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Correctional Career Pathways: A Jail Reentry Program Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

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There are numerous types of reentry programs available to inmates to help avoid the cycle of recidivism. There is little research on the impacts of reentry programs in jail populations. This current study sought to provide more research in this area by evaluating a local jail reentry program's effect on recidivism. A quasi-experimental design was used to estimate the program's effectiveness by comparing the recidivism statistics of inmates that have participated in the reentry program to a control group of inmates that did not. Inmates in the control group were matched according to their gender, age, race, and current offense type in efforts to mirror the type of inmates in the treatment group. Analyses indicated that inmates that completed the Correctional Career Pathways program had lower rates of recidivism when compared to the control group, but this difference was not great enough to be statistically significant.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Currently, the United States holds the highest incarceration rate in the world, with an estimated 6,410,000 individuals in jails and prisons, or on parole or probation (Maruschak & Minton, 2020; The Sentencing Project, 2020). A large portion of these individuals in the correctional populations are the byproducts of mass incarceration. It was during the late 1970s and early 1980s that America's use of incarceration exceeded most other countries due to the "tough on crime" and "nothing works" mentality (Mears & Cochran, 2014). Implementation of these policies caused incarceration rates to increase. To put this in perspective, the United States was incarcerating individuals at a rate of 716 individuals per 100,000 residents (Mears & Cochran, 2014). The effects of exploding numbers of inmates in mass incarceration populations continue to be exhibited today.

Studying the number of individuals incarcerated creates a broad picture of how many individuals are locked up; it does not, however, explain "who" is locked up. This massive number reflects not only institutionalized individuals but also those being served by probation and parole. The incarcerated population is disaggregated into correctional institutions accordingly. For the purpose of this thesis, inmates being served by both jails and prisons will be the focus.

Jails and Prisons

Both jails and prisons serve as a means of punishment for the justice system; however, they differ in the types of offenders they serve and the length of time that they detain them. Jails serve inmates who are awaiting trial or who have a sentence of less than a year. The average time that an inmate stays in jail is approximately 25 days (Solomon et al., 2008; Zeng, 2020). According to the 2018 jail inmate report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the city and county

jails in the United States served 738,400 inmates (Zeng, 2020). Of these inmates, a majority were white (49.9%), male (84.4%), and awaiting trial (66.4%) (Zeng, 2020).

The jail population differs from prison inmates, as they typically serve the more serious offenders for longer periods of time; in fact, the average length of stay in prison is 2.5 years (Kaeble, 2018). According to the 2019 prisoners report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, state and federal prisons in the United States served 1,430,800 inmates (Carson, 2020). Of these inmates, a majority were black (32.8%), male (92%), and charged with a drug-related offense (46.3%) (Carson, 2020).

Individuals in jails and prisons make up a large portion of the overall correctional population. They are arrested, charged, and sentenced to serve their time for their unlawful acts. However, serving their time is only part of the battle. Once inmates are released from either jail or prison, they face many life-altering challenges upon their reentry.

The Reentry Process

When released from incarceration, an offender will either recidivate or desist. Ultimately, the goal is desistance, which is when an individual's offending pattern ceases. However, many individuals fall into the same criminal patterns and recidivate. One study by Durose et al. (2014) found that in their 30-state study, more than one-third of the prisoners who were released were rearrested within the first six months, and over half were rearrested by the end of the first year. Of these prisoners, roughly 68 percent were arrested for a new crime in the first three years, while nearly 77 percent were arrested for a new crime within five years (Durose et al., 2014).

Alarming statistics like these cause researchers to question why individuals continue to reoffend. Research must look at the challenges and risk factors that individuals face upon their release to better understand why they fall into the patterns of recidivism. Ultimately, individuals

are not equipped with the proper resources, skills, or abilities needed to keep them out of trouble. In fact, there are numerous factors to consider for a successful transition to reentry. Once an inmate is released from incarceration, they face challenges with housing, employment, finances, and stigma from society. These limitations often hinder this transition from incarcerated life to freedom. It is the strain from these limitations that often causes them to reoffend.

Reentry Challenges

Homelessness and Housing

One of the main concerns for these ex-offenders is where they will go once they are released. Living arrangements and housing become a huge concern for many newly released individuals. In efforts to learn more about the housing situation among this population, Nelson et al. (1999) followed a group of inmates for one month after they were released from prison. Researchers concluded that the majority of newly released inmates stayed with family members. The second most common living arrangement was in shelters, followed closely by inmates living "on their own" (Nelson et al., 1999).

There are other housing options for those individuals who do not stay with a family member or in shelters. For example, private and public housing are both alternative options. However, these options may pose certain challenges for the previously incarcerated individual. As far as private housing goes, many landlords run a background check on potential renters and will refuse to rent to individuals that have a criminal history (Dougherty, 2012). Even public housing is not an option for many because they are required to enforce federal drug, alcohol, and criminal history restrictions (Curtis et al., 2013). If the individual is unable to find public or private housing, they become homeless.

Homelessness among previously incarcerated individuals is a common element. In fact, Couloute (2018) conducted a study of 5 million formally incarcerated individuals living in the United States and found that previously incarcerated individuals were ten times more likely to be homeless compared to the general public. Couloute (2018) also noted that the more times an individual had been incarcerated, the more likely they were to become homeless. Additionally, Couloute (2018), Metraux and Culhand (2006), and Remster (2019) concluded that recently released offenders face greater risks of homelessness shortly after their release compared to those that have been out for a couple of years.

Employment

Research has shown that employment reduces recidivism among ex-offenders (Harer, 1994; Sampson & Laub, 1997). Employment for ex-offenders is beneficial on many levels. Foremost, it provides the individuals with a source of income. This is important because, as Petersilia (2001) mentions, the majority of the newly released inmates are released with very little savings, if any at all. This can become problematic as many individuals have fines and fees to pay when they are released, therefore pressing the need for a job upon their release.

While there are obvious needs and benefits for jobs after incarceration, it is often difficult for ex-offenders to obtain jobs. In one study by Couloute and Kopf (2018), data from the National Former Prison Survey were analyzed to indicate that formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed at a rate of over 27%. The reasons for unemployment are not necessarily from the ability or willingness to work. In fact, Dougherty et al. (2012) found that out of the 6,025 men and women previously released in their study, over half of them were unemployed, able to work, and actively seeking a job. Thus, indicating that the initiative and capability are there, yet finding employment is still an issue.

There are many reasons as to why ex-offenders struggle to obtain jobs. For some, it could be that they do not know where to go or how to apply for jobs. Other reasons could be that they lack the right documentation, education, experience, or training needed to apply to jobs. For example, Visher et al. (2008) found that 40% of state and federal prisoners did not have a high school diploma or GED, whereas 60% of jail inmates lacked a high school diploma or GED (Harlow, 2003). In regard to work experience, Visher et al. (2008) found that 32% of their sample did not have a job leading up to their incarceration. Similarly, Harlow (2003) concluded in their study that 30% of the jail inmates did not have a job prior to incarceration.

Finally, another hindrance of concern is the stigma that surrounds ex-offenders. Travis et al. (2001) mentioned in their study that many employers do not hire ex-offenders because they view them as not trustworthy. Studies such as Pager (2003), Uggen et al. (2014), and Agan and Starr (2017) have found that employers are less likely to hire an individual with a criminal record. Pager (2003) specifically found that having a criminal history reduced the individual's chance for a job call back by 50%.

Social Support

One other challenge that ex-offenders face is having a support system to help them navigate through the reentry challenges. This support system can be friends or family members that help the ex-offender transition back into society. Cullen et al. (1999), Naser and La Vagine (2006), and Visher (2007) all noted the positive effects of social support groups in helping ex-offenders avoid criminal behavior. For many, their support systems are the key to successful reentry. Upon release, approximately 92% of ex-offenders rely on friends and family members for housing, transportation, employment assistance, childcare, food, clothing, and financial assistance (Pettus-Davis et al., 2015).

While there is evidence of the positive impacts of social support upon reentry, many ex-offenders do not have access to positive support systems. Many ex-offenders rely on family members when they are released. It is possible that the offender's family causes more harm than help. For example, in a survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 19% of state prison inmates,10% of federal inmates, and 16% of jail inmates reported prior abuse from a family member or close loved one (Harlow, 1999). Again, this can be a problematic environment to return to, therefore hindering a successful reintegration.

An additional factor that hinders the family's support is intergenerational offending. Going back into an environment where criminal behavior is the norm can be harmful in the reentry process. According to Visher et al. (2004), those who return to families that have members with criminal histories face greater reentry challenges. In their study of 324 prison inmates, over half reported having a family member with a criminal history (Visher et al., 2004). Similar statistics can be found among the jail population as well. Solomon et al. (2008) reported 46% of their jail inmates had a family member with a criminal history.

Prior criminal histories can pose certain challenges no doubt. Additionally, criminal behaviors, such as drug or alcohol abuse, can negatively influence the ex-offender as they navigate through the reentry process. If the ex-offender is working on overcoming a drug or alcohol addiction, being around negative influences could mislead the ex-offender. Visher et al. (2004) reported that nearly 72% of their prison respondents had at least one family member that had a drug or alcohol problem. Solomon et al. (2008) found that one-third of jail inmates had at least one family member that abused drugs or alcohol.

Reentry Programs

The challenges previously discussed are just a few of the issues that inmates reentering into society face. In efforts to help study how newly released individuals adjust to this transition, researchers have conducted numerous studies analyzing the specific challenges and developing programs to better prepare the individual for reentry. These reentry programs help individuals transition back into their community while also implementing a variety of methods to reduce recidivism.

