**7wk**

**Research Questions**

Creating the research questions is key to designing a study:  Research questions “must have both *substance*--for example, What is my study about?—and *form*—for example, Am I asking a ‘who, ‘what,’ ‘where,’ ‘why,’ or ‘how’ question? . . .  The form of the question can provide an important clue regarding the appropriate research method to be used” (Yin, 2014, p. 11). In this Discussion, you will create research questions and evaluate the extent to which they align with other components of your Prospectus, and, ultimately, Proposal.

To prepare for your Discussion, review the Dissertation resources in this week’s Learning Resources.

Pay particular attention to specific examples of problem statements. Also, go to the Walden Library webpage "Dissertations," find at least two Walden Dissertations from SPPA completed in the past year, and read the problem statements, purpose, and research questions for each.

Post by **Day 3** your Dissertation topic, problem statement, purpose, and at least **two research questions**. Explain what you learned from your required readings and Walden Dissertations, on problem and purpose statements and formulating research questions that flow logically from these. Summarize the ways all of these sections are aligned and why that is required for quality and rigorous dissertation research.

Respond by **Day 6** to at least of at least two of your colleagues who have not yet had a reply, in any of the following ways:

* To what extent do the research questions align with the Dissertation topic, problem statement, and purpose? Explain.
* In what ways are your colleagues’ research questions focused and specific enough that they are measurable?
* Create at least one more research question for each colleague, justifying your reasons for adding the question(s).

**­­­­­Student 1 LL**

**1. Dissertation Topic.**

Why So Many African American Males Are Incarcerated - Is It Genetics, Economics, or Both?

**2. Problem Statement.**

The problem of males being incarcerated is that they leave behind the people in their lives that they love and care about. There is now no role model for the family to confide in with various situations that might occur in their lives. Especially little girls it is important that they have their father in their lives because a father can help shape her into the person that she may become. Teach her how a man is supposed to treat her.

**3. Purpose.**

The purpose of my research question Why So Many African American Males Are Incarcerated - Is It Genetics, Economics, or Both is to understand and focus on the criminal justice system, incarceration, economics, and genetics of the participants. How the participants have viewed the life that they have had and the communities they were raised in. The purpose of the study will also be to help the participants break the pathology of incarceration in families. The information that is needed will be the history of the participants that I will be studying, along with understanding their reality while being raised.

**4. Two Research Questions.**

For my research study, I will ask open-ended questions which will allow the participants to answer in a manner that they feel comfortable answering.

1. What were your dreams, goals, and aspirations as a child?

2. What were your experiences growing up?

**5. Explain what you learned from your required reading and Walden Dissertations, on problem and purpose statements and formulating research questions that flow logically from these.**

It is important to select a topic that you have an interest in studying, as well as working with a faculty member who is familiar with your topic of research. If a person studying a subject that they have no interest, it can be a waste of time, they can also feel inferior. Having an interest in the topic will increase the thirst of knowing more about the subject. It is also best to avoid topics that may cause the researcher to experience emotional issues in their life. A dissertation topic must generate or help validate theoretical understanding in an area or, in the fields where applied dissertations are permissible, contribute to the development of professional practice. Research questions must have both substances, and ask a who, what, where, why or how question. The form of the question can provide an important clue regarding the appropriate research method to be used (Yin, 2014, p.1).

In reference to the problem, and purpose statements, what I have learned, I am the researcher and I am in charge of my study. I must also adopt a critical perspective in reading as well as relating to others. The best thing to do is to develop a theme and then cite the work of relevant authors to buttress the argument that you are making or to provide noteworthy arguments.

A good problem statement will vary according to the discipline of the study as well as the research tradition that it may represent. Since my focus will be a qualitative study I will conduct open-ended questions. Regarding the problem write a summary review and doing this the summary should highlight the main conclusions and reference the most relevant literature. The specificity of the problem statement is very important It is also important that the statement of the problem contains a brief summary of the conceptual underpinnings for the proposed research.

The purpose of my methodology will be a qualitative study and the need to understand Why So Many African American Males Are Incarcerated - Is It Genetics, Economics, or Both?

**6. Summarize the ways all of these sections are aligned and why that is required for quality and rigorous dissertation research.**

All of the sections are aligned because it keeps a dissertation strong. The alignment of the study begins with the identification of a problem that is worthy of doctoral research. This is followed by the purpose of the study and the research question. The research question aligns with the problem and purpose statements. The intent of the research must be to answer the research question.

