The Role of Social Support Networks in Shaping Post-Prison Life

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Abstract

This study examines the role of social support networks in shaping the reintegration experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals. Focusing on emotional well-being, economic stability, and recidivism, the research explores how different types of support—emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal—impact these outcomes. Conducted in Angeles City, Pampanga, the study employs a quantitative descriptive survey design, using structured questionnaires to gather data from 122 participants released from incarceration within the past two years. Convenience and snowball sampling methods were utilized to identify participants who accessed social support during reintegration. Results highlight the availability and effectiveness of support systems, barriers faced, and the perceived success of reintegration programs. The study underscores the importance of family ties, peer networks, and community organizations in fostering successful reintegration while addressing gaps in resources and systemic challenges. These findings aim to guide policymakers, rehabilitation experts, and community leaders in designing evidence-based, inclusive reintegration strategies that reduce recidivism and promote social inclusion.

Keywords: *Social Support Networks; Post-Prison Reintegration; Emotional Well-Being; Recidivism; Rehabilitation Programs*

Introduction

Reintegrating formerly incarcerated individuals into society is a multifaceted process that encompasses legal, economic, social, and emotional dimensions. These individuals often face considerable challenges, including overcoming social stigma, securing stable employment, and rebuilding personal relationships, which can significantly undermine successful reintegration (Doleac, 2018). Despite existing interventions, many individuals struggle due to inadequate social support networks (Tharshini et al., 2018). Research underscores the critical role of support systems such as family, peers,

and community organizations in addressing these challenges (Larsen et al., 2022). However, there remains a gap in understanding how specific types of social support, emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal influence outcomes such as emotional well-being, economic stability, and recidivism reduction (Berghuis, 2018).

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of social support networks on the reintegration outcomes of formerly incarcerated individuals. Through analyzing the experiences of these individuals, this research aims to contribute to the development of policies that prioritize social support as a significant factor in reducing recidivism and fostering successful societal reintegration.

Incarceration often results in collateral consequences, including loss of livelihood, personal belongings, housing, and meaningful relationships, as well as exposure to adverse health conditions and psychological distress (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). The experience can also foster self-defeating habits and attitudes. Upon release, these individuals frequently face compounded difficulties, such as securing employment and reestablishing social connections. Prolonged imprisonment has been linked to mental health disorders, including symptoms of Post-Incarceration Syndrome, which mirrors PTSD (Quandt & Jones, 2021). Consequently, reintegration becomes a critical phase where the lasting effects of incarceration intersect with opportunities for renewal.

Globally, reintegration efforts are hampered by varying levels of support and resources across countries (Hall, 2023). Successful reintegration relies heavily on access to social support networks, employment opportunities, and mental health services (Terry & Townley, 2019). A lack of coordination among governmental and non-governmental organizations often results in high recidivism rates (Butler & Taylor, 2022; Nickerson, 2023). Research suggests that restorative justice and community-based programs are more effective in promoting social inclusion and reducing reoffending (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018).

In countries with efficient social welfare systems, such as Scandinavia, comprehensive reintegration programs significantly reduce recidivism by providing housing, education, and employment support (Riep, 2019). Conversely, nations with weaker social safety nets report higher reoffending rates, as former prisoners struggle with stigma and limited community acceptance (Gaines, Hardy, & Schweitzer, 2021). In the Philippines, forums organized by the Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation emphasize the need for comprehensive national and local government policies focused on holistic rehabilitation (Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation, 2018). Studies highlight the importance of factors such as family support, peer influence, state employment policies, and spirituality in successful reintegration among Filipino ex-offenders (Co, Estel, Portes, & Rondina, 2016).

Although the Philippine government has implemented programs through the Bureau of Corrections and the Department of Social Welfare and Development, these initiatives are often underfunded and lack the scope to address diverse needs. Community-based rehabilitation programs and partnerships with non-governmental organizations show promise but remain limited in scale and reach (Byers, 2020).

Given these challenges, this study emphasizes the significance of social support networks in shaping reintegration outcomes. By focusing on emotional well-being, recidivism reduction, and social inclusion, the research aims to provide actionable insights to guide the development of evidence-based, human-centered reintegration strategies.

The process of reintegration following incarceration is intricate and multidimensional, requiring a nuanced understanding of various contributing factors. Reintegration entails adopting new perspectives, adjusting social relationships, and developing behaviors that restore stability in one's life (Devia, 2024). It offers a pathway for individuals to rebuild their lives and transition smoothly back into society (Smith,

2021). Successful reintegration reduces recidivism by fostering belonging, stability, and purpose (Whitehouse & Fitzgerald, 2020). Challenges such as stigma, unemployment, and strained family relationships significantly hinder reintegration (Sakib, 2022; Kılıç & Tuysuz, 2024). Addressing these barriers through comprehensive support programs is critical to ensuring long-term reintegration success (Hyde et al., 2022).

Social support is integral to reintegration, providing emotional, social, and financial assistance essential for navigating post-incarceration challenges. Effective support from family, peers, and community organizations reduces recidivism and enhances overall well-being (Russell, 2023; Fahmy, 2021). Family support offers critical emotional and instrumental assistance, positively influencing reintegration outcomes (Mowen et al., 2019). Strong familial bonds enhance mental health, reduce stress, and deter recidivism (Fahmy & Wallace, 2019; Chouhy et al., 2020). Similarly, peer support fosters a sense of belonging and offers practical guidance, reducing feelings of isolation (Hinck et al., 2019; Bellamy et al., 2019). Programs emphasizing peer mentorship show promise in improving reintegration outcomes. Community organizations provide counseling, job training, and educational opportunities, addressing systemic barriers to reintegration (Christian, 2022). Collaborative efforts with government agencies enhance these programs' effectiveness.

Rehabilitation programs address root causes of criminal behavior, such as substance abuse and lack of vocational skills. Their holistic approach reduces recidivism and fosters long-term success (Sveinsdottir & Bond, 2020; Brown, 2024). Emotional support mitigates psychological challenges, enhancing mental health and reducing recidivism (Jolly et al., 2021). Providing guidance on housing, employment, and resources empowers individuals to navigate reintegration complexities (Arabyat & Raisch, 2019). Tangible aid, such as housing and financial assistance, is crucial for economic stability (Chouhy et al., 2020). Social connections reduce isolation and foster prosocial behaviors, contributing to long-term reintegration success (Ajmal & Arshad, 2024). Together, these forms of support create a robust network that helps individuals address immediate and long-term challenges, fostering resilience and reducing recidivism.

This study is grounded in key criminological theories that emphasize the role of social support, labeling, and life course dynamics in influencing reintegration outcomes for formerly incarcerated individuals. Labeling Theory, as articulated by Burt (2018), posits that societal labels, such as "ex-convict," can reinforce deviant identities, leading to stigma and social exclusion. This stigma often exacerbates recidivism by limiting access to employment and housing, which are critical for successful reintegration. The Life Course Perspective provides additional perception, pointing how pivotal life events, such as imprisonment and subsequent reentry into society, reshape individual trajectories. This perspective underscores the importance of social ties, especially family and community networks in mitigating recidivism and fostering rehabilitation.