There have been numerous types of reentry programs developed across the nation with the goal of making this process an easier transition for the inmate. These programs are implemented in both jails and prisons, but a majority of the research solely targets the prison population. While it is necessary to study prison reentry programs, further attention must be given to jail reentry programs as they face a different set of challenges compared to prisons.

Jail Reentry Program Challenges

When it comes to developing and implementing a reentry program, jails face a different set of challenges. Some of the unique challenges include the diverse population they serve, shorter sentence lengths, limited housing capacity, and the diverse needs and resources for the community they serve (Solomon et al., 2008). These challenges together make it difficult to design, implement, and study reentry programs in jails.

The first challenge to be addressed is the diverse population. Jails house many criminals from their community, but they also house inmates from other agencies and jurisdictions (Solomon et al., 2008). The inmate population is constantly changing in jails. In fact, the weekly

inmate turnover rate was 55% in the most recent jail inmate report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Zeng, 2020).

Just as the inmate population varies, so does the sentence lengths. The shorter sentences make it difficult to implement an effective reentry program. The most recent Bureau of Justice Statistics report concluded that the average time served in prison was 2.6 years, whereas the average time served in jail was 25 days (Kaeble, 2018; Zeng, 2020). Not only is the jail dealing with shorter sentences, but also more variety in sentencing. While a majority of inmates stay less than a month, there are others who are there a few hours or a few days (Sawyer & Wagner, 2020). The shortened sentences and the variety of sentences make it difficult for programs to adequately assess the needs and risks of the individual and implement an effective reentry program (Solomon et al., 2008).

The final two challenges mentioned by Solomon et al. (2008) tie into one another. Jails are limited on capacity, funding, and available resources (Solomon et al., 2008). Approximately 2,851 jails are utilized in the United States, each bringing their own set of diverse attributes. (Zeng, 2020). These jails vary in size and location and also urban and rural dynamics. Due to these variations, jails each possess their own unique set of needs and resources. While programs aim to address these needs, oftentimes jails do not have the capacity or money needed to implement the type of program (Solomon et al., 2008).

These challenges together pose a great obstacle for jail reentry programs and successful reentry. By recognizing these unique challenges for this population, it drives the need for further research targeting jail reentry programs. In efforts to expand upon the limited research regarding

the characteristics, challenges, and evaluation of jail reentry programs, this current study was conducted.

Current Study

The purpose of this current study is to analyze and evaluate a prerelease reentry program serving a county jail. The Correctional Career Pathways program was implemented in a rural county jail serving approximately 300 inmates. This program focuses on job attainment, job retainment, payment of fines, fees, and restitution, and avoidance of reincarceration. The evaluation will determine if participation in the reentry program resulted in lower rates of recidivism by answering the following questions:

R_1: What are the characteristics of those in the treatment group (inmates who participate in the Correctional Career Pathways program) and the control group (those who do not participate)?

R_2: What if any differences exist between the treatment and the control group?

R_3: What factors predict successful completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program?

R_4: Does participation in the Correctional Career Pathways result in lower rates of recidivism?

R_5: What factors predict successful reintegration into the community?

Chapter Summary

This chapter addressed the concept of reentry by specifically focusing on the various factors that prevent offenders from a successful transition back into the community. It is

common knowledge that offenders are often released unprepared for life outside of incarceration. They are released without the proper skills, resources, and knowledge to help them successfully reenter society. Upon their release, ex-offenders have to face many challenges. For example, finding housing, attaining a job, maintaining a job, and staying out of trouble. Balancing these challenges can be detrimental for many individuals, causing them to fall back into the rigorous cycle of reoffending. However, there are reentry programs across the nation that aim to better prepare individuals for this transition, but a majority of these programs and studies are for prison inmates. The jail population is lacking further research for reentry programs. Thus, the purpose of this study is to bridge that gap. Chapter Two will address the literature that is currently available on jail and prison reentry programs. It will also address multiple causes of crime, and how reentry programs are addressing these issues. This will then be followed by a brief description of the current study's approach to analyzing the Correctional Career Pathway's program. Chapter Three will present the methodology and statistical models used to test the hypotheses from the previous chapter. Chapter Four will present the findings from the statistical analyses. Chapter Five will explain the findings, discuss how these findings pertain to the current research, and provide suggestions for future studies.

Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

The current study aims to analyze and evaluate a local county jail's reentry program. By studying this local jail reentry program, the hope is to identify the unique issues that the jail population faces regarding successful reentry into the community. Additionally, the goal is to identify any individual characteristics implemented that lead to reductions in recidivism. The goal of this chapter is to present findings from the literature available on recidivism and reentry.

The literature selected will examine both the prison and jail populations. While these institutions share their differences, it is necessary to mention both to gain a deeper understanding of recidivism and reentry. To build a solid foundation of understanding this topic, this literature review will first address the history of jails and prisons. Then it will focus on the origins of the crime by addressing the importance of understanding individuals' risk factors and meeting their criminogenic needs. The chapter will then transition into explaining the risk-need-responsivity principles and how this model incorporates the criminogenic needs to effectively address reentry programs. In addition, the chapter will focus on different reentry programs in jails and prisons. Finally, the current study will be described.

The Purpose of Corrections

Corrections is often seen as a form of punishment for the wrongdoers of society. The punishment itself, however, has multiple interpretations. In fact, there are four philosophies of punishment. The four philosophies of punishment are retribution, deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation (Miethe & Lu, 2005). Each philosophy, working together or separately, has the promise of discouraging participation or involvement in criminal activity.

The first philosophy of retribution is one of the oldest forms of punishment. The ultimate goal is to punish the offender because "they deserve it." Oftentimes, the punishment was physical

pain paired with public humiliation. As time progressed, punitive imprisonment began to take common use. The purpose of the imprisonment was to punish the individual for their crime.

The second philosophy of punishment as a deterrent can be viewed as a use of scare tactics. The overall goal of the deterrent is conformity to promote the belief that consequences far outweigh the risk and rewards. In other words, the punishment of crime is worse than any of the benefits that the individual could gain from committing the crime. It was believed that the fear of punishment would lead individuals to conform to law abiding behaviors. Therefore, in order for punishments to have the greatest potential for deterring this behavior, they needed to be swift, certain, and severe (Milethe & Lu, 2005).

Under this philosophy emerges the important work of Cesare Beccaria. As an eighteenth-century philosopher, Beccaria posed three components of punishment to ensure that it would deter other individuals in society from committing crimes. Beccaria believed that punishment could deter individuals if the punishment was certain, severe, and proportional to the crime (Paternoster, 2010). Beccaria also believed that the certainty or infallibility of punishment had a greater effect on deterring individuals than the severity of the punishment itself (Paternoster, 2010). The severity of the punishment should be proportionate to the crime. For example, the more severe crimes deserve severe punishments, whereas the least severe crimes deserve the least painful punishments (Paternoster, 2010). Finally, the punishment itself should be swift. In other words, the punishment should be administered immediately after the crime or as close to the time of the crime (Paternoster, 2010).

Probably the most widely recognized philosophy of punishment is incapacitation. Incapacitation serves to prevent future and additional criminal behaviors as well as protect the individual from themselves and others by physically restraining the individual. The means of

detainment makes society safer by withholding the criminal from committing more crimes and by deterring other potential criminals (Raphael & Stoll, 2009). Common places for detainment include the jails and prisons that are so well-known today. According to the most recent incarceration report from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are 1,430,800 inmates in prison and 738,400 inmates in jail (Carson, 2020; Zeng, 2020).

The final philosophy is rehabilitation. Under this philosophy, the goal becomes restoring convicted offenders and enabling them to become productive successful members of society. The process by which resources such as vocational or educational training, therapy, and or treatment will prevent the offender from returning to criminal activities and lifestyle. These skills, values, and resources will then become an arsenal of tools for the prevention of future law breaking. As will be discussed later in the chapter, there are specific techniques and processes that work to greatly increase the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs.

The History of Jails and Prisons

Historically the concept of jails and prisons was a means to detain and remove personal freedoms of incarcerated individuals. Not only are both institutions used as a measure of punishment, but they are also used for incapacitation purposes. In addition, prisons and jails may also serve the purpose of rehabilitation when the facilities implement treatment programs. To gain a deeper understanding of the development of these institutions, the history of each will be discussed below.

Jails

Early jails were nothing like modern day jails. The original purpose for the early jails was holding criminals until they could make bail, pay debts, or until it was time for their trial (Tilotson & Colanese, 2017). Unlike modern jails, early jails' purpose was not correction. In fact,

only on rare occasions were offenders confined as a means of correction or punishment. The jails were used as a means to temporarily hold the criminal until further disciplinary actions could be issued. In other words, early jails were not solely instruments of discipline; rather, they were tools used to facilitate the process of criminal punishment (Latessa & Holsinger, 2011).

The purpose of early jails was to hold those individuals awaiting trial. In addition to the purpose, the early jail environment also differed from what can be observed in modern jail systems. For example, modern jails house inmates in their own facilities. In early jails, inmates were housed in homes or inns, and the jailor would live in the jail with the inmates (Walsh & Stohr, 2011). Many of the early jails had a household environment. The inmates would live with the jailor and their family with little differentiation between the jailor's quarters from the inmates (Latessa & Holsinger, 2011). An additional differentiation to note is that the early jails enforced very few restrictions compared to modern jails. Inmates did not wear uniforms or cuffs, and they were free to walk about the jail (Latessa & Holsinger, 2011).