Reference

O'Sullivan, E., Rassel, G. R., Berner, M., & Taliaferro, J. D. (2017). *Research methods for public administrators*(6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

                 Chapter 2, "Designs for Descriptions" (pp. 28-57)

                 Chapter 3, "Designs for Explanation" (pp. 58-100)

Web Center for Social Research Methods. (n.d.). *Research Methods Knowledge Base.*Retrieved from **http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php**

**Dissertation**

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                In Chapter 2, "Selecting a Suitable Topic," 'Generating researchable questions' (pp. 21-26)

                Chapter 3, "Methods of Inquiry: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches" (pp. 27-65)

                Chapter 5, "The Method Chapter: Describing Your Research Plan" (pp. 99-135)

                Readings on research design, pages listed in Subject Index under "Research design," (p. 359)

                Readings on research questions, pages listed in Subject Index under "Research questions," (p. 359)

                Chapter 10, "Writing" (pp. 259-279)

Brause, R. S. (1999B). Identifying your dissertation topic and your research questions. In *Writing your doctoral dissertation: Invisible rules for success*(pp. 37-47). New York, NY: Routledge. Retrieved from the Walden Library databases.

Web Center for Social Research Methods. (n.d.). *Research Methods Knowledge Base.*Retrieved from **http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php**

Walden University. (2010). ***Research design: Some thoughts on the research* process.** Minneapolis. MN: Walden University.

Trochim, W., & Land, D. (1982). Designing designs for research. *The Researcher, 1*(1), 1-6. Retrieved from **http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/desdes.php**

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Walden University, Center for Research Quality. (2012). *Ph.D dissertation process and documents.*Retrieved from **http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/osra/phd**

               Dissertation Prospectus Guide

                 Dissertation Student Process Worksheet

**Media**

Laureate Education (Producer). (2010a). ***Dissertation research* process** ~~[~~Multimedia file]. Baltimore, MD: Author.

Laureate Education (Producer). (2010b). ***Overview of qualitative research methods.***Baltimore, MD: Author.

**Student 2 MH**

**Dissertation Topic:**The effects of incarceration on recidivism for adult offenders in Louisiana

**Problem Statement:**There are few studies about the impact of incarceration on recidivism, more specifically, offender-family relationships and post-release employment. Duwe and Clark (2013) found that visits from in-laws, siblings, and parents reduced recidivism. Not only are social ties critical for emotional support, but also important for helping offenders obtain employment. Unemployment was the most influential factor for recidivism, regardless, of race and education (Lockwood, Nally, & Ho, 2016). Offenders who are not able to obtain employment post-release may be likely to resort to criminal activity to sustain and provide sustainability to their families, which may result to re-incarceration or recidivism.

**Purpose Statement:**The purpose of this quantitative study is to determine the extent of the influence of the effects of incarceration, specifically, offender-family relationships and post-release employment, on recidivism among adult offenders.  This study aims to determine if the effects of incarceration influence recidivism for adult offenders in Louisiana.

#### ****Research Questions****: This study will aim to answer the research questions (RQ):

#### RQ1: What is the relationship of offender-family relationships and post-release employment on recidivism for adult offenders?

#### RQ2: To what extent does incarceration affect post-release employment?

*RQ*3: To what extent does incarceration impact the relationship between offenders and their families?

#### Explain what you learned from your required readings and Walden Dissertations, on problem and purpose statements and formulating research questions that flow logically from these.

The problem statement specifies the issue(s) that lead to the research questions. It explains what the issue is and why it is an issue (Simon, 2011a). The lack of something is not the problem, but what is happening because of the lack is the problem. The problem should not be an issue of which the solution can be googled or there would be no need for a study. The purpose statement tells the major objective, or goal of the study (Simon, 2011a). The purpose statement informs the readers about the intent of the researcher. Research questions tells what the researcher want to know (Simon, 2011a), the questions they hope to answer in their study. The answer to a research question should be important and amenable to the formulation of a clear hypothesis (Simon, 2011a). Research questions should also consist of questions that will generate answers that are will address the problem and the and fulfill the purpose of the study.