On the other hand, Social Support Theory serves as the foundation for this study for providing a concrete framework to understand the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals into society. Developed through the works of Cassel (1976) and Cobb (1976), this theory posits that social relationships are important in mitigating stress and promoting mental and physical well-being (Wellman & Gulia, 2018). The theory identifies four key dimensions of social support: emotional support, which involves empathy and care; instrumental support, which addresses tangible needs such as housing and employment; informational support, which includes advice and guidance; and appraisal support, which provides feedback that reinforces self-esteem and decision-making. These dimensions collectively facilitate the resilience and stability required for successful reintegration.

In the context of reintegration, Social Support Theory underscores the vital role of social networks such as family, peers, and community organizations in addressing the socio-economic and

psychological challenges faced by ex-offenders. Cohen and Wills (1985) emphasize that such support systems are instrumental in fostering emotional well-being and enhancing coping mechanisms during stressful transitions. For formerly incarcerated individuals, these networks provide the psychological reassurance and practical resources necessary to establish stability and avoid recidivism. Studies affirm that strong family connections and community support significantly reduce the likelihood of reoffending by offering ex-offenders access to material aid, emotional reinforcement, and a sense of belonging (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Klyver, Honig, & Steffens, 2018).

Furthermore, social support is closely tied to the process of desistance, which refers to ceasing criminal behavior. Sampson and Laub (1993) assert that strong social bonds not only provide resources and emotional support but also foster cognitive transformation, encouraging positive behavioral change. For example, social support networks help ex-offenders overcome reentry challenges, such as securing employment and rebuilding personal relationships, thereby promoting a positive self-identity and reducing the likelihood of reoffending (Sampson & Laub, 1993). This idea is supported by Maruna (2001), who argues that a strong sense of belonging within supportive networks motivates individuals to desist from crime.

In addition to family and peer relationships, community organizations play a critical role in reintegration by addressing systemic barriers like housing and employment. Pleggenkuhle (2018) highlights that while families provide essential material support, their ability to foster successful reintegration depends on their socio-economic resources. Thus, integrated community interventions are necessary to supplement familial support and address broader societal challenges. Similarly, studies such as those by Fahmy (2021) emphasize that emotional and instrumental support significantly impact mental health outcomes, reinforcing the need for stable support systems during reentry.

Moreover, peer mentoring has proven to be transformative in reintegration efforts. Hector, J., Khey, Hector, and Khey (2018) found that peer-based interventions enhance coping mechanisms, self-esteem, and social connectedness, equipping ex-offenders with the tools to navigate reentry challenges effectively. These findings underscore the importance of integrating peer support into holistic reintegration programs that address not only individual needs but also societal stigmas and systemic inequalities.
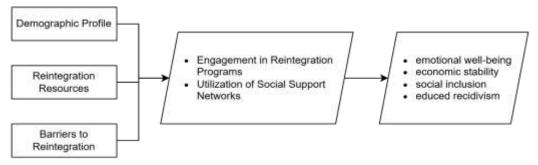

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework for this study on the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals centers on the interplay between social support networks, rehabilitation programs, and reintegration outcomes. This framework integrates theoretical perspectives and empirical insights derived from the literature, emphasizing key elements like demographic characteristics, resource availability, and major barriers to reintegration.

A. Demographic Profile

Understanding the demographic profile (age, gender, and education level) provides a foundation for analyzing variations in the experiences and reintegration success of formerly incarcerated individuals.

B. Availability of Reintegration Resources

Access to critical reintegration services, such as employment programs, housing, and counseling, serves as a significant determinant in stabilizing the reintegration process. These resources directly impact economic stability, emotional well-being, and social inclusion.

C. Barriers to Reintegration

Challenges like societal stigma, lack of vocational training, mental health issues, and discrimination in housing or employment are significant obstacles that must be addressed to improve reintegration outcomes.

D. Social Support Networks

This component assesses the availability and use of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support from family, peers, and community organizations. Strong social networks are hypothesized to mitigate the risk of recidivism and enhance well-being.

E. Perceived Success of Reintegration Programs

Evaluation of reintegration programs based on participant perceptions highlights the effectiveness of current interventions and identifies areas for improvement.

Methods

This chapter analyzes the design and methods that guided our study on exploring the role of social support networks in shaping the reintegration experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals. In this chapter, we discuss the research design and methodology, providing an overview of the measures and procedures involved in collecting and analyzing data.

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative research design with a descriptive survey methodology. Nardi (2018) highlighted that the descriptive survey design allows researchers to gather comprehensive amounts of data from diverse populations to analyze frequencies and identify patterns in responses. The design was chosen to quantify relationships between variables, such as the role of social support networks and the reintegration outcomes of formerly incarcerated individuals. The descriptive survey design allowed for the collection of measurable data regarding the availability and adequacy of social support, barriers to reintegration, and outcomes such as emotional well-being, economic stability, and the risk of recidivism. Using this design ensured a structured approach to collecting large amounts of data from a sample population, which was analyzed to draw generalized conclusions relevant to similar populations.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in Angeles City, Pampanga, a first-class, highly urbanized city located in Central Luzon, Philippines, with an estimated population of 584,962 (World Population Review, 2024). This city offered a relevant context for investigating the reintegration experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals, given its significant socio-economic dynamics and urban environment. Angeles

City presented both challenges and opportunities in understanding how social support networks impact key outcomes such as emotional well-being, economic stability, and recidivism.

The city's diverse and rapidly growing population emphasize the complexity of reintegration efforts, while its urban landscape underscored the socio-economic conditions influencing these processes. Furthermore, the presence of various community organizations, rehabilitation centers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the city offered a unique opportunity to explore the availability and effectiveness of social support systems. These networks played a critical role in facilitating successful reintegration, addressing common barriers such as social stigma, unemployment, and housing insecurity.

Key institutions in Angeles City actively contributed to the reintegration process. The Angeles City Social Welfare and Development Office (CSWDO), located within the Angeles City Hall Compound, offered psychosocial interventions, livelihood programs, and counseling as part of its "Aftercare Program," focused on personal rehabilitation and family reintegration. They most facilitate ex-offenders undergoing community service. Another significant institution was the Parole and Probation Office (PPO) – Angeles City, situated in the Regional Trial Court Compound, Barangay Pulung Maragul. The PPO supervised and assisted probationers and parolees, providing monitoring, moral recovery programs, and vocational training.

The Balay Silangan Reformation Center in Angeles City, a government-initiated rehabilitation program, also played an important role in reintegrating alcoholics, gamblers, and drug offenders. It offered a 2-months program that included counseling, skills training, moral recovery, physical health and wellness activities, and community service. Additionally, the center provided post-treatment services such as seminars, family interventions, and livelihood training for 1-month after the 2months to help participants reintegrate into society successfully.

Furthermore, the Philippine Jesuit Prison Service (PJPS), in collaboration with local parishes like Holy Rosary Parish, offered holistic support, including spiritual formation, skills training, and scholarships for the children of ex-offenders. These institutions made Angeles City a dynamic and supportive environment for studying the role of social support systems in post-prison reintegration efforts.

Sampling Method and Population

The population for this study consisted of formerly incarcerated individuals who reentered the community after serving prison sentences. Convenience sampling was employed in this study. This method was suitable for several reasons. First, it allowed the researchers to quickly and efficiently gather data from participants who were readily available and met the study's inclusion criteria. Convenience sampling was particularly appropriate as it dealt with formerly incarcerated individuals, a population that could be difficult to access. Relying on participants accessible through community organizations or personal networks enabled the research to capture a diverse range of experiences without the complexities associated with more stringent random sampling techniques.

