prisoner after being released is expected to benefit from emotional and material support from society but then in most situations, society tends to stigmatize and attach labels to them due to their past criminal record which leads to unemployment, because employers are either afraid of them or cannot trust them enough to grant them employment opportunities hence return offenders are socially rejected and not getting jobs as a result of social rejection and since they do not have the start-up capital to start their businesses, they end up in poverty (Shinkfield, & Graffam, 2010).

Lack of meaningful employment results in no income, making it impossible to meet one's own requirements, let alone those of others, in the event that the released prisoner has family and dependents (Antwi, 2015). So, they end up reoffending and the fact that they were in prison and came into contact with various kinds of offenders, they learned how to re-offend better and because of these conditions out there, they now put into practice the better method they learned while in prison and soon, they are arrested and returned to prison.

### *Structural factors*

When convicted inmates are released from prison, the Correctional Service is in charge of ensuring their safe custody, along with offering initiatives for reformation and rehabilitation to guarantee their seamless readmission into society

(Antwi, 2015). Despite the Prison's emphasis on being an effective correctional facility that supports the reformation and rehabilitation of the imprisoned individual for a successful reintegration into society, the facility regrettably encourages recidivism in the areas of cell population, the behaviour of some Prison Officers, and insufficiently reformed inmates (Kuuire, 2021). The prison population has grown so much that the official capacity of 600 convicts at Nsawam Prison in 2015 housed around 2000 detainees (Antwi, 2015). As a result, reoffenders are combined with first-time offenders in various prison cells, resulting in "character contamination" also known as "social learning" (Antwi, 2015). Character contamination or social learning occurs when a recidivist teaches a first-time offender how to commit a crime. When the initial criminal is released, he or she will have accumulated enough "lecture notes" on how to approach the situation tougher the following time. Should surviving in the open world prove to be challenging, the only thing that is needed for someone like that is for them to remember the "lecture notes," commit crimes, and finally end up back in prison.

Antwi (2015), Darkwah (2016) and Yin (2018) assert that some Correctional Officers include some of the detainees in operating in forbidden substances making them more powerful criminals while they are incarcerated. Some Prison Officers' traffic in illegal drugs such as marijuana and alcohol as an inmate becomes more actively involved, his or her interest grows and finally, that inmate is released worse off than before. As a result, the likelihood of return-offending rises dramatically.

Government underfunding of prisoners leading to ineffective rehabilitation and training programmes is another interesting issue that needs attention. Rehabilitation and reformation (including formal, and non-formal education and skills training) are ineffective due to insufficient state funding. As mandated by the Prisons Service Act, 1972 (NRCD 46), the Prison Service is required to “establish in every prison course of training and instruction assigned to teach simple trades, skills and crafts to prisoners who may benefit from such training”. However, it is challenging for the Ghana Prisons Service (GPS) to fund rehabilitation activities due to the issue of budgetary constraints (Ghana Prisons Service Report, 2022). Interestingly, the GPS uses these scarce resources for administrative, personal emoluments, and other service-related tasks.

### *Personal factors*

The personal factors that contribute to return offending are as follows:

- Associating with bad friends outside the prison,
- Low interest in participating in rehabilitation and transformational programmes,
- Inability to cope with challenges in the society
- Substance abuse
- poverty
- Unemployment

These factors are next explained in turn.

### *Association with Bad Friends*

According to Antwi (2015), as previously mentioned, released inmates often consider going back to prison if they are not treated with dignity and acceptance by their families and the community. They now keep an eye out for the acquaintances they acquired while incarcerated or visit locations where the locals behave violently and in an antisocial manner, which exposes the ex-offenders. Because it has been said that bad companions spawn bad conduct, the likelihood of the released prisoner getting involved in crime and getting imprisoned again would be very high in this situation.

### *Low Interest in Rehabilitation*

According to Yin (2018), some forms of rehabilitation in most prisons such as formal education could be described as non-existent. Darkwa (2016) and Antwi (2015) stated emphatically that the Kumasi Central Prison offers a variety of rehabilitation activities. These include going to school to further one's education and get a Junior High Certificate or Senior High Certificate, or studying occupational skills like masonry, carpentry, and weaving. Prisoners tend to show low interest in these trainings. The majority of prisoners expressed dissatisfaction with the standard of food provided to them within the prison. Aside from that, the ratio is typically insufficient to satisfy the stomach. As a result, the majority of prisoners choose to leave the prison and work for businesses that the prison administration has asked for their services (Kuuire, 2021).



Some of the companies who hire inmates also give gifts to the prisoners when they complete the necessary activities for the company, in addition to paying the prison officials. These gifts, sometimes in the form of money, are used to buy essentials such as food, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes and other personal care items. To safeguard any extra cash they may have on hand at the time of release, some inmates also deposit it with the prison treasury. Consequently, it is understandable that upon being released, these individuals lack the necessary business skills to function independently, as well as the higher education required to secure employment. This predicament often leads them back to prison, as they are unable to navigate the challenges of society effectively.

### ***Substance Abuse***

Certain prisoners are incarcerated due to substance addiction, including crack, cocaine, marijuana and smoking (Cope, 2000). Because these substances are addictive, persons who use them find it challenging to refrain from using them. Such people may continue to engage in this behaviour while in prison, with the help of a few prison officers. As a result, when such people are released, they are quickly returned to prison. Antwi (2015) in his study found that within the realm of personal characteristics, the association with criminal activity was notably influenced by having acquaintances involved in criminal behaviour. Cope (2000) added that individuals who maintained persistently positive attitudes, feelings, or beliefs about crime tended to engage in more criminal acts through their associations with criminals.

In 1 Corinthians 15:33, the Bible states unequivocally, "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good practices." Gendreau et al. (1995) listed substance addiction as one of the most powerful indicators of recidivism in their studies on the indicators of repeat offending. Consistent with Maltz's (2001) findings on recidivism risk factors, there is a failure at the personal level to stay out of trouble, avoid arrest and conviction and participate in a correctional programme as an inmate.

### ***Poverty***

Crime and poverty have been issues in society since the dawn of humanity. An ex-offender who is denied employment after being released from prison due to his or her criminal record will be forced to commit another crime and serve another sentence (Simon, 2020). Income disparity has a positive association with all types of crime. Given the complexities of the crime, concerns for housing, healthcare and education must be considered and anyone unable to meet these demands is likely to re-offend (Wilkinson, & Pickett, 2009). The findings show that poverty and crime are linked and that income disparity has a substantial impact on crime.

### ***Unemployment***

Securing employment is considered a crucial element of criminal reintegration, according to researchers studying offender rehabilitation and re-entry programmes. Lipsey (1995) identifies obtaining employment as the most successful strategy for lowering reoffending. Unemployment is closely linked to the stigma of having a criminal record. Studies reveal that a decrease in unemployment is likely to result in a comparable decrease in crime, as unemployment has a substantial

influence on criminal activity. Since there are fewer opportunities for legal employment, the opportunity costs of illegal activity rise, leading economists to conclude that unemployment and crime are related (Becker, 1968). In other words, the opportunity cost of engaging in criminal behaviour increases due to the financial losses incurred from unemployment.

Unemployment leaves individuals vulnerable, marginalised, impoverished and relegated to lower social classes, which correlates with higher rates of criminal activity. Merton (1938) discovered that individuals who have been denied access to a legal opportunity structure experience anomic conditions as a result of their frustration and fury, which leads to crime. Because it is more difficult to live a conforming life and build relationships with pro-social people when one is unemployed, crime rates rise. More significantly, having a criminal record restricts career options and lowers income and unemployment is a persistent factor in recidivism (Holzer, 2009).

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter presented the operational definitions for recidivism, correctional interventions and penal reforms. It discussed underlying theories and related concepts and reviewed empirical studies on correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms. This discussion acknowledged that recidivism involves a relapse into criminal behaviour, emphasizing the importance of effective correctional interventions. The review of empirical work highlighted ineffective correctional interventions and penal reforms in Ghanaian prisons as major contributors to increased reoffending rates in Ghana. Additionally, the chapter

presented a conceptual framework illustrating how study variables relate to determinants of recidivism and explored the history of penal reforms and incarceration in Ghana. The subsequent chapter outlines the methodological approach employed in the study.





## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed for this study. It deals with the techniques used to collect data for the research. It includes the description of the study area, research design, sources of data, research participants and sampling procedure, data collection instrument, data collection procedure, data processing and analysis, ethical considerations and Goodness and Trustworthiness.

#### Philosophical Underpinning

The study is premised on the belief that reality in knowledge production comes from language, consciousness and shared meanings. Implies that knowledge and reality construction processes are not objective, but are products of how people interpret their world as such an in-depth and more contextual analytical procedure is required. On that premise, the interpretivist research paradigm was employed to explore how correctional interventions and penal reforms affect recidivism in the Ankaful Prisons Complex. The interpretivist philosophical paradigm offers the study the opportunity to thoroughly analyse correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms by reconciling the subjective interpretations of both the prison officers and recidivists.

#### Study Area- Ankaful Prison Complex

The Ankaful Prison Complex (APC) consists of four separate prisons located in Ankaful, within the Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abirem (KEEA) District Assembly in the Central Region of Ghana. These include Ankaful Main Camp,

Ankaful Annex Prison, Communicable Disease Prison (for sick prisoners), and Ankaful Maximum Security Prison. This study focuses on Ankaful Maximum Security Prison, Ankaful Main Camp, and Prison Annex due to the prevalent issue of recidivism in these facilities. The Communicable Disease Prison, which primarily hosts sick and ill prisoners from the sampled prisons, was excluded from the study.

Ankaful Annex Prison (AAP) was established by converting part of the Ankaful Main Camp Prison to expand the facility's capacity. Commissioned on February 15, 2000, AAP comprises distinct cell units known as blocks, segregation blocks (for new arrivals), a special block for condemned inmates, and blocks for tailoring training. Both AAP and Ankaful Main Camp Prison (AMCP) house various types of criminals, ranging from first-time petty offenders to repeat offenders and those convicted of offences against the state, persons, property, and public order.

Ankaful Maximum Security Prison (AMSP) is the most sophisticated prison facility in Ghana, constructed in 2011 to accommodate high-profile criminals serving long sentences. Unlike Ankaful Main Camp and Ankaful Annex Prison, which house both convicted and remanded prisoners, AMSP was specifically developed to help alleviate overcrowding in Ghana's prisons. The facility, located on a 1,800-foot-by-1,800-foot plot of land, is heavily secured, with armed prison officers on duty. AMSP cells measure 16 feet 5 inches by 10 feet 10 inches, accommodating six to ten inmates each.

Despite minor ventilation issues during dry seasons, security measures are robust, with a tall barbed-wire-topped chain-link fence preventing escapes. Overcrowding is a significant issue, with an average of 55 inmates per cell, far exceeding the UN standard requirement of four prisoners per cell. AMSP, with a capacity of 2000 detainees, is larger than the other prisons and consists of six blocks labelled. The 'A' and 'F' blocks can accommodate 200 convicts apiece, while the 'B' to 'E' blocks can accommodate 400 inmates with 40 cells individually.

At the time of the research, Ankaful Main Camp and Annex prisons housed 550 and 600 inmates, respectively, resulting in an inmate-to-officer ratio of nearly 1:7, far above the UN-recommended ratio of 1:3. This overcrowding, combined with the comparison of inmate population to rehabilitative facilities, suggests that APC is operating beyond capacity. Despite its capacity challenges, the prison complex includes various facilities such as a storehouse, kitchen, infirmary, reception area, and administration building. Additionally, areas within the prison have been transformed into churches and mosques for inmates' worship. The prison environment is maintained clean, and recreational facilities like a football pitch are provided.

The infirmary at AMSP addresses prisoners' health needs, although it lacks adequate clinical materials and pharmaceuticals. Inmates often purchase medications through officers when they fall ill. Main Camp and Annex prisons occasionally receive health workers to attend to inmates' health issues and provide medications. In terms of nutrition, prisoners are served three meals daily, although many refuse to eat due to the poor nutritional value. Each prisoner is entitled to

Ghana 1 cedi, 80 pesewas per day for meals. Those with visiting relatives receive additional food items, and inmates with no visitors rely on tips from prison staff and outside workers for supplementary provisions.

### **Research Design**

In line with the interpretivist philosophical viewpoint, the study adopted a qualitative research design. The basis of qualitative research lies in the interpretative paradigm of social reality and the description of the lived experience of people and how that informs their interpretation of their world. The qualitative research design was employed to allow for the in-depth exploration of experiences and opinions of recidivists and Prison Officers regarding correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms at the Ankaful prison complex. An exploratory design was then employed to better understand how correctional interventions and penal reforms influence recidivism.

The exploratory study design was utilised to advance knowledge about a social issue, usually when there is not enough information available about the research subject to enable researchers to gain a better understanding and provide a conclusive finding. The exploratory design allows the use of existing theories and concepts to guide the data collection exercise, generation of themes and reporting of study findings to enable familiarisation with pertinent concerns and interpretations that might not be identified with an inductive technique, a theory-driven approach was used (Sarantakos, 2013). The deductive approach coupled with the theory-driven approach allowed the study to use concepts to evaluate existing theories instead of developing theories from the data gathered.



### **Sources of Data**

Data for the research was gathered from the primary sources (Creswell, 2007). The primary source of data was generated from the participants involved in the research. In-depth interviews and informal interactions were used to collect primary data directly from participants and respondents. Probing questions allowed participants to provide detailed information about the social phenomenon, particularly on issues relating to reoffending and correctional interventions in prison (Creswell, 2007). Other sources of information were obtained from written records through prison documents (standing orders and regulations), internet searches (organizational websites and news reports) and reports from international organizations such as the United Nations, among other sources. This type of data aided in the generation of new insights that supplemented the primary data. The goal of collecting data through these methods was to obtain first-hand information about the measures used in reforming, rehabilitating, and reintegrating inmates, the role of correctional interventions in prison and the impact on these inmates after discharge.

### **Study Population**

Key participants in the study were recidivists and correctional officers/prison officers. The selection of this target group was motivated by their characteristics, knowledge and experiences with the transitional challenges of offenders in Ghana (Awilly, 2015). The researcher interviewed prison officers with more than three years of experience in the prison system. The researcher interviewed prison officers with more than three years of experience in the prison

system because they have been in the system for some time hence endowed with the institutional memory on correctional interventions, recidivism and penal. The research focused on recidivists who have been in and out of prison more than two times therefore it was appropriate to seek the views of Prison officers who have engaged inmates for at least more than three years since they are in a better position to understand the plights of this inmate.

### **Sample size and sampling Procedures**

The participants of the study comprised offenders and prison officers. According to Duverger (1964), It is difficult to forecast sample size in qualitative research at the outset. However, sampling up to theoretical saturation is advised. The actual research participants engaged in the study were determined at the point of saturation. A non-probability sampling technique was used for selecting these individuals. Purposive sampling methods were used in the study to select the participants. The purposive sample technique was utilised because it made it possible for the researcher to select Prison Officers and offenders who have the knowledge necessary to support the study's goals.