**Summarize the ways all these sections are aligned and why that is required for quality and rigorous dissertation research.**

The sections are aligned because one section complements another and will serve as a guide for the next section. After the problem statement was addressed, the purpose of the study will inform readers of the intent to find answers about the problem and the approach to seeking answers. The research questions will guide the study. Also, the researcher will ask questions that are likely to generate answers to the problem that can be amenable in social science to help inform future research and policies. The research questions allow the researcher to know which research study method will be most appropriate for the study (i.e. quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods). This information helps the researcher determine how data will be collected, the type of data collected, and the instrument(s) used (Weintraub, 2017). After formulating the research questions, the researcher can move on to choosing the most appropriate design for the study.  Alignment keeps the problem and purpose of the study in focus. Alignment allows the researcher to choose the right research design for the study to mitigate any threats to validity. It is critical for the research components to be aligned to prevent errors that may occur later in the study.

**References**

Duwe, G., & Clark, V. (2013). Blessed be the social tie that binds: The effects of prison visitation on offender recidivism.*Criminal Justice Policy Review, 24*(3), 271-296. doi:10.1177/0887403411429724

Lockwood, S. K., Nally, J. M., & Ho, T. (2016). Race, Education, Employment, and Recidivism among offenders in the United States: An exploration of complex issues in the Indianapolis Metropolitan Area. *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences, 11*(1), 57-74. Retrieved from https://ezp.waldenulibrary.org/login?url=https://search.proquest.com/docview/1800742299?accountid=14872

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Weintraub, D. (2017, Summer). Alignment: The key to a strong dissertation. Nova Southeastern University. Retrieved from https://education.nova.edu/summer/2017sessionmaterials/Required\_T1\_Alignment\_Presentation\_Weintraub.pdf

**Resources**

#### Readings

**Public Policy and Administration**

* O’Sullivan, E., Rassel, G. R.,  Berner, M., & Taliaferro, J. D. (2017). Research methods for public administrators (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
  + Chapter 2, “Designs for Description” (pp. 28-57)
  + Chapter 3, “Designs for Explanation” (pp. 58-100)
* Web Center for Social Research Methods. (n.d.). Research Methods Knowledge Base. Retrieved from <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php>

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* Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R. R. (2015). Surviving your dissertation: A comprehensive guide to content and process (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. ISBN: 978-1-4522-6097-6
  + In Chapter 2, “Selecting a Suitable Topic,”  ‘Generating researchable questions’ (pp. 21–26)
  + Chapter 3, “Methods of Inquiry: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches” (pp. 27–65)
  + Chapter 5, “The Method Chapter: Describing Your Research Plan” (pp. 99–135)
  + Readings on research design, pages listed in Subject Index under “Research design,” (p. 359)
  + Readings on research questions, pages listed in Subject Index under “Research questions,” (p. 359)
  + Chapter 10, “Writing” (pp. 259–279)
* Brause, R. S. (1999b). Identifying your dissertation topic and your research questions. In Writing your doctoral dissertation: Invisible rules for success (pp. 37–47). New York, NY: Routledge.  
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* Simon, M. K. (2011a). Developing research questions. In Dissertation and scholarly research: Recipes for success (pp. 1–3). Seattle, WA: Dissertation Success. Retrieved from <http://dissertationrecipes.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/Developing-Research-Questions.pdf>
* Walden University, Center for Research Quality. (2012). Ph.D. dissertation process and documents. Retrieved from <http://academicguides.waldenu.edu/researchcenter/osra/phd>
  + Dissertation Prospectus Guide
  + Dissertation Student Process Worksheet

#### Media

* Laureate Education (Producer). (2010a). [*Dissertation research process*](http://mym.cdn.laureate-media.com/2dett4d/Walden/PPPA/8115/CH/mm/dissertation/index.html) [Multimedia file]. Baltimore, MD: Author.

## Optional Resources

* Laureate Education (Producer). (2010b). [*Overview of qualitative research methods*](http://streaming.waldenu.edu/hdp/researchtutorials/qualitative/index.html). Baltimore, MD: Author.
* Laureate Education. (Producer ). (2010c). [*Overview of quantitative research methods*](http://streaming.waldenu.edu/hdp/researchtutorials/quantitative/index.html). Baltimore, MD: Author.

**Assignment**

## Application: Research Design, Strengths and Limitations, and Rationale

|  |
| --- |
| **Note**: Complete the Week 7 Discussion before completing this Assignment. |

Research designs and methods are not created equal. Each design and method has its strengths and limitations. True experimental research designs, for example, tend to have higher levels of validity compared to ex post facto designs. Once you decide on your research design this week and the method, which you will cover in Week 8, it is important to evaluate limitations of each and consider how you will attempt to prevent or minimize them in your study.