Additionally, snowball sampling complemented convenience sampling. This method involved initial participants referring to others who met the study criteria, which was useful for hard-to-reach populations like the formerly incarcerated.

Participants must meet the following inclusion criteria to be eligible for the study:

1. Individuals who have been released from prison within the past two years to ensure they have had sufficient time to engage in the reintegration process but are still within a critical adjustment period.

2. Participants must be 18 years or older to focus on adult reintegration experiences.

3. Individuals who have received some form of social support during their reintegration process, including but not limited to family, friends, community organizations, or rehabilitation programs.

Exclusion criteria for the study are as follows:

1. Individuals with severe mental or physical health conditions that impair their ability to meaningfully engage in the research process, such as severe cognitive impairments or ongoing hospitalization.

2. Individuals who have not interacted with any social support systems post-incarceration, as their experiences would not align with the study's focus on social support networks.

3. Participants unwilling or unable to provide informed consent or those under duress to participate in the study.

4. Individuals who have been released from prison more than five years ago or less than six months ago to maintain consistency in assessing reintegration processes within a comparable timeframe.

5. Participants currently engaged in similar reintegration-focused studies to prevent cross-contamination of data.

Sample Size

The researchers utilized GPower statistical software to determine the appropriate sample size for the study, ensuring robust statistical power to generate reliable and valid results. Based on the parameters entered into GPower, including an effect size of 0.30, an alpha level of 0.05, and a statistical power of 0.80, the software calculated that a sample size of 122 respondents from Angeles City was required. This sample size was sufficient to detect the moderate effect that the researchers aimed to investigate while also ensuring a high level of confidence that the results would not be influenced by random variation. The chosen sample size was well-suited to the quantitative nature of the study, providing a solid foundation for analyzing the key variables under consideration.

Instruments

The instruments utilized in this study comprehensively evaluated the reintegration process for formerly incarcerated individuals, focusing on their access to resources, barriers faced, and the role of social networks. The Demographics section gathered key background details such as age, gender, and education level, enabling a nuanced understanding of how these factors impacted reintegration experiences.

The Available Resources scale assessed the perceived accessibility of critical reintegration resources, including employment services, housing support, mental health counseling, and community resources. This 16-item scale, rated on a 4-point Likert scale, categorized scores from 16 to 64 into low, moderate, or high availability, helping to identify community strengths and areas for improvement.

The Barriers scale identified significant obstacles such as employment discrimination, housing challenges, and legal restrictions. Participants rated the severity of 15 barriers on a scale from 1 (Not a barrier) to 4 (Major barrier), offering actionable insights for targeted interventions.

The Social Support scale evaluated the perceived adequacy of instrumental, informational, and emotional support from family, friends, and community organizations. This 9-item scale, rated on a 4-

point Likert scale, provided a detailed understanding of the role social networks played in facilitating reintegration.

Additionally, the Perceived Success of Reintegration Programs scale measured the effectiveness of reintegration programs through a 13-item assessment on a 4-point Likert scale. It evaluated various dimensions such as employment assistance, housing support, and mental health services, highlighting participants' perspectives on how well these programs met their needs and promoted successful reintegration. Together, these instruments ensured a robust analysis of the reintegration process, identifying both challenges and support significant to the transition of formerly incarcerated individuals back into society.

Reliability and Validity

The validity and reliability of the survey instrument were critical to maintaining the study's methodological rigor and the integrity of its findings. The instrument's validity was established through a comprehensive review of literature on social support networks and reintegration challenges. The survey questions were aligned with established theoretical frameworks to ensure content validity, accurately reflecting key constructs. Pilot testing was conducted with a sample of formerly incarcerated individuals. Feedback from this phase guided clarifications and adjustments, enhancing the clarity and relevance of the questions. Face validity was also reinforced through expert reviews, ensuring the instrument's comprehensibility and alignment with the study's objectives.

In terms of reliability, the survey measured internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha, which was applied during analysis to ensure that the instrument provided stable and consistent results over time. Additionally, a test-retest method was employed during the pilot phase to further evaluate reliability, confirming that the survey responses remained replicable across different instances.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection for this study was conducted using a structured survey questionnaire designed to gather quantitative data on the reintegration experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals. The survey consisted of several sections, including demographic information, the availability of reintegration resources, barriers to reintegration, the extent of social support, and the perceived success of reintegration programs. The questionnaire utilized a Likert scale to measure the participants' responses regarding the availability and effectiveness of support networks and resources.

The survey was distributed to participants in person, depending on accessibility and considering the safety of the participants and the researchers. In-person surveys were administered in partnership with community organizations that worked with formerly incarcerated individuals, ensuring a diverse and representative sample. Participants were given clear instructions and assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous.

The survey administration was conducted over a period of several weeks. For those completing the survey in person, the data collection process took place in a comfortable and private setting to ensure that participants could respond freely without external pressure. Consent forms were signed by all participants prior to the survey, and they were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Upon completion, the survey responses were securely collected, and the data was entered into statistical software for analysis. This process ensured that the study collected reliable and comprehensive data on the social support networks, barriers, and reintegration experiences of the participants.

Data Statistical Analysis

The study employed descriptive statistical methods to address the research objectives. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize participant demographics such as age, gender, and education level, as well as the availability of reintegration resources like employment services, housing, and counseling. These statistics also measured the severity of barriers faced during reintegration and evaluated the extent of emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support received from family, peers, and community organizations.

Additionally, the perceived success of reintegration programs was analyzed using summary measures to provide insights into their effectiveness. The analysis provided a clear overview of the patterns and trends observed in the data without inferring causal relationships by focusing on descriptive statistics.

The results were contextualized within the broader social and personal circumstances of participants to ensure ethical and accurate interpretation. Statistical findings were presented with appropriate disclaimers to emphasize their indicative nature, avoiding generalizations that could stigmatize or misrepresent the population of formerly incarcerated individuals.

All analyses were conducted using statistical software SPSS, ensuring accuracy in summarizing and interpreting the data collected.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical principles, including respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. These principles ensured that participants' rights were upheld, risks were minimized, and confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the research.

Informed Consent Process, Duration of Participation, and Withdrawal Criteria

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with additional steps taken to ensure that the sensitive nature of the population was adequately addressed and that participants fully understood the implications of their involvement. Participants were clearly informed, through both written and verbal communications, that their decision to participate, decline, or withdraw at any point would not influence their access to services or their relationship with the organizations involved. This assurance was explicitly stated in a dedicated section of the consent forms, written in clear and straightforward language to enhance comprehension.

To emphasize voluntary participation and eliminate any perception of coercion, the researchers avoided directly involving staff from community organizations in participant recruitment or survey administration. Verbal explanations stressed the independence of the study from the operations of these organizations, and participants were given ample time and a supportive environment to ask questions. A neutral third party, unaffiliated with the community organizations or the provision of their services, facilitated the consent process to further ensure impartiality.

Consent forms were written in plain, accessible language, including both English and Filipino, to account for potential literacy challenges or cognitive difficulties faced by some participants. Verbal explanations of the study's purpose, potential risks, and participants' rights accompanied the written forms to enhance understanding. Participants were asked to summarize their understanding of the study in their own words to confirm clarity and ensure they fully grasped the information before providing their consent.

Participation lasted approximately 15 to 20 minutes, and participants were informed that they could withdraw without any penalty or consequence at any stage of the process.