Purposive sampling additionally made it possible for the researcher to select individuals who would be most suited to aid in understanding the issue being studied (Creswell, 2009). Studies that have used lived experiences generally study between twenty and 81 participants (Darkwah, 2016). However, according to Yin (2018), there is no required number of participants in lived experiences studies as the size depends, among other things, on the issue being studied and the heterogeneity of the subjects. Based on this, the study purposively selected 21

participants who had been to prison two to six times. In addition to the recidivists, nine officers with more than five years' experience, three from each facility, were purposively selected.

### **Research Instrument**

The study made use of two interview guides, one designed for inmates (recidivists) and the other for prison officers. The research instrument for inmates was structured into five sections. The first section of the instrument contained the background information of the recidivists such as their age, sex, level of education, number of years in prison and number of times they have been imprisoned. The second section of the instrument provided information on the causes of recidivism in Ghana while the third section examined the types of correctional interventions within Ghanaian prisons. Also, aspects of the instrument sought to find out how repeat offending is related to the types and nature of correctional reforms within the prison system. Lastly, the interview guide sought information on the recommendations towards penal reforms to reduce recidivism. The research instrument for prison officers sought the background information of the Prison Officers as well as the correctional interventions available to recidivists.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

To obtain authorisation to conduct a study involving recidivists and officers from the Ankaful Prisons Complex, a letter was submitted by the University of Cape Coast's Department of Peace Studies to the Ghana Prisons Service Headquarters in Accra. Before the scheduled date for the actual fieldwork, a preliminary visit was made to the Ankaful Prisons Complex and the Ghana Prisons

Headquarters. The visit was initiated to communicate the intention to the target population, establish rapport, familiarise with recidivists and prison officers, and understand the laid-down protocols for conducting such exercises in the facilities.

Those who were willing to participate were recruited. An introductory letter issued by the Ghana Prisons Headquarters detailing the purpose of the study was sent to the various prison facilities. A convenient date and time for the actual data collection exercise was agreed upon on the day of the visit to the Ankaful Prison Complex. The study detailed the overall intent of each participant and sought their consent before proceeding with the conduct of the interviews.

The consent of the recidivists and officers was sought for a week before their respective interview sessions. Officers from the Ankaful Prison Complex were chosen in consultation with unit heads for the interviews. Most of the interviews with the recidivists were conducted in the local language (Fante twi and Asante twi) where inmates were not fluent in the English Language. However, in situations where inmates understood the English language, that was the medium of communication while interviews with the prison officers were conducted in the English language. This was to enable participants, to understand the questions being asked and to enable them to express their opinions and feelings thoroughly and confidently.

Follow-up questions were asked to prompt, probe and seek further clarity on some issues where appropriate. The in-depth interview was audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. Where permission to record the interview was denied, the researcher took notes of the interview proceedings. An unstructured



interview guide and non-participant observation guide were used for the study. Due to the limited knowledge of correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms in the Ankaful Prisons Complex, the unstructured interview was conducted first to allow for the coverage of much information on the phenomenon.

The in-depth interview began with officers to gain more insight on the topic under study. The sampled officers informed the inquiry through their knowledge, experience and expertise in the area of correctional interventions, recidivism and penal reforms. The in-depth interview with the prison officers was centred on the correctional interventions and the penal reforms given to these prisoners to ensure they are well reformed in the Ankaful prison complex. This is to enable in-depth knowledge regarding the causes of recidivism, and the nature of correctional interventions given to these inmates especially return offenders. The interviews with recidivists lasted between 45-60 minutes per participant whilst interviews with officers lasted between 30-40 minutes per participant.

The interviews with the recidivists were conducted in the prison yard, while those of the prison officers were carried out at their work premises which was in the yard or their offices. A convenient time was scheduled with each of these respondents so that the conduct of the interview did not interfere with their activities. Similarly, the interviews and observations were done concurrently. To keep track of relevant observations, there was documentation of all relevant observations made in a field notebook. About 5 to 6 hours were devoted each day, interviewing and watching participants go about their daily activities inside the facilities. The data collection lasted about a month. Participants were numbered 1-

30 so that during the data transcription, the researcher was able to identify the participants according to the numbers that were assigned to them.

### **Data Processing and Analysis**

Analysis of qualitative data can be done manually or electronically using analytical software like Nvivo, Nudist, Saturate and Atlas among others. However, for this study, organisation and analysis of the gathered data were done manually. The rationale for analysing the data manually stems from expediency and the ease of use of the method. The analysis of the data started with verbatim transcriptions of key person interviews, notes taken and observations made from the field. All interviews were narrated in the local language (Twi and Fanti) and were fully transcribed into English. To familiarise myself with the data gathered and gain a general overview, in line with the objectives and operational concepts in the conceptual framework giving cognizance of key axioms of the underpinning theories of the study.

The study's main focus is how correctional interventions and penal reforms reduce recidivism. There were three stages to the data coding process. The study combed through each participant's data line by line in the initial stage, known as open coding, in an effort to identify the causes of recidivism at the Ankafu Prisons Complex. This was done for every question posed because respondents provided numerous signs when responding to the predetermined questions. In order to find connections, parallels and discrepancies in the material coded for synchronisation, the researcher examined the codes produced by the open coding during the axial coding phase.

After the axial coding, selective coding was done to create categories (themed together) for the analysis. The findings discussion revolved around the subsequent themes, types of correctional interventions within the Ankaful prison complex and how they influence recidivism, how repeat offending related to the types and nature of correctional interventions in the Prison system, and the penal reforms needed to reduce recidivism. Finally, several direct quotes from participants were used to buttress the claims advanced for each objective.

### **Ethical Issues**

Before the data collection all conventions regarding field work such as an introductory letter were obtained from the Ghana Prisons Headquarters and the Department of Peace Studies, School for Development Studies, University of Cape Coast to legitimize the permission for the collection of primary data at the Ankaful Prisons Complex. An ethical clearance letter detailing the purpose of the study was sought from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Cape Coast and served to the authorities of the Ghana Prisons Headquarters and the Ankaful Prisons Complex for their approval before the actual data gathering commenced. The researcher embarked on a trip to the Ghana Prisons Headquarters in Accra and Ankaful Prisons Complex in Cape Coast to discuss the purpose of the study with authorities to familiarize, establish rapport and keep abreast of the laid down protocols for such exercise. This was done to avoid unreceptive and hostile attitudes from the prison officials and the research participants.

Informed consent was obtained from all the study participants a week before proceeding to conduct the conduct of the interview(s). Participants were

made aware that their voluntary participation is not monetised and as such, they can decline to answer any question that they did not wish to respond to and that they could withdraw from interviews at any time that they felt uncomfortable without any penalty. Participants who consented to partake in the study were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of the information supplied for the study. To ensure anonymity, the study used identifiable codes instead of real names of participants and avoided linking de-identified data to a specific participant by keeping it apart from the coding list. Ensuring that issues arising from the interviews were not discussed with outsiders in a way that might identify respondents helped to maintain the confidentiality of the study participants.

The in-depth interviews were held at places that were convenient for the participants and the study as well. To protect the facial identity of the participants and respect prison protocols, pictures and videos were not taken for the study. Most interviews with the Recidivists were conducted in the local language, however, in situations where some of these inmates are literate, English language was used to conduct interviews. Interviews with prison officers were conducted in English language. This was to enable participants, to comprehend the questions being posed and enable them to voice their opinions and emotions thoroughly and confidently. Follow-up questions were asked to prompt, probe and seek further clarity on some issues where appropriate

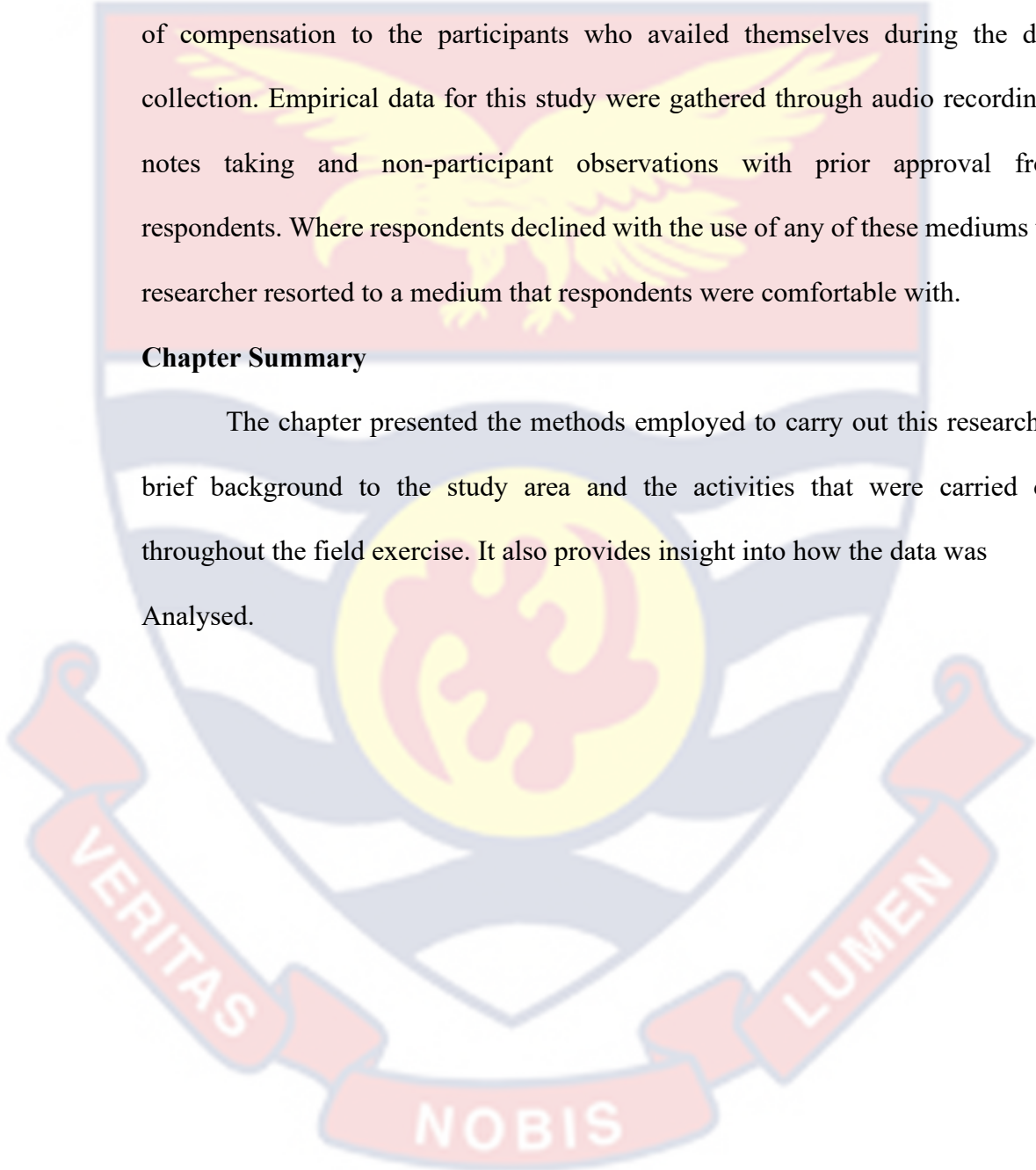
To achieve beneficence, the study exercised caution in how the interviews were conducted and how the questions were framed so as not to arouse previous grief or alter the study participant's mood before and after the interview. Finally, the



study refrained from all sorts of data manipulation and reported findings as gathered from the participants. The researcher acknowledged the impact of compensation on participants' responses for this reason, the researcher did not administer any form of compensation to the participants who availed themselves during the data collection. Empirical data for this study were gathered through audio recordings, notes taking and non-participant observations with prior approval from respondents. Where respondents declined with the use of any of these mediums the researcher resorted to a medium that respondents were comfortable with.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter presented the methods employed to carry out this research, a brief background to the study area and the activities that were carried out throughout the field exercise. It also provides insight into how the data was analysed.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Introduction

The chapter presents the results and discussion of the study based on the data gathered from recidivists and prison officers at the Ankaful Prison Complex. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section focuses on the background characteristics of participants for the study. The other sections of the chapter are organised according to the objectives of the study. In this regard, the second section contains data on the causes of recidivism in Ghana. The third section explores the nature of correctional interventions within the Ghanaian prison while the last part of the chapter presents data on recommendations on penal reforms.

#### Background Characteristics of the Recidivists

The background information of recidivists is categorised into two sections. The first section focuses on their age, marital status, level of education, employment before arrest, ethnic background and residential status before arrest. The second section looks at their information upon arrest specifically on the crime they committed that led to their first and subsequent arrest, the number of years spent in prison for first and subsequent incarceration, employment of participant before the second arrest, and the level of income before first and second arrest.

**Table 1: Background Characteristics of Recidivists**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Frequency (n=21)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age (years)</b>		
Below 20 years	1	4.76
21-30	5	23.8
31-40	6	28.57
41-50	4	19.04
51-60	1	4.76
61-70	1	4.76
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	7	33.3
Married	6	28.57
Separated	1	4.76
Divorced	1	4.76
Cohabiting	2	9.52
Widowed	2	9.52
<b>Educational Level</b>		
No Education	5	23.8
Basic		
Senior High	5	23.8
Tertiary	1	4.76
<b>Residential status before and after arrest</b>		
Renting	14	66.6
Owned	1	4.76
Family house, etc.	6	28.57
<b>Hometown</b>		
Central Region	7	33.3
Outside Central Region	14	66.6
<b>Ethnicity of Recidivists</b>		
Fante	6	28.5
Ashante	3	14.28
Ewe	4	19.04
Ga	3	14.28
Akuapem	3	14.28
Bono	2	9.52
<b>Employment status before the first Arrest</b>		
Employed	15	71.42
Unemployed	6	28.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 1 presents the background characteristics of recidivists in the Ankaful Prisons. Concerning age, 15 (71%) were within the age range of 21 to 50.

Only one prisoner was below twenty years of age and two prisoners were above 50 years. This shows that the majority of the return offenders were in their productive age groups. The 2008 study that stated that roughly 88.7% of Ghanaian inmates are between the ages of 18 and 45 (Ghana Prison Annual study, 2020) is corroborated by the data showing that 85.3% of re-offenders were between the ages of 19 and 50. According to criminological study, age and crime have an inverse relationship, which is supported by this conclusion (Sutton & Farrall, 2005). Research investigating the correlation between age and crime has revealed that the relationship's slope rises quickly during adolescence, peaks in the early stages of adulthood, and then declines after that. The age distribution of crime, for example, appears to differ amongst racial or ethnic groups, according to "Age-of-onset" research; still, criminal activity increases with age, peaks in the late teens, and then declines (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 1983). One possible explanation for this phenomenon could be that as people age, they assume greater social and personal responsibilities (such as caring for partners or children) and personal responsibilities (like work or a career), which forces them to think about how their actions will affect the people they value (Addo, 2018).