Either determining research questions or the research design might come first; most likely, you will circle back from one to the other until they are aligned and one flows logically from the other. It is necessary to have both in place before deciding on your methodology.

To prepare for this Assignment, review the Learning Resources for the week. Your research design represents the structure of your study. In other words, the research design includes (a) elements of treatment; and (b) the number, type, relationship, and strategies to control the variables you are studying.  It also includes (c) the number and type of individuals or groups in your sample.  Finally, the research design includes (d) the measurements; (e) sampling methods; (f) data collection time frame; and (g) setting (Walden University, 2010).  Research methods are used to carry out research designs; methods fall under two broad categories: (a) Quantitative (e.g., experimsental, quasi-experimental) and (b) qualitative (e.g., case study, grounded theory, ethnography) (Trochim & Land, 1982). More on that in Week 8.

Again, your problem statement and research questions will help you determine your research design, and your research design will help determine your research method.  In this Assignment, you will select a research design and examine its appropriateness for your potential research.

In your Discussion assignment, you have posted at least two research questions. In the Week 7 Application Assignment, using the required readings and media resources on research design, write 4-5 pages (a) describing at least **one potential research design**you could use, (b) the **strengths and limitations**(including reliability and validity issues) of that design selection, and (c) the **rationale**for your selection: Finally, explain how your problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions align with your proposed methodology and design. Be specific.

The latter will become part of your Prospectus section on the nature of the study, together with your chosen methodology.

Support your Application Assignment with specific references to all resources used in its preparation. You are asked to provide a reference list for all resources, including those in the Learning Resources for this course.

**­­­­Dissertation Topic for the Assignment:**

“Efficacy of Offender Reentry Programs Targeting Recidivism in the United States”

**1. Role of the IRB**

The institutional review board is an appropriately constituted research enterprise designated to review and approve studies that involve human subjects as per the Walden University, Federal and state regulations. The IRB provides oversight and guidance on a variety of processes and human participant protection program in compliance with applicable regulations and laws (Endicott,2010a). It helps streamline proposed scientific methods in order to achieve high-quality research on human subjects. Its main role is to protect the rights and welfare of humans who participate as subjects in research. The IRB achieves its roles by using group process in reviewing research protocols and related materials such as the investigator brochures and the informed consent documents. The IRB will ensure that those participating in research are exposed to minimize risks in spite of the benefits resulting from the study (Walden University, Institutional Review Board., 2013.

**2. Explain ethical problems**

My topic of research is the “Efficacy of Offender Reentry Programs Targeting Recidivism in the United States".Considering the nature of this study, I will expect ethical challenges during the interaction with the participants during the different stages of the study. The first ethical problem will be the informed consent of the participants. The participants especially prisoners are extremely vulnerable and therefore I will consider them as autonomous individuals. Confidentiality is another ethical problem especially with the entrusted information concerning the efficacy of reentry programs. This is a sensitive issue and therefore my responsibility will be to safeguard this information and to wrongly disclose it. This will be significant in showing respect to the participants and ensuring the integrity of my research project. Breaching on confidentiality has a negative impact on trust between me and the reputation of the research community. Anonymity is another ethical challenge that might result from this research. Protecting a participant identity is an important aspect I will consider in ensuring that they are safe from suspicions. Information like their names, title, age, gender or even the length of service especially for government officials will be a major priority.

**3. Impact of these potential ethical challenges**

A major impact of these ethical challenges will be the integrity, validity, and reliability of my research findings. The readers will want to get an assurance if the appropriate IRB regulations and guidelines were followed for instance issues related to human rights, conflict of interest and the law. Following ethical standards will have a huge impact in promoting the pursuit of knowledge on the efficacy of offender reentry programs in the United States. Ensuring that there is confidentiality of the participants is a major boost in building trust with the participants and therefore prevent against the falsification of data (O’Sullivan et al., 2017). Since this is sensitive research, ensuring the anonymity of participants, for instance, the wardens, prisoners or government officials will help in protecting them against suspicion of leaking vital information. Some participants can lose jobs or be suspended. In case of funding needed, the sponsors will assess if I followed the correct ethical procedures in collecting my data.