The modern jails that are utilized today have come a long way since the early jails. Modern jails still serve the similar purpose of holding those individuals awaiting trial or sentencing, but they also incarcerate individuals as a means of punishment, usually those who have sentences less than a year (Solomon et al., 2008). Additionally, modern jails are used as a means of correction. An example of modern jails serving as a more correctional institution would be with their use of programming. Early jails did not provide any sort of programming because they did not believe that a jail could be used to rehabilitate an offender (Latessa & Holsinger, 2011). Now, modern jails are providing vocational programs, educational programs, drug related programs, and other community programs (Albert, 2010). These programs seek to provide some form of rehabilitation to the inmate.

Prisons

The initial purpose of prisons was to house the more serious criminals. While this has always been the main purpose for prisons, their goals and methods of punishment have changed over the years. Early jails rarely utilized their establishments as a means of punishment. While this approach was rare for jails, it was more common for early prisons. The early prison systems utilized incarceration as a means to reform criminal behavior (Cullen & Gilbert, 1982). In order to reform the criminal behavior, early prisons and penitentiaries focused on hard work, prayer, silence, and isolation (Cullen & Gilbert, 1982). The punishment through hard labor was instilled to replace opportunities for deviant behavior and eliminate idle time (Foster, 2006). The silence, isolation, and prayer allowed for prisoners to focus on their spiritual transformation. The religious beliefs and practices were enforced as a means to implement penitence so that the offender may reflect on their sinful behaviors. (Cullen & Gilbert, 1982). Through these practices, prisons aimed to reform prisoners through spiritual means of repenting. It is the concept of penitence and repenting that the word "penitentiary" derived from (Foster, 2006).

The prison systems have evolved, shifting from the focus of isolation and punitive factors to a focus on rehabilitation. Modern prisons still utilize punishment and solitary confinement, but not as extensively as the early prison systems due to the recognition of mental health dangers. Historically, prisons were used mostly as a means of punishment; however, modern prisons now serve several purposes such as: retribution, deterrence, incapacitation, and rehabilitation (Allen & Simonsen, 2001; Robinson & Crow, 2009). The purpose of this thesis will focus on the rehabilitative portion.

In modern prisons, rehabilitation is implemented through programming**.** For example, modern prisons offer a range of programs such as educational, vocational, mental health, reentry,

social support, substance abuse, and others (Duwe, 2017). The goal of these types of programs is to reduce recidivism through program intervention that is individualized toward the offender. Before jumping to the intervention and treatment portion of rehabilitation, it is first necessary to reflect back on what factors drive these criminal behaviors. Throughout history, there have been many theories that have tried to explain the causes of crime. The following section will discuss some of these theories and their responses to crime.

Causes of Crime

Theories on the causes of crime have focused on biological, social, and psychological factors and the theories and causes are reflective of the social context of the era. For example, during the Middle Ages, it was believed that criminal behavior was a result of demonic influences or demonic possession (Arrigo, 2014). It was during these times that faith and religion ruled many of the actions and beliefs of society. Individuals believed that by following the law, they were adhering to God's will, and if they succumbed to deviant behavior, they had weak faith (Arrigo, 2014). Thus, if an individual deviated from the law, the church would step in, claiming that the individual ought to be cleansed of their evil spirits. Oftentimes, religious leaders would perform exorcisms to cleanse the individual of their demonic influences, but if the exorcism was deemed unsuccessful, then death was the only option. While individuals were given the option to prove their innocence, many of the trial options, such as trial by fire, water, or battle, resulted in death (Arrigo, 2014). The theory behind these types of trials was that God would not let an innocent being lose. The trials themselves were often too difficult for any being, guilty or not, to survive. Thus, still resulting in death. The death sentence reassured the community that the demonic spirit would not harm or infect the rest of the community (Arrigo, 2014).

This method of correcting criminal behavior was soon replaced by a more rehabilitative approach during the progressive era. The progressive era focused on reformation. This was a time when rehabilitation replaced the old ways of retributive punishment. During this time, it was believed that criminal behavior could be "cured." This provided a glimpse at the possible hope of rehabilitation for the offender

This approach did not last long, as there was a shift to a focus on incapacitation during the "Get Tough" era. It was during this time that prisons made living conditions and punishments "tough," and many believed that there was not a "cure" for criminals. Also within this era was the promotion of punishment and the rejection of rehabilitation. The theory was that it was impossible to "cure" a criminal, but if the punishment was swift, certain, and severe enough, then it would deter others from pursuing such behaviors (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). It was during this time that Boot camps and Scared Straight programs emerged.

Although the "Get Tough" era had its misunderstandings for rehabilitation, not all of the concepts from this era were disregarded. The role of punishment does play a factor in recidivism. According to Andrews and Bonta (2010a), in order for punishment to "work," it must be at the maximum intensity, immediate, consistent, and certain, which is similar to Beccaria's theory of punishment. While these concepts address the requirements needed for punishment to suppress criminal behaviors, they do not consider the individual factors of each person and how those interact with the punishment (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a).

The "Get Tough" movement addressed the purpose and extent of punishment on deterrence and recidivism; however, it neglected to address personal factors. The factors relating to the individual became a focus in the "what works" transition. During this time, rehabilitation

was viewed as a possible tool to reduce recidivism by targeting individuals' needs. Specifically, in order to reduce recidivism, programming needed to be matched to an offender's risk of offending, criminogenic needs, and their responsivity issues (Gendreau et al., 2004).

Current Causes of Crime

While there are many theories on the causes of crime, research has identified a major set of risk factors/predictors of crime. These risk factors include antisocial personality, antisocial cognition, antisocial associates, history of antisocial behavior, family, education/ employment, leisure, and substance abuse (Andrews et al., 2006). These eight risk factors are referred to as the "Central Eight." These factors are further broken down into the "Big Four," which includes the individual's antisocial cognition/ attitudes, antisocial associates, antisocial personality, and their history of antisocial behavior (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). These four factors are some of the strongest predictors of criminal behaviors.

Antisocial cognitions are an individual's antisocial thoughts and attitudes (Walters, 1990). These thoughts incorporate values that support criminal behavior, such as negative attitudes toward the law, and the justification or rationalization that crime will yield rewards (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a; Grieger & Hosser, 2014). The antisocial associates factor focuses on the offender's peers and their influence on the individual. Sutherland (1947) believed that time spent with deviant peers provided opportunities for criminal behaviors by providing the techniques, motives, and reinforcements for crime (Wooditch et al., 2014). The antisocial personality factor may include individuals who have low self-control, are adventurous, pleasure seeking, restlessly aggressive, and have a disregard for others (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a; Andrews et al., 2006). These individuals may also be considered spiteful, impulsive, and antagonistic (Andrews &

Bonta, 2010b). Lastly, is the history of antisocial behavior factor. This factor addresses the individual's criminal history. Andrews and Bonta (2010b) concluded that some indicators that highlight a history of antisocial behavior considered whether the individual had been arrested at a young age, their number of prior offenses, and if they obtained any violations while on conditional release.

The remaining four factors are referred to as the "Moderate Four." These factors include the individual's family and marital circumstances, educational and vocational factors, leisure and recreational factors, and substance abuse (Jonson & Cullen, 2015). An individual's relationship with their family/ spouse has proven to affect criminal offending patterns. In fact, Cobbina et al. (2012) noted that individuals that had strong family ties were associated with a decline in criminal behavior. Educational and employment involvement/ performance also showed correlation with offending patterns. Andrews and Bonta (2010b) indicated that this risk/need factor correlated low levels of performance and involvement in the school or work environment with offending. Leisure as a risk/need factor addresses what an offender does during their free time. This will include any leisurely or recreational activities. Wooditch et al. (2014) in their report, relates this factor to the old saying that "Idle time makes idle hands." This saying suggests that free time allows for more time with interaction with antisocial peers, causing individuals to replace prosocial behavior with antisocial behavior. Lastly is the is the substance abuse factor. Andrews and Bonta (2010b) note that individuals that are currently struggling with substance abuse are higher risks compared to individuals that only have a history of substance abuse. Additionally, the prevalence of drug and alcohol use is approximately four times higher for offenders compared to the general population (Wooditch et al., 2014).

These eight factors are unique to the individual and are used in many cases to predict criminal behavior. Again, the “Major Four” are the stronger predictors, but the “Moderate Four” are also important predictors to consider. It is important for these factors to be considered when determining the risk for an individual to commit a crime.

Planning for Treatment

The criminogenic needs are the dynamic risk factors that are unique to the individual. These factors can either increase or decrease the likelihood of certain offending patterns. It is highly important to consider these individual factors in addition to the individual's criminal history when considering offending patterns. By evaluating these components, it can help explain why the individual committed the crime, their likelihood of committing a crime again, and what intervention can be applied to help deter them from recidivating. By recognizing the individual's needs and risks, it helps establish a tailored plan for that individual regarding their transition back into society. One of the most common ways to assess these needs and risks in order to plan out the best method needed for a successful transition back into society is by utilizing the risk-need-responsivity model. The goal of this model is to improve treatment for offenders and reduce recidivism by targeting the basic principles of risk, need, and responsivity (Andrews & Bonta, 2010b; Viglione, 2018).

Ready for Reentry

The risk-need-responsivity model is often used as a tool to understand the factors that contributed to the individual's causes of crime, as well as the factors and risks that could promote similar criminal behaviors. These principles together help build an understanding for offender

rehabilitation. The goal of this model is to understand these criminogenic needs in order to form an efficient plan of action that has the greatest potential of success for that individual specifically. This model evaluates the risk level of the offender, identifies their criminogenic needs, and the best form of treatment for that individual.