Recidivism is inversely connected with age. Gendreau, Little, and Goggin (1996) assert that the probability of reoffending increases with the age of the released offender. While youth are a nation's greatest asset, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime (2005) found that they also contribute to societal vulnerability. Regardless of the risk variables, the one universal truth regarding crime is that it is done by teenagers and young adults.



It also turned out that the majority of the participants—that is, the prisoners—were widowed, single, married, or cohabiting. Marital status and criminal activity are strongly correlated (Sampson & Laub, 1993). Criminologists have been interested in how marriage affects involvement in criminal activity. 38.3% of the respondents were divorced, 29.4% were single, 14.7% were married, 14.7% were separated, and 2.9% were in a relationship, according to the data above. A sufficient amount of research indicates that marital status and criminal activity are related (Farrington & West, 1995; Warr, 2017). Marriage can serve as a social control mechanism by fortifying the attachment or the link of solidarity.

According to Hirschi and Gottfredson (2017), the closer a husband is to his wife, the less likely he is to commit a crime because engaging in criminal activity jeopardises the intimate connection. Marriage's social bonds create a system of obligation, mutual support, and control over criminal inclinations. Marriage induces changes in daily routines and patterns of social interaction, influencing a person's habitual behaviours, particularly regarding deviant conduct. The fact that only 6 (28%) of the criminals were married reinforces these findings about marriage and criminal activity.

The table shows that 47.6% of recidivists were illiterate, whereas 23.8% had elementary or basic schooling, 23.8% had completed secondary school, while 4.76% had finished tertiary education. Due to budgetary constraints, the majority of the participants dropped out of primary, elementary and secondary education. The lower educational level of the correctional population compared to the general community has been identified as a difficulty with offender reintegration in Ghana.

In a paper presented at the 108th International Seminar on “effective treatment measures for prisoners to facilitate their reintegration into society: The Ghanaian Experience”. Asiedu (1999) observed that as of 1990, 48% of the inmate population in Ghana were illiterate, 39% had elementary education, 8% had secondary education, 3% had technical education, 1.5% had tertiary education, and 0.5% had post-graduate education. As per Petersilia (2003, p. 32). "While illiteracy and poor academic performance are not direct causes of criminal behaviour, people who have received inadequate education or exhibit poor literacy skills are disproportionately found within prison".

The reintegration of convicts into society is impacted by their lower level of education. The promotion of crime can be attributed to low educational attainment for multiple reasons. Despite the fact that education in Ghana offers the means to acquire social mobility, the low educational attainment of offenders suggests that they lack the necessary skills to improve their chances of obtaining lawful employment and income and leading law-abiding lives. This could result in a dependence on an illegal opportunity structure, such as the emergence of a pro-criminal mindset, abilities, and network that encourages recidivism. A family home accounted for 28.57% of the respondents, two-thirds (66.6%) were renters, and the remaining 4.76% were homeowners. Becoming a homeowner denotes dedication and bestows ownership status. Per the data, the majority of re-offenders were either renting or staying with family because they did not possess a home.

## Employment Status

Unemployment and underemployment are recognised to be major problems in the nation, especially for young people and those with criminal records. In Ghana, the rate of youth unemployment in 2019 was 10.6% and many young people reported difficulty in locating chances for meaningful employment. The report also noted that those with only a primary education had a much greater unemployment rate than those with a secondary or tertiary education. It can be difficult for recently released prisoners to reintegrate into society and refrain from reoffending in the context of recidivism due to a lack of job opportunities and social support. When looking for work, many experience stigmatisation and prejudice, which can leave them feeling helpless and desperate. To overcome these obstacles, though, some initiatives are being made. The Ghana Prison Service has put in place several vocational training programmes, including those in carpentry, tailoring, and soap-making to give inmates marketable skills and improve their odds of landing a job.

### Background Characteristics of Respondents Before First Arrest

This section presents information on the background of the recidivists before the first arrest. The focus is on the crimes committed leading to the first arrest, time spent in prison when rearrested and the employment and economic status. Table 2 presents the data.

**Table 2: Background Information Before First Arrest**

Characteristics	Frequency (n=21)	Percentage
<b>The crime you committed leading to the first incarceration</b>		
Stealing	13	61.9
Fighting	5	23.8
Defrauding	1	4.76
Threat	2	9.52
<b>Months/ Years spent in Prison</b>		
0- 5 months	6	28.57
6- 10 Months	5	23.8
11-15 Months	6	28.57
16 months and above	4	19.04
<b>When were you released?</b>		
I don't know	3	14.28
2 years ago	6	28.57
4 years ago	4	19.04
5 years ago	2	9.52
6 years ago	2	9.52
7 years ago and above	4	19.04
<b>Employment Status before the first arrest</b>		
Driver	6	28.57
Farmer	4	19.04
Manager	1	4.76
Artisan	6	28.57
Unemployed	4	19.04
<b>Monthly income level before the first arrest</b>		
0-1200 GHC	10	47.61
1201- 2000 GHC	6	28.57
2001-3000 GHC	1	4.76
3001 GHC and above	4	19.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Stealing, armed robbery, fighting, false accusation, rape, defrauding, “galamsey”, threat and unlawful entry was among the main offences committed by the recidivist to warrant the first incarceration, with stealing and fighting to dominate (See Table 2). This confirms the Ghana Prison Service annual report (2008), which revealed that 41% of all offences committed are theft-related.



According to the fieldwork, 61.9% of the inmates in the Ankaful Prison Complex were arrested for stealing, 23.8% were arrested for fighting, 4.76% were arrested for defrauding and 9.52% were arrested for threatening. Although sentencing varies depending on the gravity of the offence, 28.57% of the recidivists interviewed were serving sentences not less than five months. 23.8% of sentences ranging from six to ten months, another 28.57% were also serving sentences ranging from eleven to fifteen months and finally 19.04% of recidivists were serving 16 months and above sentence.

In respect of employment availability to inmates before coming to prison, 28.57% were drivers before their arrest, 19.04% were farmers, 4.76% were managers and the last category, 28.57% was Artisans. Probing further to understand why they committed these offences, most of the participants stated emphatically that they earned between 0 to 1,200 Ghana cedis monthly which was the main reason they resorted to other means to sustain their families and themselves. 47.61% earned less than 1200 monthly, followed by 28.57% of the inmates interviewed who earned between 1201 and 2000, 4.76% of the inmates earned 2001 to 3000 and the final group which is 19.04% earned 3001 and above. Looking at these income figures, one can only weigh their pain and pleasure and if the benefits outweigh the cost, then the person is bound to commit a crime.

### **Background Characteristics of Respondents After Reincarceration**

This section presents information on the background of the recidivists after their rearrest. The focus is on the crimes committed leading to their rearrest, time

spent in prison, when rearrested, their employment and economic status as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Background Information After Second Incarceration**

Characteristics	Frequency (n=21)	Percentage
<b>The crime you committed leading to rearrest</b>		
Stealing	13	61.9
Fighting	5	23.8
Rape/ Defilement	2	9.52
Threat	1	4.76
<b>Months/ Years spent in Prison/ sentenced for crime</b>		
0- 5 months	0	0
6- 10 Months	4	19.04
11-15 Months	5	23.80
16 months and above	12	57.14
<b>When were you re-arrested?</b>		
Less than a year	4	19.04
1 year ago	6	28.57
2 years ago	5	23.8
3 years ago and above	6	28.57
<b>Employment Status before rearrest</b>		
Driver	2	28.57
Farmer	5	19.04
contractor	1	4.76
Menial jobs	6	28.57
Unemployed	7	
<b>Monthly income level and economic status before rearrest</b>		
0-1200 GHC	11	52.38
1201- 2000 GHC	5	23.80
2001-3000 GHC	3	14.28
3001 GHC and above	1	9.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 3 presents the background information of recidivists after a second arrest. Concerning the crime committed leading to their rearrest, 13 (61.9%) of the

inmates interviewed were arrested for stealing, 5 (23.8%) engaged in a fight that led to their rearrest, 2 (9.52%) of the inmates confessed to have come back to prison for defilement and rape. Only one (4.76) prisoner was rearrested for threatening.

Table (3) also shows that the majority of recidivists got harsher and longer sentences for their subsequent offences. Five (23.8%) inmates interviewed had been imprisoned for 6 to 10 months, 6 (28.57) of them were serving 11 to 15 months sentence and lastly, 14 inmates (66.66%) of re-offenders were imprisoned for more than 16 months and above.

This demonstrates the gravity of the crimes they committed and highlights the fact that recidivists are worse off after they are released from prison. For instance, a recidivist received a 90-year sentence for defilement as the second offence after receiving a 2-year term for theft as the first. Another repeat offender received a 6-month term for fighting as their first offence, a 3-year prison for theft as their second offence and a 4-year sentence for theft once more. One HND holder who was interviewed in the maximum-security prison stated that his first offence was defrauding, for which he received a 4-year sentence and his second violation, carnal knowledge with an imbecile, for which he received an 8-year sentence.

According to Antwi (2015), Some inmates find it somewhat safer to remain in prison because of the complimentary services they receive given the hardships in the outside world. Food, clothing, housing and the non-existence of utility bill payments for things like water and light are a few of these services. To keep offenders engaged and content, there are additional recreational facilities. These in a way give some of them a sense of survival in prison that they don't have in their

post-released lives. From the study, 19.04% of the inmates returned to prison in less than a year after their release, 28.57% were rearrested after a year of release, 23.8% were rearrested after two years of being released and finally, 28.57% were released after 3 and above years later. This confirms the report by the Funder Newspaper that over 7, 181 ex-convicts returned to prison in 5 years and over 1000 cases every year (the Funder, 2022).

From the interviews with inmates and prison officers, it came to light that most ex-convicts face employment problems because they have been to prison. Society frowns on them and is unwilling to employ them after their release from prison. From the study, 28.57% of the inmates were drivers, 19.04% were farmers, 19.04% worked in the artisanal sector and 4.76% were managers, all of whom did not earn enough. Three inmates (14.28%), of the participants, claimed to receive income between 2001 to 3000 Ghana cedis after their rearrest whilst only one (9.52%) participant received above 3000 Ghana cedis.

This confirms the assertion made by Ajagbe (1996) that, inmates are viewed as social misfits and nothing more than laughing stock. In accordance with Ajagbe, the purpose of the prison is to punish the person or people who break the criminal laws of the country by denying them their freedom and confining them. Many people associate prison with being a place where offenders are housed, irrespective of their gender, age, or social status. Convicted criminals are removed from society by the courts and sent to prisons for varying sentences of incarceration. Everywhere in the world, society views prisoners as individuals who have gotten caught up in the web of the law (Durosaro, 2002).



### Background Characteristics of Prison Officers

This section presents information on the background of the prison Officers at the Ankaful Prison Complex. The focus is on their level of education, years of experience, the number of prisoners they train daily the nature and types of correctional intervention for prisoners.

**Table 4: Background Characteristics of Prison Officers**

Characteristics	Frequency (n= 9)	Percentage %
<b>Age (years)</b>		
33 years and below	2	22.22
34-49 years	1	11.11
50- 55 years	4	44.44
56 years and above	2	22.22
<b>Educational Level</b>		
Secondary	3	33.33
Tertiary	5	55.55
Basic	1	11.11
<b>Length of experience</b>		
0-4years	1	11.11
5-9	1	11.11
10-14	1	11.11
15-19	1	11.11
20 years and above	5	55.55
<b>Rank</b>		
Deputy Director of Prisons	3	33.33
Superintendents of prisons	1	11.11
Assistant Superintendent of Prisons	2	22.22
Senior Chief Officer	1	11.11
Corporal	2	22.22
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 4 represents the background characteristics of Prison Officers in the Ankaful Prison Complex. Prison officials play crucial responsibilities in the proper

running of correctional facilities and have a direct impact on recidivist behaviour through their everyday interactions (Moon & Maxwell, 2004). In general, the age and educational level of prison officers can differ based on factors like recruitment policies, job requirements and experience. The minimum educational prerequisite for becoming a prison officer in Ghana is a Senior High School certificate and applicants must be between the ages of 21 and 35. Since the research is based on offenders, the aim was to interview Officers with more than three years of experience in the field since they have enough knowledge about the inmates and their offending status. From the interview session with the officers, three officers were below 50 years and six were above 50 years. Out of the nine Officers interviewed, three of them constituting 33.33% were Senior High School (SHS) leavers, and five of them (55.55%) were tertiary graduates who had Master's degrees.

Some prison officers were in their early stages of employment, having just finished their training programmes and joined the workforce. Others have worked in the industry for a sizable amount of time and have many years of experience. Some Prison Officers have prior experience in areas that are similar to prison work, like law enforcement or corrections, which can raise their overall level of experience. One Officer had less than 5 years of experience in the prison service whilst the remaining eight officers had more than 5 years of experience working in the prison service. The Ghana Prison Service (GPS) ranks are outlined in the table below for Senior Officers and Junior Officers rank:

**Table 5: The Ghana Prison Service (GPS) Ranks**

<b>Senior Officers</b>	<b>Junior Officers</b>
Director General of prisons	Senior chief officer
Deputy Director General of Prisons	Chief officer
Deputy Director of Prisons	Assistant Chief Officer
Assistant Director of Prisons	Sergeant
Chief Superintendent of Prisons	Corporal
Superintendent of Prisons	Lance corporal
Deputy Superintendent of Prisons	Second class officer
Assistant Superintendent of Prisons	Recruit officer
Officer Cadet	

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The Rank of Officers interviewed at the various prisons include three (33.33%) Deputy Directors of Prisons, one (11.11%) Superintendent of Prisons, two (22.22%) Assistant Superintendent of Prisons, one Senior Chief Officer of Prisons and two (22.22%) Corporals.

#### ***The Prison Environment and Conditions of Work***

To improve the skills and expertise of its officers, the Ghana Prison Service has implemented various reforms and training programmes, including education and professional growth chances. However, Prison officers are believed to encounter challenges that diminish their efficiency and effectiveness while performing their responsibilities. One such challenge in the APC is the lack of space and so they are seen either sharing a big hall or sitting under trees if they are not

assigned duties. Amnesty International (2012) revealed several other challenges confronting Ghana's prison service. Amnesty International (AI) Emphasized that prisoner nutrition and health treatment are both deplorable. If officers are unmotivated, they may not give their utmost, jeopardising the success of rehabilitation efforts. Even though ex-prisoners want to start a new life, build a safe house, and reconnect with their families, they confront obstacles owing to a lack of funds (Evans, 2006).