1. **Ways to address these ethical challenges to the IRB to ensure integrity in the research process**

I will address ethical issues related to the consent of the participants by fully informing them about the nature of my project. I will make sure they understand how the results will be utilized, shared and the potential risks. The participation will be on a voluntary basis. The human subjects will be able to decide on the acceptability of releasing their private information and the adequacy of their protection. I will be following the correct protocols that will minimize the collection of identifiable information about the participants during the process. My data will be based on the need to know basis. I will be careful in how I draft my report to make sure that the subjects are not identified easily based on their names, age, title, interests or gender.

1. **Ethical values I hold that underlie my response**

I believe that people should be protected against any harm that may arise from my study. My research on the efficacy of offender reentry programs and recidivism is a sensitive issue that requires special attention to the participants’ welfare. Some could lose their jobs if they are identified by their authorities or seniors. I value honesty and independence in analyzing and interpreting results without the influence of external sources. I believe I am bound by moral obligations to the society and responsibility in protecting the rights of human subjects. Adhering to ethical standards is a major aspect of ensuring the reliability and safety of my research subjects.

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O’Sullivan, E., Rassel, G. R.,  Berner, M., & Taliaferro, J. D. (2017). *Research methods for public*

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                Research Ethics Planning Worksheet

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Walden University, Scholars of Change. (2013). *Courtney Skiera, Ph.D. in psychology*[Video file]. Retrieved from **http://www.waldenu.edu/about/multimedia/walden-community/scholars-of-change/2013-winners/courtney-skiera#waLightbox/1/**

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**The significance of my proposed study**

My proposed study is the Efficacy of Offender Reentry Programs Targeting Recidivism in the United States. Our society faces a lot of challenges in areas such as social inequality and political alienation due to negligence lack of policies to address them(Callahan et al, 2012). My research will play an important role in addressing these challenges through the stimulation of transformation changes in minimizing the high rates of recidivism in the United States. I believe my study will be significant in advancing societal well being of communities in the United States.The high rates of recidivism affect all members of society. An increase in crime affects the economy, education and other sectors driving the country. Identifying the right reentry programs that will minimize increased cases of inmates being rearrested and putting pressure to the government. Through my research, the political powers will get enough knowledge on the need to address these challenges through policy making and funding to relevant agencies. Most of the inmates need integration into society. Creating programs and policies that will help them is a reason why I decided to research on this societal issue. Most leaders have neglected reforms policies which in return puts a lot of pressure on the government.

**Dissertation topic.**

The dissertation topic, I settled on from week one was; Efficacy of Offender Reentry Programs Targeting Recidivism in the United States. For this weeks assignment, I am developing and revising the topic and formulating a problem statement in the dissertation process. The subject of prison reforms receives little attention and has less political popularity, making the area an abandoned area regarding political power. There is a significant research gap, evidence to show that the problem is significant in the field, enough scholarly articles for the topic to build on the literature review and the problem is amenable to a scientific study as evaluated using the Litmus test (Academic Guides: Research Resources: Research Planning & Writing).

**Problem statement.**

Offender reentry programs in the United States remain an area of concern with an alarmingly high rate of Recidivism within 3-5 years of release from prison and correctional facilities. Although there are strong unions of correctional officers, they mainly aim at increasing the jail term and not improving the conditions and programs inside and outside the prisons after the jail term. Prisoners have little political power due to the little popularity of the area to political leaders. Furthermore, there are no proper political reforms that can advocate for the allocation of more funds to improve the process of offender re-entry programs into society.

Muhlhausen (2015), found out that approximately 67.8% of released prisoners get rearrested within three years for a new crime and the rate increases to 76.6% within five years. Although the higher rate of 95-97% incarcerated citizens in the United Staes being released back into the society, there are no active programs in the re-integration process. To date, there is no clear evidence of the most effective programs that can help to reduce the recidivism rates and help in re-integration for the ex-convicts. Perhaps a study which investigates the efficacy of the offender re-entry programs targeting recidivism in the United States by a mixed-method case study could be useful in determining the most effective remedy programs and assist in policy formulation in the area of prison reforms.

**Use of the Walden Doctoral Capstone Resources in the Dissertation Process**

The Walden Doctoral Capstone Resources have been very useful from the first week. The resources helped me a lot in developing the dissertation topic. For this week the resources have been useful, especially the Litmus test resource in the development of the problem statement for the dissertation process. Besides the resources are proving to be handled in refining my skills of using the APA citation style in my academic work.