Risk, Inconvenience, and Vulnerability

Although the study did not involve significant physical risks, there were potential psychological and social risks, particularly related to the sensitive nature of the participants' experiences. Discussions about participants' experiences occasionally evoked negative emotions or caused distress. To address this, participants were informed that they could pause or withdraw from the interview at any time without facing any consequences. Additionally, the researchers provided a list of support services or counselors that participants could contact if they experienced emotional distress. The researchers coordinated with the guidance and counseling office to ensure support was readily available for any respondent in distress during or after participation.

There was also a risk of inadvertently disclosing participants' status as formerly incarcerated individuals, particularly in smaller or close-knit communities, which could have led to social stigmatization or privacy concerns. To minimize this, the researchers conducted interviews in private and discreet locations to safeguard anonymity. Confidentiality was strictly maintained, with no public disclosure of participation. No personally identifiable information was collected, and all responses were anonymized using pseudonyms or unique codes instead of real names. Data was securely stored with access restricted to authorized personnel who had signed confidentiality agreements.

To further safeguard privacy, the researchers ensured all data was securely stored using encrypted digital systems, and no collection of identifiable metadata occurred. These measures protected against confidentiality breaches. The voluntary nature of participation was emphasized, and participants were reassured that their participation would not impact their relationship with community services or how they were perceived by others. Participants had the option to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or negative consequences.

The researchers ensured participants' well-being by maintaining strict confidentiality, providing access to emotional support services, and conducting the study in a manner that minimized psychological and social risks. By addressing these risks comprehensively, the study upheld ethical standards and protected the dignity and rights of participants.

Table 1: Risks and Risk Minimization

Risk	Risk Minimization
Emotional distress	Participants can pause or withdraw at any time without consequences. A list of support services or counselors will be provided. Guidance and counseling offices are on standby to assist distressed participants.
Disclosure of ex-offender status	Interviews will be conducted in private and discreet locations. All data will be anonymized, using pseudonyms or unique codes instead of real names, and confidentiality will be strictly maintained.
Privacy breaches	Data will be stored securely with encryption, and access will be restricted to authorized personnel. No personally identifiable information will be collected.
Stigmatization	Confidentiality will be emphasized, and no public disclosure of participation will occur. Interviews will be held in secure, private locations to protect anonymity.

Benefits of the Study and Community Considerations

Participants received a modest snack as a token of appreciation for their time and effort in participating in the study. This provision was intended to ensure that participants felt acknowledged for their contribution without the token being seen as coercive or influencing their decision to participate.

The researchers ensured full transparency by clearly stating the nature of the provided token in the informed consent form. Participants were explicitly informed that it was a gesture of appreciation and would not affect their access to services or their relationship with the community organizations involved in the study. Verbal explanations reassured participants that the token was voluntary and had no bearing on their rights or decision to participate.

To prevent any perception of coercion, the researchers emphasized that it was offered only after participation, ensuring it did not influence participants' willingness to join the study. Participants were also reminded that their decision to participate or withdraw would not affect their relationship with community organizations or the services they received.

The researchers reaffirmed that participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were reminded during the survey process that they could withdraw at any point without consequences, including receiving the snack. These measures ensured that the token of appreciation was fair, transparent, and non-coercive, recognizing participants' time and effort without creating undue pressure to join the study.

Privacy, Confidentiality, and Data Management

Data collected during the study was handled in strict compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to ensure participants' privacy and confidentiality. To address the risk of privacy breaches when administering surveys in person, particularly in smaller or close-knit communities, the researchers implemented rigorous measures to protect participant confidentiality. Surveys did not collect identifiable information such as names or addresses. Instead, participants were assigned unique codes or pseudonyms to ensure their individual responses remained anonymous. Demographic information was generalized to prevent the indirect identification of participants through specific details.

The recruitment and participation process was carefully designed to minimize visibility and the risk of inference by others. Recruitment materials and invitations avoided highlighting the nature of the participant group to prevent unintended disclosure of affiliation. Survey sessions were conducted in private and secure locations, with staggered scheduling to ensure participants did not encounter one another during the process.

Survey locations were carefully selected to ensure privacy and discretion, such as neutral venues unrelated to community organizations or public spaces where participants could be recognized. Potential venues included rented conference rooms, private offices, or community centers with no public visibility of the study's purpose. Protocols were established to minimize interruptions during survey administration.

Completed survey forms were securely stored in lockers accessible only to the research team, promptly digitized, and shredded once transferred to encrypted devices. Digitized data was stored in encrypted folders on devices protected by strong passwords and multi-factor authentication. Backups were maintained on secure, ISO-certified cloud platforms, with access restricted to authorized researchers who had signed confidentiality agreements.

Participants received clear assurances about the confidentiality measures in place. Both verbal explanations and written communications detailed these efforts, emphasizing that no identifiable information would be shared with community organizations or external parties.

Conflict of Interests

There were no conflicts of interest in this study. The researchers declared that their professional and personal interests did not influence the conduct of the research or its outcomes. The study obtained ethics review clearance from the Angeles University Foundation – Ethics Review Committee prior to the commencement of data collection. This clearance ensured that the research adhered to established ethical standards and guidelines, and the committee's approval confirmed that the study's methodology and procedures were ethically sound. To further enhance transparency and integrity, the study remained under the ongoing oversight of the ethics review committee during its conduct. This oversight ensured continued compliance with ethical standards throughout the research process, from data collection to reporting.

The researchers maintained transparency by establishing a community advisory group comprising individuals with relevant expertise, such as representatives from involved community organizations and members of the population under study. This group provided feedback and guidance to ensure that the research remained sensitive to participants' needs and aligned with ethical best practices.

Finally, the researchers transparently reported the study's methods, findings, and ethical considerations for public review. These measures underscored the researchers' commitment to ethical conduct and the integrity of the research process.

Results and Discussion

The researchers utilized SPSS to analyze the data collected from the respondents, ensuring statistical accuracy and reliability.

Age Distribution of Respondents

The data on the age distribution of respondents highlights the varying representation of age groups within the study. As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents are aged 25–34 years old, accounting for 35.2% of the total sample, followed closely by those aged 18–24 years old, representing 28.7%. The 35–44 years old group comprises 23.0% of respondents, while smaller proportions are seen in the older age groups, with 9.0% in the 45–54 years old category and only 4.1% in the 55–64 years old category.

This distribution indicates that the sample is predominantly composed of younger to middle-aged adults. The substantial representation of individuals aged 25–34 and 18–24 may reflect the demographic trends in the study area, where younger populations are often more accessible and responsive to surveys as they are more prone for committing re-offending when reintegration is unsuccessful. The lower percentages of older respondents may suggest challenges in engaging older age groups or a smaller population size within these categories of formerly incarcerated individuals. This emphasizes the need to consider age demographics when interpreting the study results, as age-related factors may influence perspectives, behaviors, or outcomes related to the research variables.

Table 1. Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent (%)
18–24 Years Old	35	28.7
25–34 Years Old	43	35.2
35–44 Years Old	28	23.0
45–54 Years Old	11	9.0
55–64 Years Old	5	4.1
Total	**122**	**100.0**

Gender Distribution of Respondents

Table 2 illustrates the gender distribution of the respondents, revealing that males constitute the majority of the sample at 77.0%, while females represent 23.0%. This notable disparity suggests a predominantly male participant, which may be attributed to factors such as accessibility, willingness to participate, or demographic trends within the study area.