There are three principles to this model. The first is the risk principle. According to Andrews and Bonta (2010a), this principle speaks to "who" should be treated. Through risk screenings and assessments, the offender's risk of reoffending can be measured and used to determine the most effective form of intervention for that individual. These risk assessments target the offender's static and dynamic factors. While some argue that static factors provide enough information for evaluating the risk level of the offender, Andrews et al. (2006) and Hanson and Morton-Bourgon (2009) found evidence that evaluating both types of factors improve the risk evaluation. The static factors are those that cannot be changed, such as criminal history. Dynamic factors are attributes that can be changed. These include antisocial personalities, antisocial cognitions, antisocial associates, family/marital relationships, education/employment, leisure, and substance abuse (Andrews & Bonta, 2010b). Once the individual's probability of recidivism is determined, treatment should be applied. Specifically, the higher risk offenders should receive the most intensive treatment (Sperber et al., 2013). The higher risk offenders should receive greater benefits from treatment, but only if given at the proper dosage.

Proper dosage will vary for each type of offender, whether they be high, moderate, or low risk offenders. Research has indicated that correctional interventions have been more successful among the moderate and high-risk offenders (Brusman-Lovins et al., 2007; Lowenkamp &

Latessa, 2004; Lowenkamp et al., 2006; Sperber et al., 2013). Knowing which offenders to target is half the battle. The other component refers back to the proper dosage of treatment. Research from Simpson et al. (1997) and Zerger (2002) suggests that the longer an individual is in treatment, the great the effect will be; however, too much treatment causes success rates to fall (Sperber et al., 2013). With that in mind, it causes researchers to question the right amount of balance for the different risks of offenders.

In efforts to expand on the proper amount of dosage, Bourgon and Armstrong (2005) conducted a study where 620 incarcerated adult males were studied in efforts to establish the adequate number of treatment hours needed to reduce recidivism for inmates at different risk levels. Their findings concluded that 100 hours of treatment was sufficient at reducing recidivism for moderate risk offenders with few needs, 200 hours of treatment for high-risk offenders with few needs or moderate risk offenders with multiple needs (Sperber et al., 2013). Sperber and colleagues (2013) also built on these findings in their study. Their findings were consistent with Bourgon and Armstrong; however, they added that dosage levels over 200 hours reduced recidivism in high-risk offenders and dosages over 100 hours were effective for moderate and low risk inmates (Sperber et al., 2013).

While the risk principle answers the question of "who," the need principle answers the question "what" by distinguishing between the criminogenic and noncriminogenic needs (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). The criminogenic needs are the eight risk factors previously discussed. These include antisocial personalities, antisocial cognitions, antisocial associates, history of antisocial behavior, family/marital relationships, education/employment, leisure, and substance abuse. These factors are the strongest predictors of offending (Viglione, 2018). Seven

of the risk factors are referred to as dynamic because they can change (Andrews & Bonta, 2010b). History of antisocial behavior is considered a static factor because it cannot change. The noncriminogenic needs may also be considered dynamic factors, but they are weaker predictors of recidivism (Andrews & Bonta, 2010b). These noncriminogenic needs include low self-esteem, mental disorders, physical health issues, and feelings of personal distress (Bonta & Andrews, 2007).

With these factors in mind, it can be noted that the high-risk offenders would be expected to express antisocial attitudes, peers, personalities, or have a long criminal history, substance abuse problems, poor family relations, and would most likely be unemployed (Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004). The low-risk offenders are the opposite. Low-risk offenders are expected to have better jobs, relationships with their families, have prosocial peers and attitudes, limited criminal history, and few if any substance abuse problems (Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004)

By addressing and meeting the individual's needs, it can affect criminal behavior. If the needs are met, the chances for criminal behavior are reduced. It is essential to identify the needs in order to promote the proper treatment for that individual. For this task, an actuarial risk instrument is preferred (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a).

The final principle in this model is the responsivity principle, which addresses "how" to reduce recidivism through intervention that matches the offenders learning style and abilities (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a; Andrews et al., 2011). Under this principle, there are two categories of responsivity, which are general and specific. General responsivity focuses on the therapeutic relationship and cognitive behavioral intervention necessary for an effective treatment (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). Methods for general responsivity may include role playing, modification of

thoughts and emotions through cognitive restructuring, and practicing de-escalation of certain situations (Andrews & Bonta, 2010b).

Specific responsivity focuses more on the individual's strengths, motivations, learning style, learning abilities, personalities, mental status, and bio-demographics (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a; Andrews et al., 2011). The goal for this type of responsivity is to match the treatment to the individual based on these factors. This, in turn, establishes a more effective treatment for the individual.

Reentry Programs

It is important to build off the final principle in the risk-need-responsivity model. This is the intervention/ treatment part of the model. It is at this point that the value of reentry programs emerges. Studying and acknowledging the reentry programs is essential because studies have shown that individuals who participate in a reentry program are less likely to recidivate. For example, the National Institute of Justice highlighted a meta-analysis study by Ndrecka (2014) that analyzed 53 eligible studies that evaluated reentry programs. From this study, conclusions reveal a significant difference in recidivism rates among offenders who participated in reentry programs than those who did not.

There are numerous types of reentry programs available to offenders. There are programs that are specifically built for juvenile offenders, women offenders, male offenders, as well as other general adult offenders. The reentry program itself will differ in the types of treatment and services offered and the type of offender it serves. Common types of reentry programs are probation/ parole, residential programs, substance abuse programs, halfway house programs, and

work release programs. The ultimate goal for a reentry program is to prepare and assist the offender for a smooth, successful transition back into society. By doing so, the hope is that the offender will not recidivate because the program has prepared them for this transition. That being said, there is much debate on which type of reentry program is most effective in preparing the offender for this transition.

As previously stated, there are numerous types of reentry programs, but the most effective are behavioral programs (Latessa & Holsinger, 2011). There are various types of behavioral programs that focus on changing the offender's attitudes, values, and skills. These types of programs are beneficial for developing problem-solving and self-control skills, while also enforcing changed behavior (Latessa & Holsinger, 2011).

An additional quality that has been found among effective programs is their use of the risk-need-responsivity model. Jonson and Cullen (2015) found that programs that adhere to the risk-need-responsivity model tend to be more effective. Being able to alter the treatment plan based on the individual's needs and risk factors provides for a more promising outcome due to the individuality of this approach.

Reentry Programs in Jails and Prisons

A majority of the available research focuses on prison reentry programs. There are many factors that can explain this predicament. For example, it is difficult to enforce and measure reentry programs in jails because the individuals usually have short sentences. Since many individuals filter in and out of the jail system because of their short stay, it would be difficult to enforce a successful reentry program. However, those in the prison system have more time

available to go through a reentry program. Thus, making this population more applicable for reentry program studies. That being said, this explains why the data and literature available regarding the jail population is limited, thus supporting the need for this current study.

Prison Reentry Programs

There are many different types of reentry programs implemented throughout prison systems. Again, the common goal is to prepare the offender for life outside of incarceration. The means of doing so varies from program to program. In a study by Seiter and Kadela (2003), 32 different studies were evaluated regarding various prison reentry program evaluations. Within their study, they reviewed work and vocational programs, drug rehabilitation programs, education programs, programs specifically for sex offenders and violent offenders, halfway house programs, and prison prerelease programs. The work and vocational programs showed positive results for reducing recidivism rates and also improved the offenders' job readiness (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). As for the drug rehabilitation programs, graduates from these types of programs were said to be "less likely" to recidivate compared to offenders who did not go through a drug program. Seiter and Kadela (2003) found that educational programs did not decrease recidivism. There was not a significant difference in recidivism rates of the offenders that completed the program for sex offenders or violent offenders either, but researchers did note that the individuals that completed the cognitive behavioral therapy as part of this program reduced their return-to-custody rate by 11% (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). As for the hallway houses and the prerelease programs, Seiter and Kadela (2003) concluded that the halfway houses work for easing the transition of incarceration to freedom. Additionally, the prerelease programs were noted to be effective at reducing recidivism rate among ex-offenders.

Similarly to the previous study, Sherman et al. (1998) evaluated various prison programs to determine "what works, what doesn't, and what's promising." This study is unique in the way that it looks at crime prevention programs in communities, schools, families, labor markets, as well as programs enforced by the police and by criminal justice agencies. Regarding prison programs, Sherman et al. (1998) found that the rehabilitation programs that based treatment on offender risk factors were successful at reducing repeat offending rates. Additionally, the drug treatment in therapeutic community programs was found to reduce repeat offending (Sherman et al., 1998). Correctional boot camps, shock probation, electronic monitoring devices, "scared straight" programs, and rehabilitation programs that did not focus on offender risk factors, were found to be unsuccessful at reducing recidivism rates. Prison-based vocational educational programs for adult inmates proved to reduce offending patterns, but it was deemed unclear as to which type of vocational and education program had the greatest impact (Sherman et al., 1998).

Jail Reentry Programs

It should be recognized that transitioning from incarceration to civilization is a challenge for any individual released from prison or jail. Both populations have to face challenges of employment, housing, finances, substance abuse, mental health, and overall readjustment to life outside of incarceration. While there are programs available to help make the transition smoother, they are not offered equally among the prison and jail populations. The prison reentry programs are far more extensive than those offered to the jail population.