I plan to utilize the resources in the different stages of the research process. The first step in the research process will be the development of the proposal with the capstone resources as a guide. First, the resources on developing an annotated minibiography will be useful when evaluating the credibility of my sources. After I choose the various sources, the Walden resource will come in handy in the development and complication of the literature review. In the later stages of the research, the resources will be useful when choosing the correct research paradigm and methodology. Throughout the dissertation writing process, I will be able to refer to some examples of quality dissertations listed in the Walden Capstone resources which will form a backbone that I can use to evaluate the quality of my dissertation. The Spss resource in the website will be a useful guide during the analysis of the statistical data and the organization, interpretation of the results and the discussion of the findings (Academic Guides: Doctoral Capstone Resources: Home).

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Premise Paper

**Dissertation topic.**

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**Problem statement.**

Offender reentry programs in the United States remain an area of concern with an alarmingly high rate of Recidivism within 3-5 years of release from prison and correctional facilities. Although there are strong unions of correctional officers, they mainly aim at increasing the jail term and not improving the conditions and programs inside and outside the prisons after the jail term. Prisoners have little political power due to the little popularity of the area to political leaders. Furthermore, there are no proper political reforms that can advocate for the allocation of more funds to improve the process of offender re-entry programs into society.

Muhlhausen (2015), found out that approximately 67.8% of released prisoners get rearrested within three years for a new crime and the rate increases to 76.6% within five years. Although the higher rate of 95-97% incarcerated citizens in the United Staes being released back into the society, there are no active programs in the re-integration process. To date, there is no clear evidence of the most effective programs that can help to reduce the recidivism rates and help in re-integration for the ex-convicts. Perhaps a study which investigates the efficacy of the offender re-entry programs targeting recidivism in the United States by a mixed-method case study could be useful in determining the most effective remedy programs and assist in policy formulation in the area of prison reforms.

**Use of the Walden Doctoral Capstone Resources in the Dissertation Process**

The Walden Doctoral Capstone Resources have been very useful from the first week. The resources helped me a lot in developing the dissertation topic. For this week the resources have been useful, especially the Litmus test resource in the development of the problem statement for the dissertation process. Besides the resources are proving to be handled in refining my skills of using the APA citation style in my academic work.

I plan to utilize the resources in the different stages of the research process. The first step in the research process will be the development of the proposal with the capstone resources as a guide. First, the resources on developing an annotated minibiography will be useful when evaluating the credibility of my sources. After I choose the various sources, the Walden resource will come in handy in the development and complication of the literature review. In the later stages of the research, the resources will be useful when choosing the correct research paradigm and methodology. Throughout the dissertation writing process, I will be able to refer to some examples of quality dissertations listed in the Walden Capstone resources which will form a backbone that I can use to evaluate the quality of my dissertation. The Spss resource in the website will be a useful guide during the analysis of the statistical data and the organization, interpretation of the results and the discussion of the findings (Academic Guides: Doctoral Capstone Resources: Home).

**Efficacy of Offender Reentry Programs Targeting Recidivism in the United States**

Efficacy of Offender Reentry Programs Targeting Recidivism in the United States

I arrived at the above topic after an extensive search and review of the literature concerning the prison reforms, specific rates of recidivism and the reentry programs. Initially, I had made an observation and did prior research on the topic of the effectiveness of reentry programs, so I already had an idea of what I wanted to research on. Any issue concerning prisoners receives little popularity in politics, and therefore prisoners have little political power. There is no proper political constituency to pressure for the funding of prisoner’s reintegration into the society. The process of reentry even becomes more difficult for individuals with multiple jail terms. The unions of correctional officers are powerful, but they urge for increased prison time and not for improving the conditions and programs in the prisons and after the imprisonment.

The primary interest in studying the topic is because of the alarmingly high levels of recidivism even with the reentry programs put in place. According to data from the Justice Department’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), 2014 67.8% of released prisoners get rearrested within three years for a new crime. The rates of recidivism for five years was 76.6 %( Muhlhausen, 2015). Around 95-97% of incarcerates citizens in the US will be released back into society. However, after release life for the ex-convict may become unbearable with no proper or effective system for re-integration into the society. The ex-convicts are released with nothing to call their own-no housing, no food, no clothing and no way to contact their relatives.

Furthermore, other factors such as stigma, deterioration of social networks and economic distress that affect the reentry into the community; the adverse effects of such consequences of the ex-convicts with no proper reentry programs contribute to recidivism.