While the imbalance highlights the predominance of male perspectives in the study, the inclusion of female respondents ensures that insights from both genders are represented, albeit unevenly. The observed distribution underscores the importance of considering gender dynamics when analyzing and interpreting the findings of the study.

Table 2. Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	94	77.0
Female	28	23.0
Total	**122**	**100.0**

Educational Attainment of Respondents

Table 3 presents the educational attainment of the respondents, showing a varied distribution across three education levels. The largest group of participants, comprising 41.0%, have completed secondary education, indicating that a significant portion of the sample has achieved high school-level education. Meanwhile, 34.4% of respondents reported having only primary education, reflecting that a substantial portion of the sample has not pursued education beyond the elementary level. Lastly, 24.6% of respondents have attained tertiary education, representing individuals who have pursued higher education beyond high school.

These findings highlight a diverse educational profile among respondents, with a majority falling under the secondary or lower education levels. Such results suggest potential challenges in accessing further educational opportunities and underscore the need to consider educational background when analyzing respondents' reintegration experiences and support needs.

Table 3. Education Level

Level of Education of the Respondents	Frequency	Percent
Primary Education	42	34.4
Secondary Education	50	41.0
Higher Education	30	24.6
Total	**122**	**100**

Employment Services for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

Table 4 presents the availability of employment services for formerly incarcerated individuals in the community. The highest mean was observed for the statement on job training programs (mean = 2.86), indicating strong agreement among participants that such programs are accessible to those who were previously incarcerated. On the other hand, the lowest mean was for the availability of employment services (mean = 2.60), suggesting moderate agreement that these services are readily accessible to formerly incarcerated individuals.

These findings suggest that while there is general agreement that employment services, job training, and job placement services are available, there is some variation in how participants perceive the accessibility and effectiveness of these services. The results indicate a need for improvement in the consistency and accessibility of these services to ensure that formerly incarcerated individuals receive the support they need for successful reintegration into the workforce.

Table 4. Employment Services

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Std. Deviation	Variance
Employment services are readily available to formerly incarcerated individuals in my community.	2.60	Agree	0.95	0.90
Job training programs are accessible for those who were previously incarcerated.	2.86	Agree	0.84	0.70
There are sufficient job placement services that cater to the needs of formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.70	Agree	0.85	0.73
Formerly incarcerated individuals are provided with the necessary support to maintain employment.	2.67	Agree	0.85	0.72
AVERAGE	**2.71**	**Agree**	**0.87**	**0.76**

The findings on the accessibility of employment services for formerly incarcerated individuals, as indicated by moderate agreement and variability in perceptions, are supported by existing literature. Goodstein and Petrich (2019) examined employer perspectives and found that although employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals exist, societal stigma and legal barriers continue to hinder their reintegration into the workforce. These barriers likely contribute to the mixed perceptions observed in this study. Similarly, LePage et al. (2020) highlighted the success of hybrid vocational

programs that combine traditional job training with individualized support, demonstrating improved employment outcomes for formerly incarcerated veterans. Their research underscores the importance of structured and targeted interventions to increase the accessibility and effectiveness of employment services. Furthermore, Halushka (2020) emphasized the fragmented nature of support systems available to formerly incarcerated individuals, which often leads to inconsistent access to resources. This fragmentation aligns with the moderate variability found in this study, indicating a need for more cohesive and comprehensive support systems. Collectively, these studies highlight the importance of reducing systemic barriers, enhancing targeted interventions, and improving the consistency of employment services to better support the successful workforce reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals.

Housing Services for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

The data reveals that housing-related support for formerly incarcerated individuals is generally perceived as inadequate, with an overall average mean score below 2.0. Among the evaluated services, the highest mean score was 2.39, given to both affordable housing options and well-publicized housing assistance services, which were interpreted as Agree. This indicates that while some respondents recognize the availability of these services, they remain insufficient to address broader housing needs.

On the other hand, transitional housing programs received the lowest mean score of 1.96, interpreted as Disagree, highlighting significant challenges in accessibility. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.76 to 0.99, indicate moderate variability in responses, reflecting differing individual experiences or perceptions. These findings emphasize the critical need to improve transitional housing programs and expand housing services overall to better support reintegration efforts and reduce homelessness risks for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Table 5. Housing Services

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Std. Deviation	Variance
Affordable housing options are available for formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.39	Agree	0.97	0.95
Transitional housing programs are easy to access for those released from incarceration.	1.96	Disagree	0.76	0.59
There are enough housing assistance programs for formerly incarcerated individuals to prevent homelessness.	2.26	Agree	0.99	0.99
Housing assistance services for formerly incarcerated individuals are well-publicized and accessible.	2.39	Agree	0.98	0.97
AVERAGE	**2.25**	**Agree**	**0.925**	**0.875**

These results reflect a complex housing landscape for formerly incarcerated individuals, where affordable housing options appear somewhat accessible, but barriers remain in accessing transitional housing programs. Keene et al. (2018) provide a similar perspective, highlighting how structural stigma associated with incarceration limits access to stable and affordable housing. Their study revealed that this stigma perpetuates housing instability, aligning with the participants' perceptions of difficulty in accessing transitional housing services (Keene et al., 2018).

Further emphasizing this issue, Simonds et al. (2022) demonstrated the significant impact of transitional housing programs on reentry success. Their study found that providing paid transitional housing not only reduced recidivism but also improved employment outcomes, particularly during critical transition periods. This supports the need for well-structured and easily accessible transitional housing programs as a means of addressing the barriers identified in the data (Simonds et al., 2022).

In addition, Halushka (2020) described the fragmented and inconsistent nature of housing support systems, which often leave formerly incarcerated individuals struggling to navigate available services. This "runaround," as Halushka calls it, mirrors the moderate agreement observed in the data and underscores the need for better coordination, accessibility, and publicity of housing assistance programs (Halushka, 2020).

Overall, the findings indicate that while housing support exists, challenges persist in ensuring these services are accessible, effective, and tailored to the unique needs of formerly incarcerated individuals, particularly in transitional housing options. Addressing these gaps can significantly contribute to housing stability and homelessness prevention for this vulnerable population.

Availability and Accessibility of Counseling and Support Services for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

The data shows that respondents generally agree on the availability and accessibility of counseling and support services for formerly incarcerated individuals, with an overall mean score of 2.73. Among the services evaluated, counseling and support services for mental health and addiction received the highest mean score of 2.85, indicating that these services are relatively more accessible compared to others. Conversely, mental health counseling services were rated the lowest, with a mean score of 2.62, suggesting that while these services are present, their availability remains a concern. The standard deviations, ranging from 0.83 to 0.95, reflect moderate variability in responses, indicating differences in the experiences or perceptions of respondents.