Hesselink and Herbig (2015) identified several major challenges faced by correctional officers, including corruption and collusion among prison personnel, shoddy and malfunctioning facilities, high staff turnover, insufficient mental health support, excessive overcrowding, poor social integration and inadequate developmental programmes. From this research, it came to light that prisoners smuggle illegal drugs into the prison to sell when returning from their outside labour with the help of some corrupt officers. These findings were confirmed in this research at APC. Omboto (2013) identified substance abuse in prisons as one of the main challenges facing the successful rehabilitation of Kenyan prisoners.

According to the respondents, prisons' mandates for rehabilitation and reformation have become more challenging to implement in a setting where drug addiction among convicts has led to a rise in violence and indiscipline. Documenting these occurrences is extremely difficult for the rehabilitation process because narcotics and other dangerous substances are not allowed in prison settings. Ghana's prison system is severely limited by the fact that it does not get its annual



budget on time, forcing it to rely largely on donations from non-governmental and faith-based organisations (Amnesty International, 2012).

This reinforces Dissel's (2008) assertion that fundamental resources, such as rehabilitation materials, are lacking in many African prisons. Inadequate basic amenities include workshops, schools, human resources (skilled individuals to guide offenders through reformation and rehabilitation), and other supplies needed for rehabilitation (Owino, 2016). In many prisons, vocational training is practically nonexistent, leaving inmates without employable skills, which has an impact on them once they are released (Evans, 2006). These conditions were found to impair the rehabilitation system in the study prison, as well.

The issue of excessive turnover among correctional officers, especially case workers, is brought on by inadequate pay and remuneration, stress that causes burnout, and a lack of support from management and other stakeholders (Carlson & Thomas, 2006). In Ghana, each prisoner is allocated Gh.1. 80 pesewas a day as a feeding fee so the officers have to ensure they work extra hard to provide food for these inmates. At the APC, they have farms, which the inmates farm on to supplement what they receive from the government.

Finally, in developing nations, harsh conditions such as cramped workspaces, unpaid labour, or tiresome tasks that pays low wages influence the outcome of rehabilitation (Owino, 2016). In the case of the Ankaful Prison Complex, especially at the AMCP and the AAP, overcrowding creates an unfavourable prison environment for inmates especially when it is not time to transfer prisoners to other facilities yet. This puts additional demands on employees

and raises tensions between prisoners and workers. Because of this, prison overpopulation is thought to be a major problem facing Ghana's penal system (Amnesty International, 2012). This implies that when inmates are made to live in appalling conditions, like cramped quarters, their rehabilitation efforts falter (Hesselink & Herbig, 2010).

### **Causes of Recidivism in Ghana**

This section presents the findings on the causes of recidivism from the perspective of the inmates. Some prisoners find prison life to be more intriguing than life outside of it. Some of them would rather go back to prison to reap the rewards of their efforts after working many years as farmers. The following are some opinions that prisoners and guards have shared about the subject.

#### ***Lack of Support***

The first objective of the study was to identify the causes of recidivism in Ghanaian prisons. The analysis covered issues such as factors contributing to recidivism among inmates, reasons behind reoffending, the kind of support offenders receive after their first release, and measures taken to curb reoffending. Recidivism connotes the relapse into criminal activity and is generally measured by a former prisoner's return to prison for a new offence (Antwi, 2015). Rates of recidivism reflect the degree to which released inmates have been rehabilitated and the role correctional programmes play in reintegrating prisoners into society (Ganapathy, 2018). The rate of recidivism in Ghana is estimated to increase every year (Antwi, 2015).

The response captured from the participants indicated that most ex-convicts re-offend and are brought back to prison as a result of elements include the absence of community, friends and family support after prisoners' first release from prison. In the interview session, most of the inmates stated that they found themselves relapsing into criminal behaviour because they felt they were not needed at home. The support needed to be given to them to create a sense of belonging is not there both emotionally and financially hence their only option is to reoffend and go back to prison. This is what an inmate had to say:

*After I went home from prison, even my house people were more afraid of me than outsiders. If I had gotten support from my family after coming out of these difficult places, (for example, capital to start a small business), I would not have ended up like this. Even your siblings from the same mother and father who have some money, are sceptical in giving you because he or she feels like you will misuse the money. They could have given me the money to test me to see if I would succeed in turning myself around. My not being accepted in the family made me lonely and I felt rejected and that made me come back here (A 42-year-old Recidivist).*

Considering the narrative by the above inmate highlights a critical aspect of the relationship between lack of support and recidivism, which is the tendency for individuals who have been through the criminal justice system to re-offend after their release. The emotional toll of feeling rejected and lonely contributed hugely to his return to prison. The perception of not having a support system may cause an

ex-convict to return to criminal activities as a way to cope with their emotional distress or because they see no other viable options (Palgan, & Apolinario, 2022).

Another participant also recounted saying:

*I have a good relationship with my family, but because I went to prison, they are reluctant to help me because they believe I will still go back to my old habit and go back to prison again (32-year-old Recidivist).*

From the response by this inmate, it is apparent that when your family is reluctant to provide support due to their concerns about your potential return to criminal behaviour, even if you have a good relationship with them, can have a profound emotional impact. It can make you feel rejected and isolated, similar to the feelings experienced by individuals who have no family support at all.

One respondent had this to say about the causes of recidivism:

*Because I lacked funds, I had to rely on friends to go wherever we could and do everything we could to support myself. Even when I returned home, where I was residing due to financial troubles, they had packed my belongings outside my room because the rent was due and I had not renewed it. So, lack of accommodation and lack of support from family and friends made me join bad friends which resulted in my relapsing and going back to prison (A 32-year-old recidivist).*

In the case of this 32-year-old inmate, the combination of financial struggles, unstable living conditions, lack of support and association with a criminal peer group resulted in relapsing into criminal behaviour, ultimately leading to his return to prison. He also made mention of a lack of support from family, which is



another significant risk factor for recidivism. Strong social and familial support systems play a crucial role in helping individuals stay on the right track after release. Without this support, individuals may feel isolated and more likely to re-engage in criminal behaviour (Baffour, 2016).

Also, depending on friends for support can be both positive and negative. While supportive friends can help individuals reintegrate into society successfully, if these friends are engaged in criminal activities themselves, it can expose the individual to criminal behaviour and temptations, increasing the risk of recidivism (Antwi, 2015).

An inmate explained that:

*Hardship is a big reason for me. I did not get the support I needed especially from my family. After I came home from James Camp prison, when I talk to someone, even though you are making sense. because you have been to jail before, they will not take what I am saying to be serious. So that was the reason I started roaming around and I went to Kasoa and then went to steal again (A 40-year-old Recidivist).*

As stated in this quote by the key informant, hardship was a significant reason for his criminal behaviour. This aligns with one of the primary factors contributing to recidivism: economic instability and lack of support. When individuals battle to cater for their basic needs, such as food, shelter and clothing, they might engage in illegal activity in order to make ends meet or address their immediate financial challenges such as housing, food and transportation (Antwi,

2015). Eighteen out of the 21 inmates interviewed shared similar opinions on the reasons behind recidivism among prisoners in the Ankaful Prison Complex.

Feelings of rejection, loneliness Given the absence of family support may have influenced the individual's decision to return to a life of crime and deviance. This is consistent with the social labelling theory which states that labels like "criminal" can become a self-fulfilling prophecy, as people may turn to illicit activity when they feel excluded from traditional opportunities (Bernburg, 2009). Further, labelling theory emphasises how society's reactions to deviant behaviour, such as shame and rejection, can have a substantial impact on an individual's future conduct. In this scenario, the recidivist's experience of being rejected by their own family and community because of their criminal identity contributed to their sense of loneliness and may have pushed them back into a life of crime as a way of survival or coping.

### ***Community Rejection***

Recidivism in the Ankaful Prison Complex is also influenced by circumstances in the community. This factor sees recidivism as the result of the recidivist's family and the public's hostile attitudes, which make effective re-integration in the recidivist's community extremely difficult. It is anticipated that prisoners will re-integrate back into the society. Rejection by the community is a significant issue that ex-offenders face in each of their respective communities. Recidivists are faced with circumstances in their communities that compel them to associate with undesirable gangs or acquaintances they acquired while incarcerated,

even though they were taught the required skills and socially acceptable behaviour while incarcerated.

Respondents highlighted how social perceptions of recidivists impeded successful reintegration into the community and perpetuate the pattern of re-incarceration. These include rejection from families and peers as well as a lack of respect. These constitute evidence of the participants' responses:

*For the situation I found myself in like this, the first 3 years I spent in prison, I vouched never to repeat the same mistake because I suffered in prison. The person I committed the crime against, was a prominent person. I took his money so because of that, it made the whole town afraid of me. If I have been able to go to such a big man's house to steal, then any crime that will occur in the town will be attributed to me. So, it is not like I went home and went back to my criminal ways (A 30-year-old recidivist).*

The 30-year-old recidivist's account of his experience serves as a crystal-clear example of the effects of the labelling theory in the context of criminal behaviour and reintegration into society. According to the labelling theory, a person's self-identity and how they are regarded by others can be greatly impacted by the label that they receive when they are regarded as a "criminal" or "deviant" by society.

One respondent also viewed it like this:

*If anything goes missing, they say you are the one, when you move out too, they say you are still the one so you are always unhappy in the town even when you have your family staying there. This brings shame to your family*

*and even when you go out, people will be pointing their fingers at you. For me, the only problem I have in my hometown is that as I am here in prison, if something happens, they think I have come there to steal. Three days ago I went to make a phone call. I called my family and my mother said people are saying I am back. I told her I was still serving my sentence. I would not abandon my mother and my children and go to hide somewhere. My mother did not believe me. I had to report to one cousin of mine who is also an officer here so he said he would go and tell my parents that I am still in prison (A 30-year-old Recidivist).*

The above case is a clear example of how “labelling” can affect a person's life and identity. In this case, the person is labelled as a thief and a troublemaker by his home community, even when he is not involved in any crime. This label makes him feel unhappy, ashamed and mistrusted by his own family. He also faces difficulties in reintegrating into society after serving his prison sentence, as he is constantly suspected and accused of wrongdoing. This shows how labelling can have negative consequences for a person's well-being, self-esteem and social relationships.

Prison sentences are widely known throughout Ghana and the international community as a means of deterring crime as well as reforming and rehabilitating individuals convicted of crimes (Sechrest et al. 2020). However, community members frown on ex-convicts after they return to the community. A similar comment was made by a respondent:



*In my community, after I returned from prison for the first time, they felt once you have come back from prison, you are now worse off, so most of them ignored me. Others too will call you names like jailbird. Sometimes when they are having a discussion, you know what you are saying is true but because you have been to prison, you are not regarded, that was a problem to me (A 19-year-old Recidivist).*

This scenario described above, highlights the social stigma and isolation that individuals often face after being released from prison, and it has clear connections to recidivism. The respondent mentioned that people in his community stigmatized and ignored him after he was released from prison. They referred to him as a "jailbird," and they disregarded his opinions and contributions to discussions. This kind of social stigma and isolation can have a profoundly negative impact on individuals trying to reintegrate into society after serving time in prison. Being constantly reminded of your past mistakes and being labelled negatively can affect an individual's self-esteem and self-worth (Link, Ward & Stansfield, 2019).

Feeling like an outcast or believing that society sees you as "worse off" can lead to feelings of hopelessness and a belief that there are limited opportunities for a law-abiding life. This can contribute to a sense of resignation and potentially lead individuals back into criminal activities (Mooney, 2017).

Another respondent who is an inmate at the Ankafu Maximum Security Prison observed:

*For instance, I did not have any proper work to do and I had already committed a crime in the same community and had been to prison for the*

*first time, so because of that, they think once I had been to prison, I was now worse off than I came so anything that goes missing even if I did not take it, they will say I did it. Because I don't have any proper work to do (A 43-year-old Recidivist).*

The above quote shows how the lack of stable employment can be a significant factor contributing to recidivism. Without a legitimate source of income, individuals may feel financially desperate and may turn to criminal activities to meet their basic needs, such as food and shelter. Having a criminal record can also lead to negative perceptions within the community (Mooney, 2017). In this case, the community seems to have a preconceived notion that because the individual had committed a crime before and been to prison, they are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour again. This can lead to social isolation, mistrust and an increased likelihood of being blamed for crimes they did not commit, as he mentioned (Mooney, 2017).

Again, the combination of a criminal record, lack of employment and negative community perceptions can create significant barriers to successful reintegration into society. This can result in feelings of hopelessness and frustration, pushing individuals toward criminal behaviour out of necessity or frustration. Hence, apart from family rejection, recidivists are faced with hostile treatment from their friends and are viewed as bad people by their old friends, making re-socialization with old friends difficult and adversely affecting their reintegration processes. An inmate explained:

*Nobody was willing to walk or associate with me because if they associated with me, even their parents would tell them I had been to prison so I was a bad influence (A 28-year-old Recidivist).*

Furthermore, the community's continued handling of recidivists as disrespectful and unaccepting forced them to turn away from good people and closer to villains, raising the possibility of recidivism and re-incarceration. One respondent viewed it like this:

*Once a person goes to prison and returns, even if you have not committed a crime, they will say you have done something. They can even set a trap for you to go back to prison (A 30-year-old Recidivist).*

Here is what another participant had to say about community discrimination and stigmatizing against ex-convicts:

*After I came home, I said to myself that I would live my own life so I do not go back to prison. I realised I could not depend on my family else I would go back to prison. So, I decided to pursue a music career because I was good at that. I started joining my friends in the studio to record tracks. A friend suggested that we get a loan to market the songs. The friend was a goat thief. He said he could get a loan from the person he sold the goats to for us to pursue the music business. The only condition was that I join him in the goat-stealing business. I agreed to join him. Unfortunately, on our first trip, we got arrested. I was sent to court and sentenced to the Nsawam prison where I spent 6 months. This was my fourth imprisonment (A 26-year-old Recidivist).*

These scenarios provided by both individuals shed light on various aspects of recidivism. These individuals describe how, even after serving time in prison and without committing a crime, there is a persistent belief that they are likely to engage in criminal activities again. This type of discrimination and suspicion can create a hostile environment, making it more challenging for individuals to reintegrate into society without returning to criminal behaviour (McAdams, 2005). The notion that someone might set a trap for individuals with a criminal record to incriminate them again is a significant concern.

This kind of entrapment can indeed lead to recidivism, as individuals may find themselves in compromising situations due to the actions of others, even if they initially had no intention of reoffending. Living under constant suspicion and potential entrapment can increase the risk of recidivism (McAdams, 2005). Individuals who feel they have limited options or who believe society views them as criminals may be more inclined to engage in criminal activities out of desperation or frustration. With the issue of the 26-year-old recidivist, this individual initially decided to pursue a music career as a way to avoid returning to prison. This demonstrates a desire for personal growth and independence, which is a positive step toward rehabilitation and reintegration. However, he could not achieve these dreams due to a lack of support from home. Again, the individual's decision to engage in a criminal activity (goat theft) was influenced by a friend who was involved in criminal behaviour.