Around the early 1990s, the Department of Justice has invested many funds into the prisoner reentry programs. However, currently, there is no adequate knowledge of the most effective programs for assisting inmates to reintegrate successfully and safety into society. Furthermore, policymakers need to ensure that the evaluation of programs is based on the primary purpose for which it was established. Recidivism remains the most effective measure of assessing the impact of the programs for prisoner’s reentry. However, there is still some criticism on the use utilization of recidivism as a measure of effectiveness as compared with other factors used to assess the reintegration process (Muhlhausen, 2015).

The rates of recidivism suggest a problem with the reentry programs already in place. While common measures such as housing and employment are critical, the factors are not the primary goal of reentry programs (Muhlhausen, 2015). The lack of adequate measures for the effectiveness of reentry programs targeting recidivism makes the topic worth for further studies and recommendations. There is a lack of focus for policymakers. I am placing primary importance of the recidivism rates as a measure of the effectiveness of reentry programs. Additionally, there is a need to appraise programs about their outcome on the primary purpose for which they were employed.

Research on the evaluation of prisoner reentry programs based on employment shows that the programs play a minimal role in reducing recidivism (Muhlhausen, 2015). The outcomes of scientifically based evaluations raise some doubt regarding the effectiveness of the involvement of the federal government in reducing the cost of reentry programs.

There is a general assumption by policymakers that assisting ex-convicts to get employment has an impact on the rates of recidivism (Travis et al., 2014). The program assumes that employment helps ex-convicts to desist from crime. However, the primary question is the timing of the employment for ex-convicts and not the employment opportunity itself. The author, Mulhausen (2015) states that there are theories on the relationship between resistance and employment among individuals who leave the criminal justice system. The first premises are the maturation viewpoint, which states that desistance from crime, happens before the acquisition of legitimate employment while the turning point theory presumes that resistance happens after the ex-convict gets employed. Assuming that the maturation theory is more accurate, then assisting prisoners to get employment before they are ready to reform is unproductive. The process of reforming a prisoner and their identity to that of a law-abiding citizen is a complicated procedure that should precede legitimate employment. For example, a prisoner has to change the mindset and realize that a crime has more harm than benefits.

Although federally funded reentry programs offering employment can be sufficient evidence shows that it is vital for ex-convicts to be psychologically stable before they can be productive in the workplace. Reentry programs that offer a multifaceted approach have more results that are positive. There is still a gap in the research, mainly on a large scale to shed some light on what programs are effective and which ones are not (Travis et al., 2014).

The topic has much significance in society due to a large number of prisoners (up to 700, 000) released from prison early in the United States. Studies show that ex-convicts face many challenges when reintegration back into society. Reentry programs varied based on the services offered and treatment modalities to deliver the services. Among the 700000 ex-convicts, about two-thirds are rearrested are reincarnated within three years. Despite the vast number of reentry programs, little is known about their effectiveness. It is critical to determine whether the reentry programs are useful in the recidivism rate reduction and the factors associated with the highest success rates.

**Relationship of the topic to public policy and administration**

In 1968, H. George Frederickson developed a theory of equity in the society and advocated it as the third pillar of public administration (Toavs, n. d). The theory was concerned with how public administration was ignoring the economic and social conditions of different citizens. The assumptions are seen in the case of ex-convicts with no proper ways of evaluating what reforms are best for this group of citizens. It is essential for policymakers to streamline reentry programs to suit the immediate needs of the ex-prisoners first before considering the long-term outcomes (Kendall et al ., 2018). Therefore, the public administration should promote social equity for the ex-convicts to reduce the rates of recidivism. The current post-release programs have a limited effect on the long-term outcomes and rates of recidivism. The impact of the system of prisons on society is tremendous although it is an unpopular area. The prison system is a direct reflection of the effectiveness of the rule of law but happens to have an impact on the society where the prisoners come from and return to after the jail term (Harvard Law Review, 2010).

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**Annotated bibliography: Efficacy of Offender Re-entry Programs Targeting Recidivism in the United States**

Berghuis, M. (2018). Re-entry Programs for Adult Male Offender Recidivism and Reintegration: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 62*(14), 4655–4676. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X18778448>

Berghuis (2018) assessed the re-entry programs effectiveness about reducing recidivism among male adult offenders. The systemic review and metanalysis evaluated retry programs focused on male offender’s re-entry into the community with recidivism as the primary outcome. The findings reflect the variability of the effectiveness of various re-entries. The recommendations involved the development of program evaluations, standardized measures or re-integration, the definition of the successful re-integration process and focused on both individual and systemic variables of re-entry. The study lacks a clear guide on how the recommendations are implemented. Also, the results could have gained more credibility by taking into consideration multiple ethnic groups.