These findings suggest that although counseling and support services are somewhat accessible, gaps remain, particularly in the availability of mental health counseling. Efforts should focus on bridging these gaps to provide consistent and comprehensive support for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Table 6. Counseling and Support Services

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Std. Deviation	Variance
Mental health counseling services are available to formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.62	Agree	0.93	0.87
Substance abuse recovery programs are accessible for formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.73	Agree	0.95	0.91
Counseling and support services for mental health and addiction are easily accessible.	2.85	Agree	0.83	0.69
AVERAGE	**2.73**	**Agree**	**0.90**	**0.82**

These findings align with existing research on the accessibility of mental health and substance abuse recovery programs for formerly incarcerated individuals. Ray et al. (2017) examined the Access to Recovery (ATR) initiative and emphasized the importance of well-resourced agencies that integrate recovery-focused and reentry services. Their study found that agencies with greater resources had better outcomes in reducing recidivism among formerly incarcerated individuals, reinforcing the value of

accessible and well-funded mental health and substance use programs (Ray et al., 2017). Similarly, Gilchrist et al. (2022) highlighted that individuals exiting prison, particularly those with substance use histories, face substantial barriers to accessing mental health and support services. Their findings underscore that logistical challenges, such as gaps in care coordination, stigma, and a lack of long-term, holistic support systems, contribute to inconsistent access to these services (Gilchrist et al., 2022). Furthermore, Ruffin et al. (2021) identified systemic barriers in correctional and post-release programs, particularly for individuals with disabilities or co-occurring mental health and substance use issues. The study emphasized the need for programs that address these unique challenges and ensure equitable access to critical counseling and recovery services (Ruffin et al., 2021).

These studies support the results of this research, highlighting the importance of well-funded, coordinated, and accessible mental health and substance abuse recovery services for formerly incarcerated individuals. Addressing systemic barriers such as stigma, inconsistent program structures, and resource gaps is crucial to ensuring these services effectively support reintegration and reduce recidivism.

Availability and Effectiveness of Reintegration Resources for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

The results presented in Table 7 demonstrate that participants generally agree on the availability and adequacy of reintegration resources for formerly incarcerated individuals, but with some variability in their perceptions. The highest mean score of 2.8443 was recorded for the statement, "Community-based support groups are available for formerly incarcerated individuals," indicating strong agreement about the presence of these groups, though responses showed moderate variability (SD = 0.90928). Meanwhile, the statement "The availability of reintegration resources in my community is adequate for the needs of formerly incarcerated individuals" had the lowest mean score of 2.6885, reflecting slightly less agreement and a similar degree of variability (SD = 0.90984). Participants also indicated agreement (mean = 2.8279) with the statement "Formerly incarcerated individuals are provided with sufficient information about available reintegration services," suggesting that while reintegration resources exist, awareness and information dissemination may need improvement. The overall average mean score of 2.37, with a standard deviation of 0.88, indicates general agreement across all items but highlights moderate variability in perceptions of the effectiveness and availability of reintegration resources.

Table 7. Reintegration Resources

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Std. Deviation	Variance
Community-based support groups are available for formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.84	Agree	0.91	0.83
There are sufficient reintegration resources to help formerly incarcerated individuals transition back into society.	2.75	Agree	0.94	0.89
The availability of reintegration resources in my community is adequate for the needs of formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.69	Agree	0.91	0.83
Formerly incarcerated individuals are provided with sufficient information about available reintegration services.	2.83	Agree	0.91	0.82
Overall, the reintegration resources available to formerly incarcerated individuals are effective in supporting their return to the community.	2.79	Agree	0.77	0.60
AVERAGE	**2.78**	**Agree**	**0.89**	**0.79**

The data presented the positive perceptions of study participants regarding the availability and effectiveness of community-based support groups and reintegration resources where they expressed that these resources played a critical role in their reentry into society, confirming the importance of social support networks in facilitating successful reintegration. These findings align with existing literature that emphasizes the value of structured and informal community support in reducing recidivism and fostering positive behavioral changes.

Kiczkowski (2019) further supports these findings by emphasizing the role of community-based support in the reintegration process. Kiczkowski's research highlights that peer-led groups, which are easily accessible to individuals returning to the community, provide essential emotional and social support. This aligns with the participants' views that support groups significantly ease their transition and reinforce positive behaviors.

Moreover, the role of mental health and substance abuse recovery programs, which were also noted by participants in this study, is highlighted in a recent article from Boles, et al. (2022). The article underscores the necessity of such programs for addressing mental health and addiction issues, which many formerly incarcerated individuals face. Participants in this study similarly reported that access to mental health services played a significant role in their reintegration, supporting the importance of comprehensive support programs that offer counseling and rehabilitation services.

In addition, previous studies have reinforced the role of community-based resources and structured support systems in reducing recidivism and improving reintegration outcomes. Doleac (2018) emphasized the importance of structured reintegration programs, while Matthews et al. (2020) found that peer mentorship significantly aided reentry. Windholz (2022) further supported the need for comprehensive programs addressing housing, employment, and social reintegration. These findings are consistent with the positive feedback received from participants in this study regarding the availability and effectiveness of such services.

These studies and the data from this research underscore the critical role that community-based support, mental health services, and comprehensive reintegration programs play in facilitating the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals.

Barriers to Reintegration

The descriptive statistics for barriers to reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals are presented in Table 8. Among the identified barriers, the unavailability of affordable housing received the highest mean score (M = 2.9836), indicating a strong agreement among participants that it poses a significant challenge. Similarly, discrimination from employers (M = 2.9590) was rated as a major barrier, reflecting perceptions of widespread difficulty in securing employment after incarceration. The stigma associated with having a criminal record (M = 2.8852) and lack of family or community support (M = 2.9672) were also rated highly.

In contrast, the lack of stable employment opportunities was rated with the lowest mean score (M = 2.5492), though still within the "agree" range, indicating that while employment barriers are significant, other challenges such as housing and stigma may have a stronger perceived impact. The overall mean score across all barriers was 2.82, showing that participants generally agreed on the presence and impact of these challenges.

Table 8. Barriers to Reintegration for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Standard Deviation	Variance
The lack of stable employment opportunities is a major barrier to the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.55	Agree	0.89167	0.795
Discrimination from employers negatively impacts the ability of formerly incarcerated individuals to find a job.	2.96	Agree	0.99085	0.982
The unavailability of affordable housing poses a significant challenge for formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.98	Agree	0.92695	0.859
Lack of access to mental health services hinders the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.76	Agree	0.95392	0.910
The stigma associated with having a criminal record prevents formerly incarcerated individuals from re-entering society effectively.	2.89	Agree	0.99749	0.995
Lack of family or community support makes reintegration more difficult for formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.97	Agree	0.85217	0.726
Substance abuse and addiction issues are a major barrier to reintegration for formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.97		0.96153	0.925
The complexity of parole and probation requirements adds stress and difficulty to reintegration.	2.88	Agree	0.92332	0.853
Lack of access to educational or vocational training programs makes it difficult for formerly incarcerated individuals to improve their skills.	2.73	Agree	0.93	0.86
Legal restrictions (e.g., voting, housing, and employment) limit opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals to reintegrate successfully.	2.75	Agree	0.92	0.85
Financial instability after release is a significant barrier to successful reintegration.	2.83	Agree	0.92	0.84
Formerly incarcerated individuals face barriers to accessing healthcare services.	2.87	Agree	0.95	0.91

The criminal justice system's lack of post-release support programs hinders the successful reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals.	2.95	Agree	0.87	0.76
Negative social attitudes toward formerly incarcerated individuals create additional barriers to reintegration.	2.87	Agree	0.91	0.83
Transportation difficulties prevent formerly incarcerated individuals from accessing employment, housing, and services.	2.60	Agree	0.86	0.74
Average	**2.82**	**Agree**	**0.91**	**0.85**