This highlights the role of negative peer influence as a risk factor for recidivism. The pressure to conform to criminal activities within one's social circle



can be strong, especially when individuals lack positive alternatives and support networks. Unfortunately, the inmate's decision to join in criminal activity led to their arrest and subsequent imprisonment, illustrating the cycle of recidivism. In both cases, the individuals face significant challenges related to societal attitudes, peer influences and a lack of positive opportunities. These challenges contributed to their involvement in criminal activities and subsequent returns to prison.

Another participant gave an encounter of how the harsh treatment he received from home led him to make bad decisions leading him to relapse into criminal behaviour resulting in going back to prison.

*Though it depends on the individual, I do not think I will go back to jail since I am not happy with it but I also cannot predict due to the harsh conditions in the community. This has made some people comfortable with going to prison because of the benefits they get from there. An example is, some people prefer to stay in prison rather than go out due to the fear of being labelled (A 45- year- old recidivist).*

The return of the recidivist to the community is viewed with distrust and scepticism. This stigma is evident in the community's view that he is always to blame for any missing objects or questionable actions. The label "criminal" is associated with social marginalisation and prejudice. The recidivist's experience of being perceived as a continuous criminal also has an impact on his self-identity. He is constantly viewed through the prism of criminality, which can undermine his self-esteem and self-concept. This is consistent with labelling theory's claim that individuals internalise the labels that society assigns to them (Bernburg, 2009).

## Unemployment

After serving their time in prison, ex-offenders surely face a number of obstacles before they can properly reintegrate into society. One of the first problems an ex-offender faces is finding work. Criminal background checks often deny jobs to ex-offenders (Holzer et al., 2004; Pettit & Lyons, 2007; Travis, 2005). According to Antwi (2015), given the nature of the public and private sectors of the economy, the majority of ex-offenders lack employment that would allow them to support themselves and their families because these sectors are not willing to employ them due to the stigma associated with their past criminal record. Employers are typically hesitant to recruit ex-offenders because of trust issues or worries about the comfort of their clients (Keller & Harris (2005). Researchers including (Finn, 1998; Harrison & Schehr, 2004), in their study indicated that post-release employment may be a crucial deterrent for ex-offenders looking to reenter society and avoid engaging in criminal activity. It is evident from the results of earlier studies that most firms are reluctant to hire ex-offenders because of the negative connotation attached to prison.

Another significant impediment to offenders' reintegration in Ghana is Legal restrictions. The Ghanaian constitution along with other laws that forbid criminals from holding particular jobs address this issue. For example, Ghana's Ghanaians' fundamental freedoms and rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and respect for human dignity, as well as equity and the lack of discrimination, are guaranteed under the 1992 Constitution. According to the Constitution, “a person

shall not be discriminated against based on gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, social standing or economic status” (Chapter 5 Section 17 (2))

According to Section 24 (1) of that same chapter, everyone has the right to work in fulfilling, safe and healthy conditions and is entitled to equal recompense for equal effort without distinction of any kind. However, the same rule discriminates against ex-offenders by barring them from holding specific jobs or participating in particular activities (Antwi, 2015). For example, the 1992 Constitution stipulates that: “an individual shall not be eligible to serve in parliament if he or she has been convicted of a crime under this Constitution” (Chapter Ten, Section 94(2c). The provision continues: “No one who has been convicted of a crime involving fraud, dishonesty or moral turpitude shall be employed in a civil service position”, (Section (58) of the Civil Service Law of 1993). Additionally, the lack of laws to encourage the hiring of former criminals represents another form of macro-level bigotry as well as places ex-offenders at a drawback in terms of socioeconomic status compared to the general population.

One participant gave an ordeal of how he was refused employment because he an ex-convict could not be trusted. Another also had this to say:

*There was no job opportunity for me due to a lack of trust from people, therefore my only option was to go and steal (A 26-year-old Recidivist).*

Another inmate explicitly commented:

*If I had gotten a job after my release from prison, I would not have gone to steal again and be arrested for the second time. I did not get any support from my family and this affected my ability to get a job. If there was some*

*form of help or if family members were accepting after we were released and supported us, I am sure we would not go back into our old habits but rather find a better job to do (A 37-year-old Recidivist).*

The challenges of finding work after release from prison may be linked in part to a lack of positive role models and supporting family members. The necessity of positive role models who can display prosocial behaviours and provide guidance is emphasised by social learning theory. A respondent from Ankaful Annex had this to say about the unemployment issue:

*On occasions when a returning offender finds a job, he/she may be unlucky when the employers discover that the individual is an ex-convict. This may lead to your immediate dismissal from that job. You may have been faithful and hardworking but because of the information he had received about you, he will fire you from the job (A 30-year-old Recidivist).*

The situation described by the 30-year-old recidivist highlights a common challenge faced by many ex-convicts and how it relates to recidivism. When individuals with a criminal record are unable to secure or maintain employment due to discrimination by employers, it can have detrimental effects on their rehabilitation and reintegration back into society. Even if they are faithful and hardworking employees, the stigma associated with their criminal history can lead to immediate rejection. Being dismissed from a job or facing repeated rejection and job loss due to a past criminal record can erode an individual's confidence and hope for a better future and can also result in financial instability, making it difficult for individuals to meet their basic needs and support themselves. Economic hardship



and loss of hope a significant risk factors for recidivism as this can contribute to a sense of despair and a belief that they have limited opportunities for legitimate employment which may influence individuals to resort to criminal activities out of necessity.

Another respondent also remarked that:

*At first, when I had not been to jail, someone could even call and ask me to go and harvest his cocoa for him but after my return from prison, they all stopped calling so money issues became a challenge (A 45-year-old recidivist).*

According to social learning theory, people are more inclined to engage in behaviours that are rewarded and reinforced by their social environment. If the recidivist had received encouragement and acceptance from family members, community and even friends, he might have been more driven to obtain and keep a job, which could have served as a prosocial alternative to criminal activity. Social learning theory posits that when individuals are given positive reinforcement and opportunities for prosocial development, they can unlearn and change their criminal behaviours. In this situation, the lack of support and the difficulty of finding work may have prolonged the cycle of illegal behaviour. Additionally, the inadequate rehabilitation at the prison facilities to provide employable skills negatively affects the ability to find jobs when out of prison. Insufficient rehabilitation facilities at the Ankaful Prison Complex have hindered recidivists and other offenders from learning a trade. These leave recidivists and other inmates with no skills and often

unreformed before discharge, and as a result, they re-enter their varied societies unchanged or even hardened. A prison officer had this to say:

*I must say that this is a maximum-security prison and it was supposed to have a second phase, where there will be a training centre. However, as I am speaking now, the second phase has not been done. Consequently, the training workshops and equipment to facilitate the rehabilitation and reformation of inmates, are yet to be provided. (Prison Officer at Maximum Security Prisons).*

Since the inception of the Ankafu Prison Complex, rehabilitation has been limited to vocational training in fields including carpentry, tailoring, barbering, shoemaking, sewing and soap making. There is formal education in Maximum Security Prison where inmates are taught subjects like English, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies. Inmates can also learn reading, writing and numeracy abilities through non-formal education aside from the presence of skills training. However, correctional education in the Ankafu Prison Complex is ineffective and as a result, only a small percentage (20%) of convicts engage in these programmes. Eighty per cent of inmates do not have access to academic or vocational education especially those serving short sentences and are only confined within the prison walls and others do not show any form of interest in skills training in the prison.

An officer at the Ankafu Main Camp Annex on the other hand opined that due to human rights issues, “you cannot force inmates to enrol in skills programmes unless they are willing to do it, you can just suggest to them, you cannot force them

to enrol and that has been a problem because some inmates are uninterested in learning a skill while in prison". Some even prefer outside labour as they will get quick money from it to support themselves since the food given to them is not enough. In such cases, these inmates come out of prison when discharged with little or no skill and are unable to secure jobs. Furthermore, Prisoners accused of defilement, rape, assault and drug possession receive basic counselling; there are no specialized therapies for individual offenders from Prison officers and sometimes visiting agencies from outside the prison especially religious organisations and social welfare personnel. However, there is no attempt to segregate the counselling and the training according to the type of offence.

*This is what an inmate had to say: I don't see in importance in learning a skill because I am already skilful so this will not add up after all, I cannot finish the whole duration before I am out so I am not motivated to join (A 45year-old recidivist).*

The 45-year-old recidivist's statement in the Ankaful Maximum Security Prison is relevant to social learning theory, particularly in terms of how it emphasises the relevance of self-perception, motivation and the social environment. Bandura (1977), emphasises that individuals learn from their social environment through observation, modelling and reinforcement. Motivation is important in learning and behaviour, according to social learning theory. In this case, the convict expresses a lack of enthusiasm to participate in skill-building programmes since he believes he will not complete the programme before his release. This emphasises the importance of expected results and rewards in

motivating or discouraging behaviour. If the convict does not see a tangible benefit or incentive for participating in the programme, he may be unmotivated to participate.

In conclusion, the issue of inadequate workshops, shortage of tools and equipment, a lack of interest on the part of convicts, short sentences and inconveniences are all reasons for fewer convicts participating in rehabilitation programmes. The resources or equipment needed to start their own businesses after completing these programmes are not even provided to the participants on their release. Employability is further hampered by the stigma associated with a criminal record. For progressive release and supervision, there is no parole system in place. According to Yin (2018), there is a shortage of essential conditions that are necessary for successful recovery after release, including housing, work and abstaining from harmful behaviours like partying and drug use.

The current system of aftercare, though existing, fails to adequately support released offenders due to funding shortages. This lack of resources translates into insufficient and ineffective formal assistance, leaving a majority of offenders with unmet needs that contribute to criminal behaviour (criminogenic needs). These unmet needs act as a trigger, pushing returning individuals back into criminal activity. In essence, the ineffectiveness of the rehabilitation system becomes an institutional push element that makes offenders more likely to commit crimes again increasing the likelihood of recidivism.

Released prisoners experience a variety of transitional difficulties that make it impossible for them to live law-abiding lives. According to Yin (2018), the goal



of incarceration is to alter the beliefs that are directly responsible for criminal behaviour. As a result, reformation, rehabilitation and aftercare are all forms of official institutional support for offenders. However, the majority of criminals return home worse off than they were before their incarceration rather than receiving the supposedly promised reformation and rehabilitation.

Regrettably, the Ankafu Prison Complex (APC) hardly offers any treatments that are targeted at specific offenses, like drug rehabilitation for drug users or sex offenders' programmes. Due to insufficient institutional support to handle criminogenic needs, the majority of offenders who return to society have low levels of schooling, little work experience and a history of substance abuse. Inmates develop a coping strategy by turning to conversations that compromise first-time offenders as a result of inconsistent institutional support for meeting their rehabilitation needs which confirms the Social Learning theory. As argued by Bandura (1977) behaviour is acquired by watching models in action. These role models offer behaviours that can be seen and emulated, such as giving information on how well to commit a crime and so on.

According to Bandura (1977), representations are chosen based on traits such as charm, social standing and imagined resemblance to the observer. The observed effects of a model's activities determine whether or not their behaviour will be imitated. In other words, the likelihood of imitation increases with the degree to which Through reinforcement, a model is observed (where reinforcement delivers cherished values to the observer). Conversely, the more a model is observed through punishment, the less likely someone is to copy them. the research

of Wortley (2002) for example, these models distort convicts' pro-criminal attitudes and beliefs regarding their likelihood of carrying out their unlawful behaviour after being released from prison.

Other prisoners pursue positions of prestige and take on leadership responsibilities that earn them respect from other prisoners and prison guards such as cell police, lawyers, secretaries, treasurer and so on (Ankaful Main Camp Inmate, 2022). Because of the subsequent societal rejection, some of them are drawn back to prison as a result. Furthermore, some of them commit new crimes and return to prison because prison at least gives them a feeling of survival in light of the hardships in the outside world (Mbuba, 2012). There is no parole mechanism in the Ghanaian prison system to guarantee a controlled release over time. The aftercare services are also present, but only in books (Decker & Marteaché, 2017). The aftercare after release intended to help ex-convicts adjust is not being provided due to a shortage of funding, which is the cause. Lastly, Ghana's corrections system lacks a transitional collaboration to oversee transitional activities (Baffour, Francis, Chong, Harris, & Baffour, 2021).

### **Stigmatization and Discrimination**

In Ghana, when a family member is imprisoned, it can cause stigma and prejudice towards other family members. These family members openly declare their disavowal of the perpetrator and the offense (Darkwa, 2017). Repeat offenders often exhibit socially unacceptable behaviour and as a result, society prefers to label or attach negative tags to them. Recidivists consequently carry the stigma of being "criminals," "thieves," or "ex-convicts" with them everywhere they go. These tags

occasionally limit their freedom and movement and could even make it harder for them to get access to specific advantages (Yin, 2018). Ex-offenders face discrimination in the workplace when they are lucky enough to get employed, they are discriminated against and stigmatized when seeking accommodations, when having positions of trust and occasionally even in romantic relationships (Antwi, 2015). These make re-socialization difficult and negatively affect their reintegration processes. Recidivists' continued mistreatment, disrespect and rejection in the community lead them away from turning a new leaf, which in turn increases their chance of re-offending and re-incarceration. The following views were expressed by some participants:

*They called me jail man. Even when you are walking outside, they will be laughing and mocking you that you have been to prison (A 38-year-old Recidivist).*

Being labelled and derided as a "Jail man" indicates a social cost or consequence in the framework of rational choice theory. Individuals are sensitive to how others view their behaviours and decisions, and unfavourable labels and stigma can be termed social costs. Recidivists face social costs in the form of derision and ridicule, which can influence their social standing, self-esteem and general well-being.

A participant from the Ankaful Main Camp prison remarked:

*In my community, the challenges were the false accusations I faced, even when the person saw or did not see me committing the crime, once I had been to prison before, he thought I was the one (A 32-year-old Recidivist).*

This is what an inmate had to say:

*They feel like since you have returned from prison, you have brought some bad ideas, sickness, or have become worse. If they do not move away from you, you might influence them. You are no longer normal. (A 19 year-old Recidivist).*

Here is what another participant from Ankaful Annex had to say regarding the issue of stigmatisation and discrimination:

*Sometimes they tease you with names like Prison Man and because of this I even fought with one of the boys where I was learning auto mechanics in Accra., I was called names especially when a client came there and they saw the person liked me, they told the person I had been to prison (A 19-year-old recidivist).*

In terms of how these elements may affect the choices and behaviour of people involved, the experiences and perspectives expressed by the individuals, notably the stigmatisation and discrimination suffered by those who have gone to prison, can be related to rational choice theory. According to the rational choice theory, people make decisions by balancing the benefits and drawbacks of many options. Their decisions and interactions within their communities may be impacted by these social costs and considerations. Being labelled or a stigma attached to a person has a significant impact on how individuals perceive themselves, their expectations for how others will treat them in their surroundings, and their thoughts and feelings about themselves (Major, Quinton, & McCoy, 2002). According to psychological studies, these reactions to stigma can make it difficult for people to



function, which can result in maladaptive behaviours, poor mental health, and trouble interacting with others in the society (Inzlicht, Tullett, and Gutsell 2011). Research indicates that individuals with criminal records are a highly stigmatized population who face both temporary and permanent restrictions on their capacity to vote, obtain housing, get financial assistance, work, and engage in other community activities (Pogorzelski et al. 2005).