Jail reentry programs are not as diverse or as well-funded as those on the prison level. Oftentimes, the types of programs that jails offer are limited. In the most recent census of jails conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the various jail services and programs were

measured. Of the jails surveyed, 25% offered basic adult education programs, 7% offered vocational training, 62% offered alcohol programs, 55% offered drug programs, 22% offered life skills training, and 12% offered parenting training (Stephen, 2001).

Vocational training is one of the most neglected programs. This is unfortunate being that finding work and paying off fines is one of the most challenging tasks for an ex-offender. Many offenders lack the proper education and job training needed to obtain a job once they are released. According to Solomon et al. (2008), 14% of jail inmates participate in educational programs compared to the 52% of state prisoners, and less than 5% of jail inmates participate in vocational programs compared to one-third of prison inmates.

It is difficult to say which type of reentry program works best for the jail population because each jail and their population is different. The jails scattered throughout the communities have their different resources, needs, and populations (Solomon et al., 2008). As a whole, it is difficult to promote an effective reentry program in a jail. Jail inmates have shorter sentences, which makes it difficult to find the time to assess the individual's risks, needs, and implement an effective form of treatment for them. While there is limited research on the effectiveness of jail reentry programs, the hope is for this study to contribute by measuring the effectiveness of a work release program in a local jail.

The Current Study

The current study seeks to add to the limited research of jail reentry programs. The goal of this study is to analyze and evaluate a local jail reentry program known as "Correctional Career Pathways: A Journey to Hope." This program began in a small county in East Tennessee

in 2015. Like most jails, local municipalities are the sole source of funding behind these detention facilities. Services for inmates are limited due to cost. Smaller communities simply cannot afford the luxuries of much needed services for inmates. Money returned to the county collected from fines, fees and restitution bring opportunities and resources to the jail that would otherwise not be available.

This program started in Greene County but is replicated in two other counties in Tennessee. The purpose of this program is to combine education, training, work experience, and soft skills to prepare inmates for life outside of incarceration. This program helps inmates get a high school equivalency diploma, a 40- hour certification, and paid work experience, all while incarcerated. The jobs that inmates obtain while in this program are with a large industry in Greene County. Upon release, they maintain that job and benefits. A participation fee of one hundred dollars per week is set aside to pay off court fees, fines, and restitution. Inmates control the remaining wages in a separate bank account, which they can access through a debit card.

Inmates that complete this program have decreased or eliminated debts, a bank account with the money they earned, a job, a diploma, and soft skills needed to navigate successfully through reentry. While it seems that this program prepares the individual with the means to successfully transition back into society, the program's effectiveness has yet to be studied. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to evaluate the Correctional Career Pathways program's effectiveness. In order to do so, this study will focus on the following research questions:

R_1: What are the characteristics of those in the treatment group (inmates who participate in the Correctional Career Pathways program) and the control group (those who do not participate)?

R_2: What if any differences exist between the treatment and the control group?

R_3: What factors predict successful completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program?

R_4: Does participation in the Correctional Career Pathways result in lower rates of recidivism?

R_5: What factors predict successful reintegration into the community?

Chapter Summary

Before diving into the specifics of jail reentry programs, it was necessary to build a foundational understanding of literature available on reentry programs. This chapter provides a brief history on jails, prisons, punishment, and the causes of crime. The chapter then focusses on the importance of addressing individual risk factors and criminogenic needs in order to prevent criminal behavior. These concepts are applied in the risk-need-responsivity model that is implemented in effective reentry programs. While there is extensive literature available on effective prison reentry programs, the research on jail reentry programs is limited because funding is limited to house such needed programs on the local level. Thus, justifying the need for this current study, which seeks to evaluate a local jail reentry program by addressing the previously mentioned research questions. The following chapter will discuss the methods for conducting this current study.

Chapter 3. Methodology

Previous research has shown that employment and education-related correctional programs lead to a statistically significant reduction in recidivism rates (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). While the majority of the available studies focus on prison reentry programs, little is known about the effectiveness of jail reentry programs. While these institutions serve similar purposes, their populations differ as jail inmates usually spend less time incarcerated compared to the prison inmates. Limited research is available on the effectiveness of jail reentry programs. Therefore, this study sought to evaluate a prerelease reentry program operated in a rural county jail to determine if participation resulted in lower recidivism rates.

This chapter will begin by discussing the main research question of this study, as well as the accompanying hypotheses. The research design will then be addressed, specifically examining the procedures for collecting data and the types of measurements used. Following this section, the chapter will explain the type of statistical analyses used to evaluate the reentry program's effectiveness on recidivism. Finally, the chapter will end by addressing the specific limitations of the current study.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

This current study sought to examine if participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program reduced recidivism by answering the following questions:

R_1: What are the characteristics of those in the treatment group (inmates who participate in the Correctional Career Pathways program) and the control group (those who do not participate)?

R_2: What if any differences exist between the treatment and the control group?

R_3: What factors predict successful completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program?

R_4: Does participation in the Correctional Career Pathways result in lower rates of recidivism?

R_5: What factors predict successful reintegration into the community?

Based on these research questions the following hypotheses will be tested:

- Hypothesis1: There are no significant differences between the treatment group and the control group.
- Hypothesis 2: Number of class hours and employment will be significant predictors of successful completion of the program.
- Hypothesis 3: There is a relationship between the highest education level obtained among the inmates in the Correctional Career Pathways program and recidivism.
- Hypothesis 4: Participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program will result in lower rates of recidivism.
- Hypothesis 5: Participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program will predict successful reintegration into the community.

Research Design

Since random assignment to the treatment group and the control group is not possible, a quasi-experimental design was used to estimate the effectiveness of the jail reentry program. To minimize the potential for differences between groups, which could possibly affect outcomes, the control group cases were matched by gender, race, age, criminal history, and length of stay in the facility. Since previous research has shown differences in rates of offending based on demographic variables, gender, race and age were chosen as criteria for matching. In addition,

criminal history was chosen as research has shown that previous behavior is one of the best predictors of recidivism (Andrews et al., 1990).

Procedures for Collecting Data

The data for this study was provided by the Green County Jail inmate database. Once an inmate is placed in the county jail, they are processed through the intake booking process at which point demographic information and criminal history is collected. The database also captures program data (programs and classes' start and end dates), work history, disciplinary data and recidivism data (new arrests). These data were provided for the current study to complete the evaluation. This data was used to create the control and treatment group needed to evaluate the Correctional Career Pathways program effectiveness through a match design process.

The treatment group included inmates that had participated in the Correctional Career Pathways program. The individuals who had participated in the Correctional Career Pathways program was obtained from the jail administrator. The inmate's demographics and criminal history were then pulled from the inmate database in order to create the data for the treatment group. In addition to this information, the jail administrator also provided the data specific to the inmate's program progress (how many hours they have completed).

Once the data for the treatment group were collected, the control group was formed. The control group was constructed by matching similar characteristics to the individuals in the treatment group. Specifically, the control group of inmates was matched based on gender, race, age, current offense, and length of stay in the jail.

Treatment Group

Inmates in the treatment group were selected for participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program by the jail administration staff. Eligibility criteria for entry into the program

include nonviolent charges with minimal charges, ability to work within the facility, no behavioral infractions, and must not be awaiting sentencing in another county. If the inmate meets these requirements, their application is processed by the jail administrator. The jail administrator then evaluates their charge(s) and time left to serve. If applicable, the jail administrator will then meet with the jail work crew coordinator to reference previous work behaviors while incarcerated. If approved by both, the individual is enrolled in the program.

The goal of the Career Correctional Pathway Program is to help offenders break the cycle of recidivism and promote a successful transition back into society and the workforce. This program offers classes, job placement, mental health and substance abuse counseling, as well as transportation to work for qualified inmates. Once selected for participation in the program, the inmates take a basic skills assessment that measures basic reading and math skills. After the skills test, the inmates start the "Makin It Work" curriculum, which is a 40-hour certification. This curriculum offers four modules that are designed to focus on soft skills training. The goal of the curriculum is to prepare the offender for reentry into the community and provide them with skills they would need for successful employment. The curriculum, created by Steve Parese (2021) has three main learning objectives, which are:

1. Understand how one's thoughts and views have justified illegal behaviors in the past.
2. Gain new understandings for employer expectations in the workplace, and mentally change one’s outlooks to be more successful in the work environment.
3. Improve interpersonal skills needed to manage difficult workplace situations.

After the completion of the "Makin' It Work" curriculum, the inmate begins working with a local manufacturing industry. If no conflicts arise, the inmate may keep the job even after they are

released. The treatment group for this study consisted of 171 inmates that had participated in the Correctional Career Pathways program since 2015.

Control Group

The control group for this study was created to compare the treatment group to a comparable group of inmates that did not receive programming. The goal was to create a control group of inmates that shared similar demographics as well as similar criminal histories to those in the treatment group. Inmates were matched according to their gender, age, race, and current offense type in efforts to mirror the type of inmates in the treatment group. By using a matched design, it allowed for the study to avoid significant findings that could have resulted from these underlying characteristic differences. A total of 171 inmates were selected for the control group.

Description of the Measures

The characteristics used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Correctional Career Pathways program effectiveness included the inmate's demographic characteristics (gender, age, race, education level), criminal history (current offense, length of current offense sentence, number of prior arrests), program characteristics (program completion, how many hours of classwork have they completed), termination data, and recidivism data. Information regarding demographics and criminal history was obtained from the jail's inmate intake database. Information for the inmate's program progression was collected from the jail administrator. Recidivism data were also collected from the jail's inmate intake database. Recidivism was noted if the inmate had been rearrested after their release. For the inmates in the treatment group, recidivism was noted after the completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program.