The findings highlight significant barriers to reintegration faced by formerly incarcerated individuals, including challenges in employment, housing, education, and access to mental health care. Employment barriers, exacerbated by employer discrimination and stigma associated with criminal records, continue to hinder reintegration efforts despite policy measures like "ban-the-box" laws designed to reduce hiring biases. Research indicates that while such policies improve the likelihood of getting a job interview, they do not consistently lead to better hiring outcomes due to persistent stigmatization (Goodstein, 2019). Housing instability further compounds these challenges, as legal restrictions and stigma from landlords often prevent formerly incarcerated individuals from securing affordable housing, leading to homelessness and increasing recidivism risks. Research highlights that stable housing serves as a critical foundation for accessing employment and mental health care, underscoring the importance of housing-focused reentry programs (Keene et al., 2018). In addition, limited access to educational and vocational training programs hinders skill development, reducing employment opportunities. Programs such as expanded Pell Grant eligibility have been shown to significantly improve post-release outcomes by reducing recidivism and increasing job stability (Palmer & Christian, 2019). Finally, lack of access to mental health services further undermines reintegration efforts, as untreated mental health issues often lead to poor reintegration outcomes. Research confirms that addressing mental health care needs after release enhances overall well-being and supports successful reintegration (Brehmer et al., 2024).

Table 9. *Instrumental Support from Family, Friends, and Community Organizations*

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Standard Deviation	Variance
My family provides practical assistance, such as financial or material help, when I need it.	2.70	Agree	1.10	1.20
I can rely on my friends to help me with everyday tasks when necessary.	2.97	Agree	0.89	0.79
Community organizations offer tangible support, like job referrals or transportation assistance.	3.10	Strongly Agree	0.72	0.52
Average	**2.92**	**Agree**	**0.90**	**0.84**

The results in Table 9 illustrate the varying levels of instrumental support received by formerly incarcerated individuals, with community organizations scoring the highest mean (M = 3.0984, "strongly agree") and family support scoring the lowest mean (M = 2.7049, "agree"). The highest mean for

community organizations suggests that structured and organized efforts provide the most reliable and consistent assistance during reintegration.

This includes tangible support such as job referrals, transportation aid, and other critical services necessary for navigating the challenges of reintegration. Research confirms the pivotal role of community organizations in addressing systemic barriers, as they are often tailored to meet the specific needs of individuals reentering society (Keene et al., 2018). These findings imply that investing in community-based programs, particularly those offering employment and practical assistance, can enhance reintegration outcomes and reduce recidivism rates (Palmer & Christian, 2019).

In contrast, the lowest mean score for family support (M = 2.7049, "agree") reflects potential limitations in the assistance families can provide, such as financial or material help. This may be due to strained familial relationships or limited socio-economic resources among families of formerly incarcerated individuals. Studies suggest that families often face compounded challenges, including emotional stress and stigma, which reduce their ability to offer substantial support (Brehmer et al., 2024). These results imply a need for supportive interventions that engage families, providing them with the resources and guidance needed to sustain their loved ones through the reintegration process.

Support from friends (M = 2.9672, "agree") occupies a middle ground, indicating that friends are a significant source of assistance with everyday tasks but may not always provide the same consistent or tangible aid as community organizations. Informal social networks often provide emotional and practical support, helping formerly incarcerated individuals navigate daily challenges. Research highlights the importance of friendships in reducing social isolation and fostering a sense of belonging during reintegration (Schnappauf & Didonato, 2017).

These findings emphasize the need to strengthen community-based programs as a cornerstone of reintegration efforts. Community organizations should continue to prioritize job referrals, transportation, and practical support, as these directly address the systemic barriers to reintegration. Simultaneously, policymakers and practitioners should consider interventions that support families, such as financial assistance programs and stigma-reduction initiatives, to alleviate the burdens they face. Programs that enhance informal social networks, like peer mentorship and community-building activities, can also supplement the support provided by organizations and families, creating a comprehensive safety net for formerly incarcerated individuals. Through fostering partnerships between community organizations, families, and informal social networks, stakeholders can create a more inclusive and sustainable support system. These collaborative efforts will not only facilitate successful reintegration but also contribute to broader societal goals of reducing recidivism and promoting equity.

Table 10. *Informational Support from Family, Peer Groups, and Community Organizations*

Statement	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Standard Deviation	Variance
My family provides valuable advice and information to help me solve problems.	2.8934	Agree	1.01889	1.038
Peer groups share helpful information about available resources for reintegration.	2.9754	Agree	0.75474	0.570
Community organizations offer guidance and resources that assist in my decision-making.	2.9590	Agree	0.77564	0.602
Average	**2.94**		**0.85**	**0.74**

The results in Table 10 highlight the perceived levels of informational support provided by family, peer groups, and community organizations to formerly incarcerated individuals. Peer groups received the highest mean score (M = 2.9754, "agree"), indicating that participants found peer groups to be the most reliable source of information about resources for reintegration. This finding underscores the critical role of shared experiences and collective knowledge within peer groups, as they often provide specific, actionable insights into navigating challenges during reintegration. Research corroborates this, emphasizing that peer networks foster a sense of belonging and offer practical advice that complements formal support systems (Schnappauf & Didonato, 2017).

Community organizations closely followed, with a mean score of 2.9590, also interpreted as "agree." This finding reflects the importance of structured organizations in offering consistent and targeted informational support, such as guidance on accessing housing, employment, and legal services. Community organizations are often designed to address the unique challenges faced by formerly incarcerated individuals and are pivotal in providing tailored resources (Keene et al., 2018). The results imply that community organizations should continue to prioritize information-sharing as a cornerstone of their reentry services.

Family informational support, with a mean score of 2.8934, ranked slightly lower but still within the "agree" range. This suggests that families are moderately effective in offering advice and problem-solving assistance but may face limitations in terms of their knowledge or capacity to guide individuals through the complex reintegration process. Existing research indicates that family members, while well-intentioned, often lack the technical knowledge or resources necessary to address systemic barriers such as housing or employment challenges (Brehmer et al., 2024).

These findings suggest that peer groups and community organizations should be leveraged as primary sources of informational support for formerly incarcerated individuals. Peer-led programs and mentorship initiatives could be further developed to expand access to resource-sharing networks. Meanwhile, community organizations should continue to refine and broaden their informational support services, ensuring that their guidance is accessible and aligned with the needs of this population. Families, while essential to the reintegration process, may benefit from targeted interventions aimed at enhancing their capacity to provide effective support. Educational workshops and family counseling programs could help bridge gaps in their knowledge, empowering them to better assist their loved ones. By fostering collaboration between families, peer groups, and community organizations, a more integrated support system can be established, enabling formerly incarcerated individuals to make informed decisions and successfully reintegrate into society.

Table 11. *Emotional Support from Family, Friends, and Community Support Groups*

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Standard Deviation	Variance
I receive emotional support and encouragement from my family when facing challenges.	2.8361	Agree	1.08605	1.180
My friends provide me with empathy and understanding when I am struggling.	2.9180	Agree	0.91444	0.836
Community support groups are available to listen and provide emotional comfort.	2.8689	Agree	0.85233	0.726
Average	**2.87**	**Agree**	**0.95**	**0.91**

The data reveals insights into the sources of emotional support for individuals. Among the three groups assessed are family, friends, and community support groups, friends were rated the highest in providing empathy and understanding during struggles, with a mean of 2.9180. This suggests that friendships play a pivotal role in offering emotional comfort during challenges. In comparison, family support, with a mean of 2.8361, received the lowest score, indicating potential complexities or strained dynamics within familial relationships that may affect their ability to provide consistent encouragement. Community support groups, with a mean of 2.8689, also scored positively, highlighting their availability to listen and offer emotional solace. The relatively close means across all categories indicate general agreement on the importance of these support systems, while the standard deviation and variance values suggest a moderate consistency in participants' experiences.