By comprehending the psychological effects of stigma on offenders, we may be able to better assist them in reintegrating into society after their release from prison. Labelling theory has been the primary lens through which criminal offender stigma has been examined (Scheff 1974; Lemert 1976). In accordance with criminology's labelling theory, receiving a formal label as an offender leads a person to internalize stigmatizing beliefs, isolate themselves from society, and adopt a deviant persona (Lemert 1976). In relation to this theory, if an individual joins a stigmatized group, deeply rooted societal stereotypes may be seen as personally relevant and lead to internalization of stigma. This causes individuals to anticipate stigma and, as a result, develop various coping mechanisms, some of which may be problematic and exacerbate maladaptive behaviours (Moore, Stuewig, & Tangney, 2016).

### **Nature of Correctional Facilities and Effects on Repeat Offending**

This section discusses the nature of correctional facilities and how this influences prisoners' ability to reform.

## The Prison Environment

The theory of social learning posits that individuals pick up behaviour from watching role models. Whether or not a model's behaviour is emulated is determined by the outcomes of their activities. This has two parts, the environment within the prison and outside of the prison can improve the prisoner's understanding of self-worth or can reduce their self-worth and increase his proclivity to reoffending. If the correctional facilities do a good job, provide the skills and other important training and then all prisoners are being given this correctional training, that environment is positive. The prisoner now comes out into the society at large to function as a reformed person. Is the environment welcoming? If the environment is welcoming, then this positive reception will contribute to successful reintegration, fostering a favourable outcome.

In the context of Ghanaian prisons, inmates are often confined in close quarters for extended periods. Unfortunately, in poorly maintained and overcrowded prisons, they may observe and learn from the behaviour of other prisoners' which may often be violent and aggressive since there is a lack of opportunities for education and skills development which limits prisoners' exposure to positive role models and access to resources that promote prosocial behaviour. This violent and aggressive behaviour can be seen as a coping mechanism for prisoners to deal with the harsh conditions of prison life. They may observe other inmates engaging in violent behaviour and learn that as an effective way to deal with conflict, protect oneself, or gain power and respect in the prison hierarchy. In

such an environment, violence and certain bad behaviour can become normalised and even seen as necessary for survival.

The social dynamics of prison life may lead to the formation of gangs or cliques that reinforce bad behaviour. New inmates may be pressured to join such groups and participate in violent acts as a way of demonstrating loyalty and gaining acceptance. The lack of positive role models or pro-social activities in prison may limit opportunities for inmates to learn alternative ways of resolving conflicts or coping with stress. In this way, social learning in prison can serve as an avenue to learn violent and aggressive behaviour, perpetuating a cycle of violence and making it difficult for inmates to reintegrate into society once they are released. This, in turn, can impede their ability to learn new behaviours and attitudes that could help them successfully reintegrate into society.

Without access to education and skill development opportunities, prisoners may be more likely to adopt negative attitudes and behaviours from other inmates, such as aggression or drug use, as a means of coping with their confinement. These behaviours can then become ingrained and habitual, making it more difficult for prisoners to adopt more positive behaviours upon their release. Moreover, the lack of education and skill development opportunities in the Ankaful prison's fieldwork limits prisoners' ability to find employment and support themselves after their release. This can lead to a cycle of poverty and criminal behaviour; as ex-prisoners may resort to illegal activities to meet their basic needs. The perpetuation of this cycle of criminal behaviour and recidivism can have significant negative impacts on individuals, families and communities. It highlights the need for increased

investment in education and skill development programmes within Ghanaian prisons to provide prisoners with the tools and resources they need to successfully reintegrate into society and break the cycle of criminal behaviour.

Here is what a respondent had to say:

*In MSP here, all we have is vegetable farming, bakery and tailoring but even with that, you will go there and they will tell you there is no vacancy (A 34-year-old recidivist).*

The limited vocational opportunities available within the Ankaful Maximum Security Prisons, which primarily consist of vegetable farming, barbering, bakery and tailoring have a significant impact on an inmate's prospects for successful reintegration into society and their risk of recidivism as Inmates often have limited access to diverse vocational training and educational programmes within the prison system. When the available options are limited to a few specific trades like farming, barbering, bakery and tailoring, inmates may not have the opportunity to acquire a broad range of skills that could be useful for finding employment upon release. As a result, inmates may find it challenging to secure employment upon release, even if they excel in their prison-based training. When inmates are repeatedly told that there are no vacancies in these limited vocational programs, it can lead to frustration and a sense of hopelessness.

This emotional distress can negatively impact an inmate's motivation to pursue rehabilitation and reintegration programmes. Limited vocational opportunities, diminished employability, frustration and inadequate rehabilitation support can heighten the likelihood of reoffending. Reintegration into the



community without essential skills and support to obtain lawful employment may drive former inmates to resort to criminal behaviour to fulfil their needs.

Another inmate had this to say:

*I did not have any outside employment and when I got to the prison, there was no training to provide me with the skills I needed to sustain myself when I went home. These are a few of the factors that contribute to our desire to return to prison because while we are at home, we are not employed, thus the same factors that sent us to prison the first time will also send us there again since we lack the necessary skills and employment (A 45-year-old Recidivist).*

It is undeniable that prison conditions in Ghana are difficult and challenging (Ibrahim, Esena, Aikins, O'Keefe & McKay, 2015). Another argument made for imprisonment is that the primary goal of prison is to reform and rehabilitate convicts (Abotchie, 2008). Because of this, it is believed that teaching an offender new skills or reforming them would take a considerable amount of time. Due to this, the individual offender suffers when they receive a short prison sentence. For instance, to efficiently study carpentry, kente weaving, and tailoring in three to six months would be extremely difficult. Participants emphasized that short-term imprisonments are one factor that causes recidivism among the convicts of the Ankaful prison Complex. The results indicate that learning a trade effectively in three to six months would be difficult. Furthermore, evidence derived from the research suggests that short-term inmates are more prone to commit crimes again

and be detained again, especially where they associate with more experienced offenders. Reflecting on this problem, a participant had this to say:

*When I was transferred from Main Camp to Annex prison, I was determined to pursue tailoring so that when I left the camp, I could work and earn money to support myself. However, the madam told me that due to my lifestyle and the sentence I had come to serve, she could not work with me (A26 year- old Recidivist).*

An inmate from Ankaful Main Camp had this to say about this issue:

*I am not learning any skills because the sentence given to me is short so I cannot finish even when I enrol (A 30-year-old recidivist).*

One inmate in the Ankaful Annex prison believes the facility does not have the prerequisite tools to train him and also stated emphatically that the trade he would wish to learn is not been taught in the prison hence, his refusal to enrol in other trades. Here is what he had to say:

*My mother is a seamstress so I have knowledge in sewing but that is not what I want to learn. I want to learn how to do satellite dish installation but they don't teach that here, the carpentry too the tools are old, and it is difficult working with them so aside from the installation, I don't want to learn any other things (A 28-year-old recidivist).*

The study participants further established how poor prison conditions have compelled inmates to stay idle in the facilities. This is because most of the things needed to rehabilitate them are not available. Prisoners were thus not properly rehabilitated and well-equipped when they came out. Also, it is impossible for

prison officials to distinguish between comparatively small offenders and serious offenders. Contamination in prisons is the result of this approach. According to one participant:

*Poor prison conditions hinder us from learning a trade; if you go out and have nothing to make a life, you can rob or steal and may end up back in prison (A 58-year-old Recidivist).*

*Another respondent said this: You are given time to sleep and time to wake up, so it is not a pleasant experience and the vocational training here is minimal. As a result, I am not certain I would like to come return here after I am released (A 35-year-old recidivist).*

The statements made by these participants underscore how inadequate vocational training and unfavourable prison conditions can contribute to the cycle of recidivism. When inmates lack opportunities for skill development in prison, it becomes challenging for them to acquire the necessary skills for lawful employment upon their release. This lack of preparation significantly hinders their successful reintegration into society. Moreover, when inmates endure poor prison conditions, including limited schedules and unpleasant living environments, it often leads to frustration and a sense of hopelessness.

Furthermore, when individuals are released from prison without adequate prospects and minimal support, they may resort to criminal activities out of desperation to meet their basic needs. The combination of limited rehabilitation opportunities, frustration and a lack of post-release

support increases the likelihood of reoffending, ultimately leading to a return to prison. It is imperative to recognise that the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977 & Akers, 2011), acknowledges how behaviour can escalate and individuals released into their communities may find themselves facing the same challenges that initially led them to prison. Without access to intervention and opportunities for skill development, this cycle of unemployment and criminal behaviour may persist.

The experiences of these recidivists underscore the significance of the social learning theory, emphasizing how the absence of possibilities for employment and skill development can impact an individual's inclination to re-offend. This notion highlights the crucial importance of providing individuals with the essential skills and opportunities to escape the cycle of criminal behaviour and ensure a smooth transition back into society.

Prison conditions in Ghana are also poor given the underfunding from the public purse. The food is not available in their quantities and quality for adults. A prison officer lamented the food situation:

*Due to this poor feeding, they occasionally become unhappy, malnourished, feel incredibly lonely and have been thinking, which is why we need to talk to them. Some of them are present but do not receive visits, some too, their family members do not even know where they are. Due to this, some of them occasionally want to escape from prison. They experience a lot and while it is not always easy, we officers occasionally feel for them and even feed them.*



*However, there is nothing we can do about it. All we can do is speak with them and try to calm them down (A prison officer at Ankaful Main Camp).*

The description of poor feeding and unhappy, malnourished inmates highlights the harsh living conditions within the prison. Inmates experiencing malnutrition and unhappiness may face physical and emotional challenges that can affect their well-being. The harsh conditions, loneliness and desperation experienced by inmates can increase their vulnerability to recidivism. Individuals who feel that prison life offers them no hope or improvement in their circumstances may be more likely to re-offend once released, as they seek a way out of their challenging situations.

A respondent from the Ankaful Annex prison had this to say about the food situation:

*It is not everyone who gets family or relatives to come over here and visit them. There are some people, whose family is well-off, so they visit him from time to time and even send him mobile money to buy food to supplement the one given to them. The food we eat here, koko without milk, koko without sugar, sometimes you want to eat something specific, but you will not always get it. The meals we eat here are not nice. So, of all the prisons I have been to, this is the one where I have concluded that when I get out, I need to find something more productive to do with my life. So, I have decided to go and meet Captain Smart and seek assistance from Angel TV. I have been watching his shows over here, so this should be my last time in*

*prison. The next time I am found stealing, I might not be so lucky and I might be beaten to death (A 26 years-old recidivist).*

The lack of opportunities for education and skills development in Ghanaian prisons is a major challenge for prisoners who are trying to learn new behaviours and attitudes that could assist them to successfully reintegrate into society after their release (Kuuire, 2022). This lack of access to education and skills development programmes is perpetuating a cycle of criminal behaviour and recidivism. Without access to educational and vocational programmes, prisoners are likely to leave prison with the same limited skillset they had when they entered, making it difficult for them to find employment and reintegrate into society. Many prisoners end up returning to a life of crime, as they lack the necessary skills to succeed in legal and legitimate ways (Richie, 2001).

Education and skills development programmes in prisons can also help to change attitudes and behaviours (Mbatha, 2019). These programmes can provide prisoners with the opportunity to reflect on their past actions and learn new ways of thinking and behaving. This can be particularly effective in reducing recidivism rates among prisoners. Therefore, the lack of opportunities for education and skill development in Ghanaian prisons is limiting the ability of prisoners to learn new behaviours and attitudes that could help them successfully reintegrate into society after their release. This perpetuates a cycle of criminal behaviour and recidivism that has negative effects on both individuals and society as a whole.

Recidivism not only undermines efforts aimed at rehabilitation but also imposes substantial economic and social burdens on communities (Mohammed,

2011). Individuals caught in this cycle often face challenges in accessing legitimate employment and reintegrating into society, leading to a continuation of criminal activities to meet their needs (Simon, 2020). As a result, communities experience heightened levels of crime, reduced safety and strained resources within the criminal justice system. Efforts must be made to increase access to education and skill development programmes in Ghanaian prisons that equip inmates with the tools necessary for successful reintegration into society to break the cycle of reoffending. Breaking this cycle necessitates comprehensive efforts to address the root causes of criminal behaviour and provide support systems, such as access to education and skill development programmes (Simon, 2020).

In Ghana, there are several types of correctional interventions aimed at reducing recidivism among inmates. These include imprisonment, which is the most common form of correctional intervention. Offenders are condemned to a term of imprisonment in a correctional facility, where they are expected to serve their time and be rehabilitated. Secondly, vocational training provides offenders with the abilities and instruction required to secure a job and become productive members of society upon release. The effectiveness of these interventions in reducing recidivism in Ghana depends on a variety of factors, including the type of intervention, the quality of the programmes and the offender's circumstances. Studies have shown that programmes such as vocational training, counselling and therapy can be effective in reducing recidivism (Williams, Crane, Barnhofer, Brennan, Duggan, Fennell, & Russell, 2014), while others have shown that

imprisonment and probation have little impact on reducing reoffending (Cullen, Jonson & Nagin, 2011).

Here is what a respondent had to say about the issue:

*I wanted to enrol in mechanic training, but unfortunately, there are no such programs available here, which is disappointing. Additionally, I considered joining a block factory, but the supervisor informed me that they currently have a full team and cannot accommodate me at the moment. He suggested I be patient and wait for an opening when someone leaves (A 19-year-old recidivist).*

The statements made by the 19-year-old recidivist reflect several factors related to recidivism. The inmate expressed a desire to enrol in mechanic training, but there are no such training programmes available in their prison environment. Limited access to vocational training programmes can hinder an individual's ability to acquire skills that are essential for lawful employment upon release. The individual's eagerness to work and learn a trade contrasts with the reality of limited immediate opportunities. This gap between aspiration and opportunity can lead to frustration and a sense of hopelessness.

An officer had this to say about training programmes in the prison:

*This is a maximum-security prison. It was supposed to have a second phase where there will be a training centre. However, the second phase has not been done. The centres for training have not been established. The only things they do currently here are formal education and non-formal*



*education. then some are learning tailoring, breadmaking and aquaculture, vegetable farming, we have here, but we are about to set up a barbering shop and with the school, the officers are the same people that act as teachers and some of the inmates that have higher education also help in teaching their mates (Officer at Maximum Security prisons).*

An officer from the Main Camp Prison had this to say: We have a computer laboratory, but most of them are not interested, so those who are interested go there, and we teach them how to use computers. I believe we have other shops such as Kente shops and carpentry shops; they used to weave baskets but have since stopped due to one or two incidents.