Demographic Variables

The inmate's *age* was assessed at intake into the jail. This variable was defined as the number of years from birth to entry into the facility. The inmate's *gender* was operationalized as female (coded as 0) or male (coded as 1). The options for the *race* variable included White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or other. For the purpose of this study, the race variable was dichotomized into White (coded as 0) or Non-white (coded as 1) due to the limited number of inmates in certain racial categories. *Educational level* was measured by examining the highest level of education that the inmate had obtained upon entry into the facility. For the purpose of this study, the education variable was dichotomized into less than a high-school degree (coded as 0) or high- school degree and above (coded as 1).

Criminal History

The following factors were considered for the inmate's criminal history: current offense, length of current sentence, and number of prior arrests. The inmate's *current offense* was measured and coded as follows: (1) violent offense, (2) drug offense, (3) property offense, (4) public order offense, and (5) other. The *length of current sentence* was measured as total number of months the inmate was sentenced by the court. The *number of prior arrests* was measured by counting the number of times the inmate had been arrested in their lifetime before receiving their current offense.

Program Characteristics

Variables that related specifically to the reentry program included the following: length of time in the program, program completion, and the number of class hours completed within the program. *Length of Time in Program* was measured in the number of days the inmate spent in the Correctional Career Pathways program. This variable was created by examining the entry and

exit dates. *Program Completion* was coded as either successful completion or unsuccessful completion.

Outcome Variables

Recidivism

The outcome variable for this study was recidivism. Recidivism was measured based on whether the inmate was rearrested or not. This variable was measured as either new arrest or no new arrests.

Statistical Analysis

To adequately address the various research questions, several statistical tests were performed. First, frequency distributions were conducted to describe the treatment and control groups: gender, age, race, and educational level upon intake. Frequency distributions were computed to obtain a clear picture of the same by reporting measures of central tendency and dispersion for each inmate.

Chi-square and t-tests were conducted to examine the differences between treatment and control groups. Chi-square analyses were used to test for differences between the groups on the following variables: race, gender, highest grade completed, and offense type. Chi-square tests were used because these data are categorical.

Independent samples t-tests were computed to test for significant differences between the treatment and control groups on the following characteristics: age and length of sentence in the facility. The independent samples t-test procedure compares means for two groups of cases. Specifically, the analysis reports any statistically significant differences between the means of the groups.

The last set of statistical analyses that were conducted is logistical regression. Logistic regression measures the effects of multiple predictors on a dichotomous dependent variable. The purpose of the logistic regression is two-fold. First, the analysis reveals significant predictors of the outcome variable while holding all other variables constant. Second, logistic regression calculates beta coefficients, which can be converted into log-odds probabilities. Accordingly, the logistic regression models identified the significant predictors of successful completion of treatment.

Limitations

One of the major limitations of this study was the methods for measuring recidivism. This study measured recidivism based on the reported rearrests to this specific jail. Upon their release, the inmates were not followed or monitored. It is possible that they were rearrested in a different county or state. Therefore, there is a possibility that the current study does not capture all data regarding outcomes.

An additional limitation is the lack of random selection for the treatment and control group. Random selection is usually preferred because it allows the researcher to generalize the findings to the larger population of offenders.

One final limitation was the matched design used to create the control group. Since random assignment into the treatment and control group was not an option for this study, the control group had to be constructed using a matched method. While this may be beneficial for creating similar groups, it is possible differences in outcomes between the two groups may be due to individual characteristics.

Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to explain the methodology used to address the study's main research question and the accompanying hypotheses. This study aims to evaluate the Correctional Career Pathways program's effectiveness in reducing recidivism. In order to measure the program's effectiveness, a control and treatment group were created. Various statistical analyses were conducted utilizing variables regarding inmate demographics, such as age, gender, race, and education. In addition, the following criminal history variables were analyzed: current offense, length of current sentence, and number of prior arrests. Variables related specifically to the Correctional Career Pathways program were also measured, including whether or not the inmate completed the program, and the total hours of classes completed. Finally, these variables were compared to the recidivism variable that was measured by whether the inmate was rearrested or not. Results and findings from this chapter will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 4. Results

Introduction

This study sought to evaluate a prerelease reentry program in a rural county in East Tennessee to determine if participation in this program resulted in lower recidivism rates. To evaluate this program, five research questions were constructed. The five research questions included: 1) *What are the characteristics of those in the treatment group (inmates who participate in the Correctional Career Pathways program) and the control group (those who do not participate)?* 2) *What if any differences exist between the treatment and the control group?* 3) *What factors predict successful completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program?* 4) *Does participation in the Correctional Career Pathways result in lower rates of recidivism?* 5) *What factors predict successful reintegration into the community?* To accompany these research questions, five hypotheses were presented. The five hypotheses included: 1) *There are no significant differences between the treatment group and the control group*; 2) *The number of class hours and employment will be significant predictors of successful completion of the program*; 3) *There is a relationship between the highest education level obtained among the inmates in the Correctional Career Pathways program and recidivism*; 4) *Participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program will result in lower rates of recidivism*; 5) *Participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program will predict successful reintegration into the community*. Statistical analyses were used to answer these research questions and hypotheses.

The previous chapter explained the data collection process for this study, the different variables, and the statistical analyses that would be used to answer the research questions. This chapter presented the statistical results from the analyses listed in the previous chapter. Frequency distribution analyses were conducted to describe the control and treatment groups.

Chi-square and independent sample t-test were also conducted to measure any significant differences between the two groups. The last statistical analysis used was logistical regression. This analysis helped identify significant predictors of recidivism.

Descriptive Statistics

Demographics

This study used a treatment and a control group to evaluate the Correctional Career Pathways program. Research question one sought to identify the characteristics of the treatment and control groups. Research question two sought to identify any differences between the treatment and control groups, as significant differences may impact the recidivism rates of the groups. To understand the two groups of inmates, frequency distributions were computed by analyzing gender, age, race, and highest education level completed. The treatment group was comprised of those who participated in the Correctional Center Pathways program between 2015 and 2020. The control group was comprised by matching key characteristics such as gender, race and age from a group of inmates in the county jail. Each group was composed of 171 inmates.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of both groups. Both groups had a majority of males (69.4%) and white inmates (94.7%). There were some slight differences in the ages of the inmates across groups. While the treatment group had approximately 13 percent of the inmates younger than the control group, the average age of the control group was slightly younger ($\bar{x}$ = 38.71 years) when compared to the treatment group ($\bar{x}$ =38.81 years). However, the difference was not statistically significant (p = .902). The highest level of education was obtained from the jail database. Approximately 32 percent of the treatment and control group did not have a high school diploma. However, the majority of both groups did complete high school

(55.6% treatment group and 58.5% control group). A chi-square test was conducted to determine if the two groups were statistically different. The results indicated that the differences were not statistically different (x^2 = .408; p = .816).

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristic	Treatment Group (N = 171)		Control Group (N = 171)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender:				
Male	111	64.9	111	64.9
Female	60	35.1	60	35.1
Race:				
White	162	94.7	162	97.7
Nonwhite	9	5.3	9	5.3
Age:				
25 or younger	3	1.8	0	0.0
26 – 29	18	10.5	7	4.1
30 – 39	71	41.5	98	57.3
40 – 49	63	36.8	51	39.8
50 – 59	14	8.2	14	8.2
60 or older	2	1.2	1	0.6
t = -.123; p = .902	$\bar{x}$ = 38.81		$\bar{x}$ = 38.71	
Highest Educational Level:				
Less than High School	56	32.7	54	31.6
High School Diploma	95	55.6	100	58.5
Some College	20	11.7	17	9.9
x^2 = .408; p = .816				

Criminal History

Table 2 shows the criminal history characteristics for both groups. These characteristics included current offenses, number of prior arrests, and length of sentence. A majority of the inmates in both groups fell into the "other" category for their current offense (66.1% treatment

group and 56.1% control group). Although these percentages differed between the groups, a chi-square test indicated that the differences were not statistically significant (x^2 = 4.762; p = .190).

The next factor analyzed was number of prior arrests. The two groups were slightly different in regard to number of prior arrests. When comparing the averages from each group, the treatment group had fewer prior arrests ($\bar{x}$ = 13.29) compared to the average number of prior arrests for the control group ($\bar{x}$ = 15.25). However, the difference was not statistically significant (t = 1.737; p = .083)

The last variable analyzed for criminal history was length of sentence. Both groups had a majority of inmates serve 3-6 months in the institution (31.0% treatment group and 41.5% control group). The average sentence length was longer in the treatment group ($\bar{x}$ = 315.29 days) compared to the treatment group ($\bar{x}$ = 223.57 days). A t-test was conducted to determine if the two groups were statistically different. The results indicated that the differences were statistically significant (t = -3.743; p = .000). Based on this difference, this data does not support the first hypothesis: *There are no significant differences between the treatment group and control group.*

Table 2
Criminal History of the Sample

Characteristic	Treatment Group (N = 171)		Control Group (N = 171)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Current Offense:				
Personal	13	7.6	12	7.0
Property	16	9.4	19	11.1
Drug	29	17.0	44	25.7
Other	113	66.1	96	56.1
x^2 = 4.762; p = .190				
Number of Prior Arrests:				
1 prior arrest	7	4.1	10	5.8
2 – 5 prior arrests	34	19.9	19	11.1
6 – 10 prior arrests	42	24.6	36	21.1
11 – 20 prior arrests	61	35.7	61	35.7
More than 20 prior arrests	27	15.8	45	26.3

t = 1.737; p = .083	$\bar{x}$ = 13.29		$\bar{x}$ = 15.25	
Length of Sentence:				
Less than 3 months	18	10.5	15	8.8
3 – 6 months	53	31.0	71	41.5
6 – 9 months	22	12.9	40	23.4
9 – 12 months	25	14.6	20	11.7
1 – 2 years	41	24.0	25	14.6
2 years or more	12	7.0	0	0.0
t = -3.743; p = .000	$\bar{x}$ = 315.29 days		$\bar{x}$ = 223.57 days	

Outcome Statistics

Recidivism

The fourth research question examined whether participation in the Correctional Career Pathway program resulted in lower rates of recidivism. To answer this question, the number of inmates that were rearrested for a new charge was recorded from each group (see Table 3). Of the 171 inmates in the treatment group, 62.4% recidivated. This group had a lower recidivism rate compared to the control group (71.9%). These results indicated that the inmates who completed the Correctional Career Pathways program recidivated less than those who did not complete the program, which supported the fourth hypothesis: *Participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program would result in lower rates of recidivism*. While these findings support the hypothesis, they were not statistically significant (x^2 = 3.545; p = .060).