These findings have significant implications for reintegration efforts. The lower rating for family support suggests a need for targeted interventions, such as family counseling or relationship-building programs, to strengthen familial ties during reintegration. The higher ratings for friends and community groups underscore the critical role these external support systems play in reducing feelings of isolation and fostering emotional well-being. Programs that encourage peer mentoring and community involvement could further amplify the positive impact of these networks. Holistic reintegration strategies should aim to balance the contributions of family, friends, and community groups to provide comprehensive emotional support.

Supporting literature reinforces the importance of these findings. Research by Mowen et al. (2019) emphasizes that strong family connections reduce recidivism risks and promote mental health stability. Peer networks have been identified as valuable, with Bellamy et al. (2019) highlighting the role of peer mentors in fostering emotional resilience and reducing recidivism. Additionally, Christian (2022) points to the effectiveness of community organizations in mitigating societal stigma and providing critical resources for reintegration. Fahmy (2021) further underscores the synergistic effect of combining emotional and instrumental support from various sources to enhance resilience and successful reintegration. These studies align with the findings in Table 11, demonstrating the necessity of integrated support systems to improve outcomes for individuals navigating post-incarceration life.

Table 12. *Reintegration Program Effectiveness*

	Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Standard Deviation	Variance
The reintegration programs I have participated in have significantly helped me find stable employment.	2.8361	Agree	0.88477	0.783
The job training and education services offered by reintegration programs have improved my skills.	2.9426	Agree	0.81615	0.666
The housing assistance provided through reintegration programs has helped me secure stable housing.	2.5656	Agree	0.82309	0.677

Mental health and counseling services offered by reintegration programs have positively impacted my life.	2.9262	Agree	0.84470	0.714
The substance abuse recovery programs offered through reintegration services have been effective in supporting my sobriety.	2.9672	Agree	0.94418	0.891
The reintegration program I participated in provided adequate support to help me re-enter society.	2.9836	Agree	0.89980	0.810
I feel that the reintegration programs I have been part of have helped me improve my social relationships.	3.1066	Strongly Agree	0.88893	0.790
Overall, the reintegration programs I have experienced have been successful in helping me avoid recidivism.	2.9508	Agree	0.94346	0.890
I believe that the resources provided by the reintegration programs were sufficient to meet my needs.	3.1148	Strongly Agree	0.83514	0.697
The reintegration programs have adequately prepared me for life after release from incarceration.	3.0820	Strongly Agree	0.86808	0.754
I feel more confident in my ability to succeed after participating in reintegration programs.	3.1393	Strongly Agree	0.77476	0.600
The support networks created by the reintegration programs have been beneficial in my return to society.	3.1230	Strongly Agree	0.83891	0.704
I would recommend the reintegration programs I participated in to other formerly incarcerated individuals.	3.3115	Strongly Agree	0.81395	0.663
Average	**3.00**	**Strongly Agree**	**0.8**	**0.74**

The results from Table 12 demonstrate that participants generally perceive reintegration programs as effective in facilitating their reentry into society. The highest-rated aspects of these programs were their ability to build confidence in succeeding post-incarceration (mean = 3.1393), create supportive social networks (mean = 3.1230), and provide sufficient resources to meet participants' needs (mean = 3.1148). These findings suggest that participants strongly agree these features contribute positively to their reintegration. Additionally, participants felt well-prepared for life after incarceration (mean = 3.0820) and found the programs effective in fostering social relationships (mean = 3.1066). However, housing assistance received the lowest mean rating (mean = 2.5656), indicating that this remains an area of concern. Similarly, support related to stable employment and job training, while positively rated, showed potential for enhancement.

These findings reflect critical areas of both success and improvement. The high ratings for social networks and confidence suggest that reintegration programs are effective in addressing psychological and relational aspects of reintegration. On the other hand, the lower ratings for housing assistance and employment highlight persistent challenges in meeting practical, material needs, which are essential for long-term stability. The low standard deviation and variance values across the results indicate consistent perceptions among participants, reinforcing the reliability of these insights.

The implications of these findings are significant for designing reintegration programs. First, the emphasis on building confidence and creating support networks suggests that these components should remain central to program frameworks. Second, the relatively lower ratings for housing and employment indicate a need for targeted interventions in these areas, such as increasing access to affordable housing and enhancing job readiness through vocational training. Addressing these gaps would create a more comprehensive approach to reintegration, ensuring a balance between emotional, social, and material support.

Supporting literature validates these findings and underscores the importance of holistic reintegration programs. Doleac (2018) highlighted the effectiveness of structured reintegration programs in reducing recidivism and promoting employment stability by providing tailored support to meet individual needs (Doleac, 2018). Matthews et al. (2020) emphasized the role of peer mentoring and community involvement in improving participants' confidence and fostering social integration, which aligns with the high ratings for these aspects in the current data (Matthews et al., 2020). However, Berghuis (2018) identified challenges in housing and employment services as significant barriers to successful reintegration, mirroring the lower ratings for these aspects in the present study (Berghuis, 2018). Bowman and Travis (2012) further reinforced the importance of mental health counseling and support networks in reducing psychological stress and promoting successful reentry, which corresponds to the positive ratings for these components (Bowman & Travis, 2012).

In summary, while reintegration programs effectively address psychological and social needs, more robust interventions in housing and employment support are necessary to ensure holistic success. These findings and their alignment with existing literature highlight the importance of a balanced, comprehensive approach to reintegration program design.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study underscored the critical role of social support networks, including family, friends, community organizations, and rehabilitation programs, in shaping the reintegration experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals. These networks significantly contributed to key outcomes such as emotional well-being, economic stability, and a reduced risk of recidivism. However, the findings also highlighted gaps in addressing practical reintegration challenges, particularly in the areas of housing and employment. While the study provided valuable insights, it was limited by its reliance on a quantitative

descriptive survey design, which, while effective in identifying trends and patterns, lacked the depth to explore participants' nuanced experiences. Moreover, the geographic focus on Angeles City, Pampanga, and the use of convenience sampling constrained the generalizability of the results to other populations and contexts.

To build on the findings of this research, future studies should consider employing a mixed-methods approach, incorporating qualitative methods such as interviews to delve deeper into the lived experiences of formerly incarcerated individuals. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the barriers they face and the factors that contribute to successful reintegration. Expanding the geographic scope to include both rural and urban areas would also help identify region-specific challenges and strategies, ensuring more tailored and effective interventions. Policymakers and practitioners should prioritize programs that address housing and employment, such as affordable housing initiatives and vocational training linked to job placement. Additionally, enhancing the role of social support networks through counseling and mentorship programs can further bolster reintegration outcomes.

Efforts to reduce stigma and discrimination against formerly incarcerated individuals, particularly in housing and employment sectors, are essential. Collaborative public awareness campaigns can foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for reintegration. By addressing these recommendations, stakeholders can create a more comprehensive support system that empowers formerly incarcerated individuals, reduces recidivism, and promotes societal equity.

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