These statements from officers at both the Maximum- Maximumsecurity prison and the Main Camp Prison highlight the limited vocational training and educational opportunities available within the prison system and how this relates to the issue of recidivism. In the Maximum-Security Prison, there is mention of formal education and a limited range of vocational training programs, such as tailoring, breadmaking, aquaculture, vegetable farming and the upcoming barbering shop. In the Main Camp Prison, there is a computer laboratory, as well as mentions of kente shops and carpentry shops, but some vocational activities have been discontinued. The availability of vocational training varies and not all inmates have access to training in fields that align with their interests or market demands. The statements also touch on the issue of inmate interest and engagement in vocational and educational programmes.

While some inmates may actively participate in computer training or other vocational activities, others may not show interest. Lack of interest can limit the impact of these programmes in preparing inmates for employment upon release.

Vocational training and education play a critical role in equipping inmates with the skills they need for lawful employment and successful reintegration into society. Limited access to relevant and engaging training programs can hinder inmates' ability to acquire these skills. When inmates do not have access to vocational training or educational programs that align with their interests and the job market, they may face increased challenges in finding employment upon release. This can contribute to the risk of recidivism, as individuals may resort to criminal activities out of necessity or frustration when they are unable to secure legal employment.

### **How is Repeat Offending Related to the Types and Nature of Correctional Interventions in the Prison System?**

Recidivism, or the tendency of individuals to re-offend following their release from prison, is an important problem in many countries. One of the major contributing factors to recidivism is a lack of rehabilitation programmes in prisons. Rehabilitation and reformation programmes, such as counselling, substance abuse treatment, education and skills or vocational training, are essential for helping ex-offenders reintegrate into society and lead successful, productive lives. Unfortunately, many prisons especially in Ghana lack the resources and funding necessary to provide these programmes to all inmates. In line with Ghana's Prison Service Decree of 1972, the main goals of imprisoning offenders are rehabilitation and reformation. A criminal justice process termed rehabilitation aims to provide

prisoners the information and abilities they need to successfully reintegrate into the community.

Reformation is a criminal justice procedure that involves re-educating or re-integrating incarcerated individuals into society to enable them to conform to societal norms and customs upon release. The goal of rehabilitation and reformation is to assist each individual offender in successfully reintegrating into society after their release from custody. However, most of the necessary tools needed to rehabilitate and equip these prisoners are missing in the prisons which makes the rehabilitation process very difficult. Most prisoners spend their time in prison without learning any trade so at the end of their sentence, they come back home like they left for prison. When that happens, they are handicapped. Ex-convicts will also feed themselves so the only option available to them is to steal or re-offend and when they are caught, they are taken to prison and this cycle continues:

*What I can say is that typically in this country, it is impossible to rehabilitate someone without the necessary logistics. We pray that the government will provide them the logistics so that, we can use them. So that the likelihood of them reoffending will diminish (Officer at Annex prison).*

As illustrated by the quote above by the prison officer at Annex prison, there is a critical connection between the availability of necessary logistics for rehabilitation and the goal of reducing recidivism. The statement underscores that effective rehabilitation is a key factor in reducing recidivism, by emphasizing the importance of having the necessary logistics and resources to support rehabilitation efforts within correctional facilities. These logistics can include educational

materials, vocational training tools, counselling services and infrastructure. The officer's statement also implies that it is the responsibility of the government to provide these essential logistics. Government funding and support are crucial for ensuring that correctional facilities have the means to offer comprehensive rehabilitation programmes. When individuals receive the necessary logistics and support for rehabilitation, they are better equipped to reintegrate into society successfully after their release from prison. This, in turn, reduces the likelihood of them reoffending.

An Officer at the Ankaful Annex indicated that: “in terms of logistics, the tailoring business has been operating for around 15 or 16 years and the number of machines available to instruct convicts is still insufficient”.

When inmates are released from prison without adequate rehabilitation, they often struggle to find employment, housing and social support, which can increase the likelihood of returning to criminal behaviour. The stigma associated with a criminal record can make it even more difficult for ex-offenders to secure employment and housing, further exacerbating their difficulties as the lack of education and job skills can exacerbate the many challenges that ex-offenders face during their re-entry into society. Addressing these issues through education and job training programmes is a key strategy for reducing recidivism. Penal reforms on the other hand refer to changes or improvements in the criminal justice system and its policies, procedures and practices related to punishment and rehabilitation of offenders.



The goals of penal reforms can vary, but they generally seek to make the criminal justice system more effective, fair and humane. The prison officers at the Ankafu prisons complex were asked to suggest the reforms that would be needed to improve prisoner rehabilitation and reformation. From the discussions, the following key issues stood out:

- **Sentencing:** This involves determining the appropriate punishment for a crime. Penal reforms in this area should aim to reduce mandatory minimum sentences, provide judges with more discretion in sentencing and increase the use of alternative sentencing options such as community service or probation.
- **Prison conditions:** Reforms in this area aim to improve the living conditions, safety and health care of inmates. This should involve reducing overcrowding, increasing access to education and vocational or skills training and providing better mental health services.
- **Rehabilitation and reintegration:** These reforms aim to help offenders successfully reintegrate into society after serving their sentences. These should include providing education and job training, counselling and mental health services and support for drug and alcohol addiction.
- **Restorative justice:** This approach focuses on repairing harm done to victims and communities by involving all parties in the justice process, including the offender. This process must at all times involve mediation, community service, or other forms of restitution.

- Juvenile justice: Reforms in this area aim to create a separate justice system for young offenders that takes into account their unique developmental needs and focuses on rehabilitation rather than punishment. Although this study did not target young offenders, these reforms are needed to reduce repeat offending.

### **Recommendations needed to improve Penal reforms by the participants**

There are several challenges facing penal reforms in Ghanaian prisons. Some of the key challenges include overcrowding which is one of the biggest challenges facing Ghanaian prisons (Sarkin, 2008). Many of the prisons are operating at more than 150% over capacity, which makes it difficult to provide adequate living conditions, healthcare and rehabilitation programmes for inmates (Spelman, (2000). Issue of funding is also a big challenge facing Ghanaian prisons as Ghanaian prisons are often underfunded, which makes it difficult to provide necessities like food, water and medical care. It is abhorring to note that each prisoner is allotted to Ghana 1.80 pesewas a day. This lack of resources also limits the ability to implement effective rehabilitation programmes. Staffing and lack of resources are also a major problem.

Many Ghanaian prisons are understaffed, and lack facilities like offices and the staff that is present may not have adequate training or resources to effectively manage the prison population. This can lead to a lack of control and discipline within the prisons. There is also limited access to legal representation. Many inmates in Ghanaian prisons do not have access to legal representation, which can make it difficult to challenge their convictions or seek redress for mistreatment. The

researcher came into multiple inmates who claimed to be innocent of charges but due to the lack of representation, they ended up in prison.

Overall, these challenges make it difficult to implement meaningful penal reforms in Ghanaian prisons. Addressing these issues will require a sustained effort from the government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and other stakeholders to enhance the circumstances and care of inmates and create a more just and equitable system.

Recidivism is a significant issue facing the criminal justice system and reducing it requires a multi-faceted approach, but one important aspect is implementing penal reforms that can help to end the cycle of criminal behaviour. In this study, the researcher presents some of the penal reforms that are needed to reduce recidivism. One of the most important penal reforms that can reduce recidivism is providing inmates with intensive education and vocational training. Studies have shown that inmates who participate in educational and vocational programmes while incarcerated are less likely to re-offend once released. These programmes can help inmates gain the skills and knowledge they need to secure employment and lead productive lives outside of prison but from the interviews, most of these things needed to rehabilitate and reform these prisoners are non-existent in the prison complex therefore making prisoners come out of prison without any skills. Here is what a prisoner had to say about penal reforms in the Ankaful prison Complex:

*Prisons are designed to help people change, but that is not what is happening in this case. We are eating poor food at this place. There are not*

*many opportunities for training here so occasionally they will tell you to wait since the shops are full. By the time you are freed, you will not have any training or skills. Therefore, the prison is deficient in its role in reformation (A 42-year-old recidivist).*

Considering the response above, the recidivist points out that there are not many opportunities for training within the prison complex. This limitation can hinder inmates' ability to acquire new skills and education that are essential for their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The mention of poor food quality suggests that the living conditions within the prison may be substandard. Inmates' physical well-being can be negatively affected by inadequate nutrition, which can have consequences for their overall health and rehabilitation. The response also suggests that inmates are often told to wait for training opportunities because the available training slots are already full. This waiting period can result in inmates being released without the skills or education needed to secure legal employment, increasing the risk of recidivism. Hence, the participants are of the view that the prison complex is deficient in its role of reformation.

This deficiency is a critical concern because prisons are meant to serve as institutions for rehabilitation and reintegration into society. When inmates lack access to rehabilitation programmes and skills training while in prison, their likelihood of reoffending upon release may increase. This is particularly true if they return to the community with limited opportunities for lawful employment and personal growth.

An inmate remarked:



*We have a school here, but it is not active, individuals who cannot read and write enrol in it since it is non-formal education (A 40-year-old recidivist).*

Another important penal reform suggested by the participant is improving mental health and substance abuse treatment programmes for inmates. Many individuals who end up in prison struggle with mental health issues and substance abuse and addressing these underlying issues can help reduce the likelihood of reoffending. Providing inmates with access to mental health and substance abuse treatment can help them address these issues and develop healthy coping mechanisms. A third important penal reform is reducing the use of solitary confinement. Solitary confinement has been shown to have negative effects on mental health and can lead to increased levels of aggression and violence.

Instead of relying on solitary confinement as a punishment, correctional facilities should focus on implementing alternative forms of discipline that do not have negative psychological effects on inmates. A fourth important penal reform is implementing restorative justice programmes. Restorative justice programmes focus on repairing the harm caused by criminal behaviour and providing offenders with an opportunity to make amends for their actions. These programmes can help to reduce recidivism by addressing the underlying issues that led to criminal behaviour in the first place.

In conclusion, reducing recidivism requires a multi-faceted approach, but implementing penal reforms can play an important role in breaking the cycle of criminal behaviour. Providing inmates with education and vocational training,

improving mental health and substance abuse treatment programmes, reducing the use of solitary confinement, implementing restorative justice programmes and addressing the issue of overcrowding in prisons are all important penal reforms that can help to reduce recidivism and promote a more effective and just criminal justice system. Also, without access to appropriate rehabilitation programmes, ex-offenders may lack the necessary tools and skills to address the underlying issues that led to their criminal behaviour in the first place. This can make it difficult for them to develop healthy coping mechanisms and make positive changes in their lives, increasing the likelihood of relapse into criminal behaviour.

A lack of rehabilitation in prisons can have serious consequences for ex-offenders and society as a whole. To reduce recidivism, it is essential to provide inmates with the resources and support they need to successfully reintegrate into society. This includes funding for rehabilitation programmes and post-release support services to help ex-offenders rebuild their lives and become productive members of their communities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the key findings of the study and the conclusions. It also presents some recommendations based on the findings and offers directions for future research.

#### Summary

The overall focus of the study was to explore correctional interventions and penal reforms in Ghana to comprehend the experiences and the transitional difficulties of offenders and ex-offenders upon their release, which result in a relapse into criminal behaviour. In unpacking the aforementioned phenomenon, the labelling theory, social learning theory and rational choice theory were used as theoretical lenses to address the ensuing specific research objectives:

1. Examine the causes of recidivism in Ghana
2. Examine the types of correctional interventions within the Ghanaian prison system
3. Access how repeat offending is related to the types and nature of correctional reforms within the prison system.
4. Make recommendations toward penal reforms to reduce recidivism

In order to achieve the study's objective, the research used the qualitative research methodology, the study gathered data from 21 purposively sampled inmates comprising seven recidivists each from the Ankaful Maximum Security Prisons, Ankaful Main Camp Prison and the Ankaful Annex Prison. Also, three Prison

Officers from the above-mentioned prisons with more than four years of experience in the Prison service were purposively sampled and interviewed. In all, a total of 30 individual interviews were undertaken using an unstructured interview guide.

### Summary of Key Findings

Based on the research questions, the main findings of the study are summarised below:

- The respondents had almost the same views concerning why ex-convicts re-offend and are being brought back to prison. Analysis of the recidivists interviewed revealed that a majority fell within the youth demographic.
- Regarding the inmates' marital status, many of them were not married.
- Most of the people interviewed were petty offenders who engaged in stealing, fighting and theft cases. Among the 21 inmates interviewed, only one of them had tertiary education, the remaining were either SHS dropouts or even JHS. Some also did not have any education at all.
- About objective one on the causes of recidivism in Ghana, Inmates indicated that they face discrimination and stigmatization in their various communities. They are labelled as criminals and seen as outcasts so it is difficult for them to fit in and be part of the community again.
- Unemployment is prevalent among returned offenders within their communities, leaving them with limited options, often resulting in a return to criminal activity and seeking acceptance in prison once again.
- Financial difficulties, absence of specific treatment, issues of criminal record and short sentences, the inmate's absence of enthusiasm A weak



aftercare system, a lack of parole, inconvenience and security concerns, and participation in rehabilitation are other factors that make offenders more likely to revert to their previous criminal activity.

- The lack of support including emotional and financial aid, has also been identified as a major cause of return offending. Ex-convicts are seen as bad people in the various communities and hence are not given the support, they require hence they resort to reoffending and going back to prison.
- Most offenders perceive a negative stigma attached to them within their communities upon release from prison. The resulting harsh treatment and judgment from community members often lead them to re-offend, ultimately resulting in their return to prison.

The second objective focused on examining the types of correctional interventions within Ghanaian Prisons.

- The study found that offender rehabilitation in APC is not effective in rehabilitating offenders in order for them to lead law-abiding lives.
- Almost all of the resources meant to rehabilitate and reintegrate these offenders are only found in books and are not available to these prisoners and the correction officers.
- The second phase of the AMSP is yet to be completed. This was expected to concentrate on training and educating inmates. The only skill training programmes offered to them are barbershop, bakery and vegetable farming.