Table 3

Recidivism by Group

Characteristic	Treatment Group (N = 171)		Control Group (N = 171)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Recidivated:				
Yes	106	62.4	123	71.9
No	64	37.6	48	28.1
x^2 = 3.545; p = .060				

The final research question for this thesis sought to identify predicting factors that would result in successful reintegration back into the community. The focus of this question addressed whether certain factors would reduce the probability of a new arrest. The entirety of this question could not be answered. However, factors that predict recidivism for the treatment and control group could be identified.

To determine if participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program resulted in a significant decrease in the probability of new arrest, a logistic regression model was computed. Six variables were entered into the equation: age, race, gender, highest level of education, number of prior arrests and group. There were only two variables that were statistically significant – age (beta= -.052; p=.004) and number of prior arrests (beta= 1.49; p=000). These results suggested that as age increases, the likelihood of recidivating decreases by approximately five percent (Exp(B)= .949). Therefore, race, gender, educational level, and group did not reach significance. Thus, participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program did not significantly reduce new arrests, which did not support the fifth hypothesis. Additionally, these results helped answer the third hypothesis regarding the relationship between education level and recidivism. There was not a significant relationship between education and recidivism; therefore, not supporting the third hypothesis.

Table 4

Regression Predicting Recidivism

Factor	Beta	Significance Level	Exp(B)
Age	-.052	.004	.949
Race	-.182	.757	.834
Gender	-.514	.064	.598
Highest Education Level	-.035	.734	.966

Number of Prior Arrests	.149	.000	1.160
Group	-.314	.233	.731
Constant	1.857		
-2 Log Likelihood	338.508		
Nagelkerke R^2	.302		

Results for Research Question Three

The third research question aimed to identify predicting factors for program completion. It was hypothesized that the number of class hours and employment would be significant predictors for successful program completion. This research question could not be answered, nor the hypothesis tested, due to the lack of data.

Chapter Summary

In efforts to evaluate the Correctional Career Pathway program's effect on recidivism, two groups of inmates were established using a match design. The first group contained inmates that had been through the Correctional Career Pathways program. The second group acted as a control group, which included inmates who had not been through the program. With these two groups in mind, a series of research questions were constructed to drive this study. The five research questions included: 1) *What are the characteristics of those in the treatment group (inmates who participate in the Correctional Career Pathways program) and the control group (those who do not participate?* 2) *What if any differences exist between the treatment and the control group?* 3) *What factors predict successful completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program?* 4) *Does participation in the Correctional Career Pathways result in lower rates of recidivism?* 5) *What factors predict successful reintegration into the community?*

In order to answer these questions, various statistical analyses were needed including frequency distributions, t-tests, chi- square, and logistical regression analyses. The results from

these analyses were discussed in this chapter. The first set of analyses created a general picture for the two groups using descriptive statistics and frequency distributions. Then, the results from the chi-square and t-tests were discussed to identify the differences between the treatment and control groups. Findings from these tests indicated length of sentence was the only statistically significant difference between the two groups. Additionally, recidivism rates of the two groups were compared. Inmates that that completed the Correctional Career Pathways program recidivated less than the control group, but this finding was not significant. The last part of the chapter discussed the results from the logistical regression analyses. These analyses identified age and number of prior arrests as significant predicting factors for recidivism. The next chapter will elaborate on these findings, limitations to this study, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate a prerelease program in a rural county in East Tennessee to determine if participation in this program resulted in lower rates of recidivism. This program utilized education and employment opportunities in efforts to prepare inmates for successful reintegration back into their community. Previous research has shown that employment and education-related correctional programs lead to a statistically significant reduction in recidivism rates (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). While a majority of the existing research focuses on the prison population, the goal for this study was to focus on a local jail population in order to expand on this area of research.

In order to evaluate the Correctional Career Pathways program's effect on recidivism, a set of research questions had to be constructed. These research questions included: 1) *What are the characteristics of those in the treatment group (inmates who participate in the Correctional Career Pathways program) and the control group (those who do not participate)?* 2) *What if any differences exist between the treatment and the control group?* 3) *What factors predict successful completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program?* 4) *Does participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program result in lower rates of recidivism?* 5) *What factors predict successful reintegration into the community?* To answer these questions, two groups of inmates were constructed. The treatment group contained 171 inmates that had completed or were currently enrolled in the reentry program. The control group contained 171 inmates that had not been through the program, but were matched on characteristics such as gender, race, age, criminal history, and length of stay in the facility. Once the two groups of inmates were established, the research questions were answered using frequency distributions, chi-square, t-tests, and logistical regression.

The previous chapter presented the results from the statistical analyses used to answer the research questions and their accompanying hypotheses. This chapter will further explain the results from the statistical analyses and their significance. In addition, this chapter will address the limitations to this study and provide suggestions for future research.

Summary of Findings

In order to evaluate the effects of the Correctional Career Pathways program on recidivism, a control group was needed. Random selection was not an option for this study due to the fact that the treatment group had already been selected by the facility and its administrators. Therefore, the best method for creating the control group was by matching the control group to the treatment group on certain characteristics such as gender, race, age, current offense, and length of stay in the facility.

Research Questions One and Two

The first two research questions addressed the characteristics of the two groups. Specifically, the first research question sought to identify the characteristics of the group, while the second research question sought to identify any significant differences between the groups. It was hypothesized that there would be no significant differences between the two groups. Based on the results from the frequency distributions, t-tests, and chi- square tests, the group were similar with only one variable differing significantly. The hypothesis was not supported because of the significant difference in the "length of sentence" variable. The remaining variables were not statistically different.

For demographic characteristics, both groups had mostly male inmates, mostly white inmates, and had the majority of inmates who had completed high school. The average age for the treatment group was 38.81, whereas the average age for the control group was 38.71.

Although there was a slight difference in the average age, results indicated that it was not a significant difference.

The remaining factors of current offense, number of prior arrests, and length of sentence all related to the inmates' criminal history. A majority of inmates in both groups fell into the "other" category for their current offense. The treatment group had fewer arrest, with an average of 13.29, compared to the average 15. 25 of the control group. This difference was not statistically significant. The only variable that was significantly different between the groups was length of sentence. Both groups had a majority of inmates serving between 3-6 months in the institution. The average sentence length for the treatment group was 315.29 days, which was more than the control group's average of 223.57 days. Even though one variable was significantly different, overall, the groups were very similar.

Research Question Three

The third research question focused on the predicting factors for successful completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program. As mentioned in the limitations section of this chapter, the entirety of this question could not be answered due a lack of variation in program completion. Nearly all of the inmates were reported as "completing" the program. Because of this, the predicting factors could not be analyzed.

Research Question Four

The fourth research question explained whether participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program resulted in lower rates of recidivism. It was hypothesized that participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program would result in lower rates of recidivism. Findings concluded that the treatment group did have lower recidivism rates (62.4%) compared to the treatment group (71.9%), but the difference was not significant.

One reason that this program did not significantly reduce recidivism rates could be due to the structure of the program. This program was not structured around the risk-need-responsivity model. Research by Jonson and Cullen (2015), Turner and Petersilia (2011), and Mears and Cochran (2014), has indicated that programs that adhere to the risk-need-responsivity model have shown effective results for reducing recidivism. These types of programs are more successful because they identify the risk factors of the inmates based on their criminogenic needs. Following this, the proper dosage of treatment is given to the inmate based on their risk level. Research by Sperber and colleagues (2013) has shown that 100 hours of treatment is sufficient at reducing recidivism for moderate risk offenders with few needs, and 200 hours of treatment for high-risk offenders with few needs or moderate risk offenders with multiple needs is effective (Sperber et al., 2013).

Inmates that participated in the Correctional Career Pathways program did not go through a risk assessment; therefore, their risk level could not be determined. Additionally, each inmate in the program received the same amount and intensity of treatment. The level of intervention was not matched to the inmate based on their risk level. If these factors had been considered, the program could have had a greater effect on recidivism rates.

An additional factor that could have affected recidivism rates is the type of program that was implemented. The Correctional Career Pathway program focusses on educational and vocational components. Although education and employment play moderate roles in preventing recidivism, they are not the strongest factors. In fact, when considering the central eight risk factors, education and vocational factors are part of the “moderate four” which have a weaker relationship with criminal behavior (Andrews et al., 2012; James, 2018). According to Andrews and Bonta (2010a), the strongest factors are the individual's antisocial cognition/personality,

antisocial attitudes, antisocial associates, antisocial personality, and their history of antisocial behavior. If the program was not targeting these factors, a significant effect would not be expected.