The other two facilities only have tailoring shops, small spaces for carpentry and prison farms that can only house a limited number of inmates at a time

- Due to inadequate tools, most inmates are unable to join regular or skills training classes because there are not enough tools, materials, and teachers for education in prison. Also, there is an issue of financial problems from the government or GPS to help prisoners get better in the APC.
- Although the non-Formal Education Division of the Ministry of Education provides functional literacy initiatives for inmates, however these sources of funding are insufficient for meaningful rehabilitation programme aimed at reforming prisoners. Consequently, 47.4% of the instructors employed by APC are incarcerated individuals who lack motivation to perform to the best of their abilities due to their hard work sentences. Sometimes those disciplines or trades are temporarily suspended after the inmate teachers are released from prison.
- The findings of this study suggest that the rehabilitation activities in APC have no substantial impact on the lives of offenders. This research and others such as Antwi (2015), Baffour (2016) and Yin (2018) indicate that when rehabilitation does not adhere to sound programming practises, the influence on recidivism and other outcomes is minimal. This study discovered that APC lacks specialised therapies or cognitive behavioural abilities including anger management, prevention of violence, life skills, drug abuse therapy, and treatment for sexual offenders that enable cognitive change and desistance from crime. Instead, convicts are re-socialized at assembly grounds through general advice and counselling provided by non-professionals.

- The research also revealed that some of the prisoners lacked interest in taking part in rehabilitation programmes. Because most prisoners are more concerned with getting out of prison than anything else, there is not much excitement for participating in rehabilitation programmes.

The third objective focused on assessing how repeat offending is related to the types and nature of correctional reforms within the prison system.

- The effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes in reducing recidivism is an important aspect of correctional reforms. The research revealed that the APC's rehabilitation programmes are insufficient. Limited or inefficient rehabilitation programmes within the prison system have been the outcome of poor correctional reforms as returning citizens are not well-prepared to effectively reintegrate into society without access to evidence-based programmes that tackle the underlying reasons behind criminal behaviour.
- The nature of post-release support and re-entry programmes has a substantial impact on an individual's likelihood of reoffending. According to inmates, the provision of services such as transitional housing, employment assistance, access to healthcare and ongoing counselling can help them successfully reintegrate into society and reduce the risk of recidivism.
- The participants also hinted that the type of prison environment can also influence the likelihood of repeat offending. Issues of overcrowding, violence, lack of educational and vocational opportunities and limited

access to healthcare and mental health services have created a hostile and counterproductive environment for rehabilitation.

- According to prison officers, one major issue that contributes to recidivism in APC is the issue of punitive sentencing and inadequate re-entry policies in the Ghanaian prison system.
- Lack of collaboration and community participation, and poor correctional reforms have made it impossible for service providers, community organisations and correctional agencies to work effectively together.

The fourth and final objective of this study was to make recommendations for penal reforms to reduce recidivism from the perspectives of the participants.

- There should be implementation of sentencing reform policies to prioritize rehabilitation and proportionality. The government and the GPS should consider alternatives to incarceration for non-violent and low-level offences, such as diversion programmes, community services or restorative justice practices.

### **Conclusions**

The main objective was to find out the causes of recidivism in APC. Having trouble navigating through the transitional difficulties such as lack of support, labelling, unemployment, lack of housing as well as social rejection account for the high rate of recidivism at APC.

Examining the types of correctional interventions within Ghanaian society was the study's findings for the second objective, concluded that some forms of



rehabilitation interventions for the reintegration of inmates at APC were available but poorly equipped. Therefore, rehabilitation interventions have not been effective in reforming prisoners.

The third objective assessed the relatedness of the types and nature of correctional reforms within the prison system. It was concluded that the ineffectiveness of the correctional interventions at APC compels inmates to recidivate.

#### **Contribution to knowledge**

Data was collected from 21 participants in Ankaful Prisons Complex. Although it is a unique case, the Ankaful prison complex is a macrocosm of the Ghanaian prison system. There is not much difference in terms of the facilities provided, training given to inmates and so on. In the context of the study on reoffending among recidivists in Ankaful Prisons Complex, three theoretical frameworks were applied: social learning theory, labelling theory and rational choice theory. Each of these theories offers unique insights into the dynamics of criminal behaviour and the potential interventions within the prison system to address recidivism.

Social learning theory, propounded by Albert Bandura (1977), posits that individuals learn behaviours through observation, imitation and reinforcement. In the context of the study, social learning theory suggests that individuals, including returned offenders, may have learned criminal behaviours from their social environment, including interactions within their communities and within the prison system itself. This theory emphasizes the role of socialization processes in shaping

behaviour. The study likely explored how interactions and experiences within the Ankaful Prisons Complex contributed to the perpetuation or reduction of criminal behaviour among returned offenders.

For instance, the study examined whether exposure to criminal behaviours or deviant subcultures within the prison influenced the likelihood of reoffending. The evidence shows that this was very much real in the Ankaful prison Complex. Additionally, interventions within the prison system, such as educational programmes or vocational training, were analysed through the lens of social learning theory to understand how they can promote pro-social behaviours and deter criminality. The poor training facilities and systems available affirmed the position of the theory that recidivism thrives when offenders are not offered opportunities for reformation.

Labelling theory (Becker, 1963; Lemert, 1967) suggests that individuals may internalize and fulfil the expectations and stereotypes imposed on them by society. It argues that the labelling of individuals as criminals or deviants can lead to further criminal behaviour as individuals adopt these labels as part of their self-identity. In essence, the theory highlights the stigmatizing effects of formal or informal sanctions placed on individuals. In the context of the study, labelling theory was used to examine how the social stigma associated with being a returned offender influenced the likelihood of reoffending. The study investigated how being labelled as a "criminal" or "offender" affects an individual's self-concept and behaviour both within and outside the prison system. The findings affirmed these

theoretical positions as offenders referred to these labels as obstacles to their effective social integration upon release.

Lastly, rational choice theory suggests that individuals engage in criminal behaviour after weighing the potential costs and benefits of their actions (McCarthy & Chaudhary, 2014). According to this theory, individuals are rational actors who seek to maximize their utility by engaging in behaviours that offer the greatest rewards with the least amount of risk or punishment. Rational choice theory emphasises the importance of individual decision-making processes in understanding criminal behaviour. In the study, rational choice theory was utilised to analyse the decision-making processes of returned offenders regarding whether to re-offend or desist from criminal behaviour.

The researcher examined the perceived costs and benefits associated with reoffending, such as economic opportunities, social status, or personal satisfaction. Additionally, interventions aimed at deterring reoffending, such as rehabilitative programmes, have been evaluated based on their ability to alter the cost-benefit calculus of returned offenders. On the evidence, the data collected affirmed the basic tenets of the theory. The poor training facilities leave inmates ill-prepared for the world outside the prison. An uninviting social and economic environment thus provides conditions for inmates to see the prison as a better and more welcoming space to live.

Overall, by applying social learning theory, labelling theory and rational choice theory, the study aimed to deepen our understanding of the complex

interplay between individual behaviours, social influences and institutional factors in shaping reoffending patterns within the Ghanaian prison system.

### Recommendations

The study highlighted some possible recommendations for addressing issues that were recorded.

- Government, Nongovernmental Organisations (NGOs) and Civil Service Organisations (CSOs) should improve on skills training programmes such as carpentry, masonry, tailoring, baking, etc. efforts should also be made to provide adequate training facilities or workshops should be provided to train large number of inmates.
- Government or NGOs should provide inmates with start-up capital upon release in selected fields such as carpentry, tailoring, etc. for them to do their work.
- The government, in collaboration with Ankaful prison officers, should link trained prisoners to industries for employment. Those who excel in certain skill areas can be given some form of attestation by the prison service
- The government in collaboration with schools in Ghana should help expand formal education especially and also compulsorily enrol all long-term inmates in formal education. Any inmate without any form of education should be made to enrol in non-formal education.
- Government and Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) should increase funding to support the acquisition of tools for vocational or skills training programmes.



- There should be more community outreach by prison officers to let people know prisoners are also human beings like them. Prisoners can be reformed and so should be accepted by the community. Labelling and stigmatisation are offensive and may provide reasons for reoffending.

- Overall, there should be the creation of more effective and humane penal systems in Ghana that prioritize rehabilitation and reintegration, reduce pre-trial detention and improve prison conditions while ensuring public safety.

#### **Areas for further research**

The focus of this study was only on men since the Ankaful prison complex does not have women so there has to be further research on women and juvenile recidivists in Ghanaian prisons. A quantitative study could be undertaken on the same topic but would involve different prisons to see how widespread the causes and issues are in this study so that it will be more representative.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, GHANA

SCHOOL FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF PEACE STUDIES

Interview Guide for reoffenders

Dear respondents,

In partial fulfilment of the requirement for a Master of Philosophy in Peace and Development Studies, I am conducting research on the topic “***CORRECTIONAL INTERVENTIONS, RECIDIVISM AND PENAL REFORMS IN GHANA: A STUDY OF RETURN OFFENDERS IN ANKAFUL PRISON COMPLEX IN THE CENTRAL REGION***”. I humbly appeal to you to help me complete the following interview. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose. Thank you for your cooperation

**Background Information of Reoffending**

1. Age
2. Sex
3. Educational level
4. Marital status
5. Ethnic background
6. Hometown
8. Employment before arrest
9. Residential status before arrest



- Renting
- Owned
- Family house etc.

### **Background Information Upon Arrest**

1. Crime you committed leading to incarceration
  - First incarceration – year/month
  - Second incarceration – year/ month
2. How long did you stay in prison for the first incarceration?
3. When were you released?
4. When were you re-arrested?
5. What crime did you commit for the rearrest?
6. What is the length of prison term for your current arrest?
7. When will you be released?
8. What was your Employment status before the first
9. Employment after second arrest?
10. What was your income level before your first arrest?
11. what was your income level after the second arrest?

### **OBJECTIVE ONE: CAUSES OF RETURN-OFFENDING**

1. What leads people to repeatedly reoffend?
2. Why did you reoffend? (Probe: Unemployment, Stigmatization, Poverty, Partners leaving you, etc.)
3. How did the family support you after your first release?
4. Would you say that led to reoffending?

- If yes, how?
  - If no, why?
5. How did friends support you after your first release?
6. Would you say that led to reoffending?
- If yes, how?
  - If no, why?
7. When you were released, were you labelled/called names such as ex-convict?
- By family members (specify)
  - Friends (Specify)
  - Others (specify)
8. Did these labels affect you?
- Socially? Explain
  - Emotionally? Explain
  - Economically? Explain
  - Friendship? Explain
9. Why does society discriminate against former prisoners?
10. What do you think can be done to reduce such discrimination and labelling?
11. What are some of the challenges you encountered in the community after your release?
12. Would you say that led to reoffending?
- If yes, how?
  - If no, why?
13. How did your friends and family relate to you after your release?

14. Would you say that led to reoffending?

- If yes, how?
- If no, why?

15. What measures do you think can be put in place to reduce reoffending?

- By society
- By family
- By friends

**OBJECTIVE TWO: CORRECTIONAL INTERVENTIONS WITHIN GHANAIAAN PRISONS**

1 <sup>st</sup> time you were in prison	2 <sup>nd</sup> time you were in prison
Rehabilitation/ reformation programmes enrolled in (Counselling, healthcare, formal and informal education, etc.)	Rehabilitation/ reformation programmes enrolled in (Counselling, healthcare, formal and informal education, etc.)
Types of skills training (Ceramics, Baking, Doormat weaving, smock weaving, soap making, Tailoring, Volcanizing, Painting and decorations, etc.)	Types of skills training (Ceramics, Baking, Doormat weaving, smock weaving, soap making, Tailoring, Volcanizing, Painting and decorations, etc.)
Why did you enrol in the rehabilitation/ reformation programmes	Why did you enrol in the rehabilitation/reformation programmes

Why did you enrol in the skills training programme	Why did you enrol in the skills training programme
Did you request to be enrolled in a different skills training programme but were refused? Yes/ No. explain your answer	Did you request to be enrolled in a different skills training programme but were refused? Yes/ No. explain your answer
Regularity/ frequency of training	Regularity/ frequency of training
How are you motivated to participate in the skills training programmes?	How are you motivated to participate in the skills training programmes?
Satisfaction with rehabilitation programmes	Satisfaction with rehabilitation/ reformation training programmes
Satisfaction with the skills training programmes	Satisfaction with the skills training programmes
Did the training help you find a job upon your release? Yes/ No (explain your answer)	Will the training help you find a job after release from prison?
How did the training you received affect your reintegration into the society (your family and friends)	Do you think this training you are receiving will improve your chances of better reintegration? Explain your answer



OBJECTIVE THREE: RECOMMENDATIONS TOWARD PENAL REFORMS  
TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM

1. How many times are you fed in a day?
2. In your view, is the food you are given at the facility adequate?
3. How many are you in a cell?
  - Do you have toilet facilities in your cell
  - Is the ventilated?
  - Are you engaged in any trade training/ educational activity in the prison? Specify.
    - Do you have workshops/ classrooms for these activities?
    - Describe the place you receive training
4. In your view, are the classrooms or workshops conducive or well-resourced?
5. Leisure- What are your sources of entertainment in this facility? List some of the recreational facilities available (sports, indoor games, television, radio and other sources of entertainment available to you)
6. In your view, what do you think should be done to improve prison conditions in this facility?

**Thank you for your time!!**

## APPENDIX B

## Interview Guide for Prison Officers

In partial fulfilment of the requirement for a Master of Philosophy in Peace and Development Studies, I am conducting research on the topic “*CORRECTIONAL INTERVENTIONS, RECIDIVISM AND PENAL REFORMS IN GHANA: A STUDY OF RETURN OFFENDERS IN ANKAFUL PRISON COMPLEX IN THE CENTRAL REGION*”. I humbly appeal to you to help me complete the following interview. Any information given will be treated as confidential and used for only the intended purpose. Thank you for your cooperation

**Background Information of Prison Officers**

1. Age
2. Level of education
3. Length of experience
4. Rank
5. The number of persons you train on a daily or weekly basis?
  - Daily basis
  - Weekly basis

**Correctional Interventions (CI) Within the Ghanaian Society**

Types of CI -Formal education -Skills training -Counselling -Community service -  
Farming

1. Describe the nature of your work (**Job specification**) as a prison officer
2. What role do you play in the rehabilitation/ reformation process of prisoners

3. How would you rate your level of involvement in rehabilitating the prisoners?
4. What will be your assessment of the rehabilitation/ reformation programme of offenders?
5. How would you describe the attitudes of offenders on correctional intervention (rehabilitation/ reformation) programmes?
6. Describe the challenges offenders face in the facility and during the rehabilitation/ reformation process
7. Describe the challenges you (Prison officer) face while executing your duties
8. What can be done to improve rehabilitation/ reformation programmes to reduce reoffending?
9. Prison conditions
  - Food is given to prisoners, is it adequate or inadequate?
  - Accommodation for prisoners
  - Leisure facilities
  - Tools/ equipment for training prisoners
10. Do you follow up to check on the welfare of released prisoners to reduce reoffending?
  - How often do you visit them?
  - What education programmes do you give them?
11. What is your prisoner population?
  - What is the authorised population?

12. Does the prison system have any non-custodial projects?

- Parole
- Community service
- Probation, etc

13. In your view, do you think the introduction of non-custodial centres will be beneficial to the prison systems in Ghana?

**Thank you for your time!!!**