Research Question Five

The last research question aimed to identify factors that would predict successful reintegration into the community by examining whether participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program resulted in a significant decrease in the probability of a new arrest. It was hypothesized that participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program would predict successful reintegration back into the community. When the six variables of age, race, gender, highest level of education, number of prior arrests, and group were analyzed in a logistic regression model, the only variables that were statistically significant were age and number of prior arrests.

The results from this analysis suggest that as age increases, the likelihood of recidivating decreases. The United States Sentencing Commission (2017a) also found similar results in their study of 25,431 offenders. Over the eight-year follow-up period, roughly 13 percent of offenders 65 and older recidivated, compared to the 67.6 percent of offenders 21 years and under who recidivated within that time (The United States Sentencing Commission, 2017a). The Bureau of Justice Statistics published similar results in their 2021 report. Their study analyzed prisoner recidivism in 34 states with a follow-up period of five years. Their report indicated that 81 percent of inmates 24 or younger recidivated during the five years after their release,74 percent of prisoners 25 to 39 years old recidivated during that time, and 61 percent of those 40 years or older recidivated during that time (Durose & Antenangeli, 2021). These studies together all show similar patterns reflecting the influence that age can have on recidivism.

The second significant variable from the logistic regression was number of prior arrests. These results suggest that as the number of prior arrest increases, the likelihood of recidivism increases. It is not surprising that there was a significant correlation between recidivism and number of prior arrests since criminal history is one of the major predicting factors indicated in the central eight risk factors (Andrews et al., 2012). Additional studies by Kurlycheck, Brame, and Bushway (2006) and the United States Sentencing Commission (2017b), found support for using criminal history as a predictor of recidivism.

Even though age and number of prior arrests were found to be significant predictors, the other variables of race, gender, education level, and group did not reach significance. This result indicates that participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program did not significantly reduce new arrests. This finding did not support the fifth hypothesis *(Participation in the Correctional Career Pathways program will predict successful reintegration into the community).*

Implications

While this evaluation provides some information on the Correctional Career Pathways program's effect on recidivism, there are recommendations that could cause the program to have a greater effect. The first recommendation is to develop and utilize program completion criteria. By doing so, it would allow for a more accurate evaluation of the program's effects. This criterion may include the facility recording the number of hours spent in the program or the number of class hours each inmate completes. By collecting this information, it would allow researchers to analyze whether the number of hours in the program affects recidivism.

An additional recommendation for the program would be to incorporate a risk assessment. By recognizing the risk level and the criminogenic needs of each offender, it would

also allow for the facility to adjust the treatment dosage. As concluded by Andrews and Bonta (2010b), the offenders that are high risk should receive the most intense treatment based on their risks and needs. By incorporating this component, it would allow the program to have a greater impact.

With this in mind, it would also be beneficial for the program to incorporate a curriculum that focuses more on the criminogenic factors, specifically the "big four." These factors, which are antisocial cognition/ attitudes, antisocial associates, antisocial personalities, and criminal history are the most influential factors (Andrews & Bonta, 2010a). One curriculum that focuses on these needs for example is the "What Works Curriculum" by the Justice Research Center (2021). This curriculum is part of a correctional program assessment inventory. This curriculum first covers cognitive reconstruction, which addresses the feelings, attitudes, and beliefs that individuals have that lead them to criminal behaviors. Next, individuals learn methods to change their thinking and attitudes. The second portion of the curriculum focuses on social skills training. This portion reinforces the cognitive reconstruction by preparing the individuals for stressful conversations and teaching them how to respond, how to control their own feelings in conversations, and how to respond to others' feelings (The Justice Research Center, 2021). The final part of the curriculum focuses on problem solving. In this portion, individuals learn about the "conflict of cycle" and the six problem solving steps; which are: 1) stop and think; 2) describe the problem; 3) get information to set a goal; 4) consider choices and consequences; 5) chose a plan; 6) evaluate (The Justice Research Center, 2021).

Building on this concept, it would also be beneficial for the Correctional Career Pathways program to use a correctional program checklist. The University of Cincinnati developed this tool as a way to assess correctional intervention programs by assessing how well the program

meets principles of effective interventions (University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute, 2020). Not only does this tool measure the programs content and how well it meets the risk-need-responsivity principles, but it also measures whether the program has the capability to deliver evidence-based interventions based on evaluations of leadership and development, staff, and quality assurance (University of Cincinnati, 2008). This would be a useful tool for the program because it identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and provides recommendations needed to improve the program (University of Cincinnati, 2008).

Limitations

This study did provide additional research on a reentry program's effects on recidivism within a jail population. While this research did provide more information on this topic, there were limitations. First, there was limited individualized data on the program participants available. One of the individual characteristics that was not collected was the number of hours that each inmate spent enrolled in the program. Rather than obtaining the individual hours, nearly all of the inmates were reported as successfully completing the program. This can be problematic for a few reasons. The first reason being that it eliminated program completion variation. As a result, the effects of number of hours spent in the program could not be measured because the inmates all received the same number of hours. Without the variation there is no way to accurately measure the program's effects on recidivism based on this variable.

This limitation affects the third research question which sought to identify factors that predict successful completion of the Correctional Career Pathways program. It was hypothesized that program completion would reduce recidivism. Since most inmates completed the program there was no accurate way to test this hypothesis. In order to accurately test this hypothesis and research question, program completion criteria would need to be established.

Not collecting the number of hours also prohibits an accurate measurement of treatment dosage. As reported in research by Lowenkamp et al. (2006) and Lipsey et al. (2007), different offenders require different amounts of treatment based on their risk level; specifically, higher levels of treatment to the higher risk offenders. Research indicates that programs that accommodated for dosage were found to be more effective at reducing recidivism (Makarios et al., 2014). Sperber and colleagues (2013) concluded that dosage levels over 200 hours reduced recidivism in high-risk offenders and dosages over 100 hours were effective for moderate and low risk offenders.

In order to accommodate for dosage, the program would also need to identify the inmates risk level. Since risk level was not collected for each inmate, it can also be considered a limitation for the evaluation. Not identifying the inmates' risk level can be problematic when considering the proper amount of treatment each inmate requires. Research by Brusman-Lovins et al. (2007), Lowenkamp and Latessa (2004), and Sperber et al. (2013) have found that correctional intervention is more successful with the moderate and high-risk offenders. However, Sperber et al. (2013) also addressed the fact that too much treatment to the wrong type of offender can have negative effects. By identifying risk levels, the program can tailor the amount of treatment to the offenders in order to receive optimal results. Thus, stressing the importance of identifying the risk level of each offender.

Fortunately, there are numerous risk level assessments available to help facilities further their programs. Many of these assessments adhere to the risk-needs-responsivity model because it is the dominant model of offender treatment, and it has proven much success because the program intensity corresponded with offenders' risk level (James, 2018; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2004; Lowenkamp et al., 2006). By utilizing these risk assessments, it can allow for the proper

dosage of treatment to be given to the inmate based on their risk level in order to maximize their chances for desistance.

An additional limitation from this study was that the outcome data only applied on the county level. Recidivism was measured based on whether the individual returned to the county jail or not. This is a limitation because it is possible that upon release the individual could have been arrested in other neighboring counties. Thus, this data only applied to one specific county. This limiting factor could have impacted recidivism rates for both groups.

Lastly, the length of follow-up may have posed additional problems as a limitation. It could have been beneficial to know how long the offender had been out of jail before they recidivated. This information would help analyze the program's long-term effects. However, this information was not available at the time of this study. Rather, the information provided was solely on whether the offender recidivated or not. The time spent out of jail was not provided.

Future Research

The current research available on reentry programs mostly focuses on the prison population. While this study provided some research on a reentry program that utilized a jail population, further research on this population should be pursued. This study focused on a reentry program located in a rural county in East Tennessee. Future research should continue to expand upon the effectiveness of reentry programs in other rural counties. Additionally, future studies could expand on the effectiveness of reentry programs that adhere to the risk-need-responsivity principles since research has found support for these types of programs (Jonson & Cullen, 2015; Mears & Cochran, 2014; Turner & Petersilia, 2011). Lastly, it would be beneficial for future research to follow up on the Correctional Career Pathways program if any of the program recommendations are incorporated. This follow up would allow for researchers to have

a greater understanding for the program's effects on recidivism, especially if program completion criteria were established and more individualized data on the program's participants were provided.

Conclusion

This thesis sought to evaluate a prerelease reentry program that is implemented in a rural county jail in East Tennessee. The program focuses on job attainment, job retainment, payment of fines, fees, and restitution, and avoidance of reincarceration. This program offers educational classes, job placement, mental health and substance abuse counseling, as well as transportation to work for qualified inmates. The overarching question for this thesis was whether participation in this program resulted in lower recidivism rates. Results indicated that those in the treatment group had lower rates of recidivism compared to the control group, but it was not a significant difference. In order to have a significant impact on recidivism rates, it is suggested that the program focus on meeting the risk-need-responsivity principles. Meeting these principles would require the program to assess the inmates' criminogenic needs and risk levels and provide the proper amount and intensity of treatment based on their risk level. Currently the program does not have a risk assessment component, and each inmate receives the same amount/ intensity of treatment. If these components were changed, the program could have a greater impact on recidivism. Although this program did not significantly reduce recidivism rates, it did provide additional research on a reentry program serving the jail population in a rural county. Future research should continue to expand upon the effectiveness of reentry programs in rural counties.

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