Calleja, N. G. (2018). Translating research into practice: Designing effective re-entry services for adolescent offenders. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*.

Calleja (2018) reviews a model design of a suitable specialized re-entry program for juveniles that led to a decrease in the rates of recidivism to less than 50 percent rate of the control group. The re-entry program evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the “Wayne County Second Chance Re-entry Program (WC-SCA)” which is a collaborative project involving community support partners, treatment providers, law enforcement department and administrators of juvenile justice. The program has been identified as a potential active practice in the planning of offender re-entry into the public and the reduction of recidivism in the juvenile group. The best re-entry planning practices are highlighted throughout the article. The model is an outcome of significant efforts in the past in the field of re-entry planning and evaluation. The article fails to provide the limitations and weakness of the program. Furthermore, there is no comparison with other successful programs that can be used if the model fails.

Duwe, G., & King, M. (2013). Can Faith-Based Correctional Programs Work? An Outcome Evaluation of the Inner Change Freedom Initiative in Minnesota. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 57*(7), 813–841. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X12439397>

Duwe and King (2013) examine the efficacy of religious-based re-entry programs in reducing the rates of recidivism. The retrospective quasi-experimental study analysed the recidivism rates in ex-offenders who had gone through the “Inner Change Freedom Initiative” which is faith-based. The results from the study revealed that the religious programs had a significant positive impact in reducing recidivism rates. The findings suggest a role for continuity of mentoring and support as a contributory factor as applied to the community’s study lacks a definite recommendation on improving the outcomes of re-entry services.

Early, K. W., Chapman, S. F., & Hand, G. A. (2013). Family-focused juvenile re-entry services: A quasi-experimental design evaluation of recidivism outcomes. *Journal of Juvenile Justice, 2*(2), 1.

Early et al., (2013), evaluated the effectiveness of family-focused and community-based probation services for the juveniles on recidivism. The quasi-experimental studies aimed to compare the outcomes of standard aftercare and the family-focused “Parenting with Love and Limits™ (PLL)” provided through the Indiana, St. Joseph County Probate Court. The findings show lower rates of recidivism for youths receiving the services of aftercare with statistically significant differences for readjustments. The recommendation involves proper timing of the re-entry programs to improve the effectiveness.

Hunter, B. A., Stephen Lanza, A., Lawlor, M., Dyson, W., & Gordon, D. M. (2016). A Strengths-Based Approach to Prisoner Re-entry: The Fresh Start Prisoner Re-entry Program. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 60*(11), 1298–1314. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X15576501>

Hunter et al., (2016) explore the “Fresh Start Prisoner Re-entry Program” which utilizes a strength-based approach to re-integrate men ex-convicts in the United States into the community. The qualitative analysis of the program begins from the start of incarceration to the successful re-integration into the society with continuous reporting of the respondent’s risks, limitations needs, and strengths. Throughout the process, interventions were developed to boost the strengths of the participants. Findings show that the strength-based programs are more effective in reducing recidivism as compared to the risk-based programs.

Gill, C., & Wilson, D. B. (2017). Improving the success of re-entry programs: Identifying the impact of service–need fit on recidivism — *criminal Justice and Behaviour, 44* (3), 336- 359.

Gill and Wilson (2017) examined the effect of the “service-need fit” on official and self-reported recidivism using information from the ‘Serious and Violent Offender Re-entry Initiative’ (SVORI) study and analyze the degree of correspondence between the services offered to ex-offenders and self-reported needs of the individuals concerning recidivism rates. The findings reflect a reduced rate of recidivism with an increased fit. Also, findings indicate that less than half of the respondents receive the services they say they need making the services provide ineffectively. The results provided could have been strengthened by a provision of a clinically based risk assessment rather than a service-need fit. Recommendation involves the implementation of policies that support the strength-based program for re-entry.

James, N. (2015). Offender re-entry: Correctional statistics, reintegration into the community, and recidivism. *Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress.*

James (2015) examines the various aspects of re-entry programs starting from the statistics from correctional systems to highlight the weight of the problem, an explanation of offender re-entry and the summarizes the literature of the re-entry programs that work. He concluded that the majority of the successful programs follow three phases; programs during incarceration, programs during the release period and the programs of reintegration. Literature suggests that programs focusing on housing mental health and drugs are effective. The article suggests the most effective programs are those that are implemented within one year of release from prison.

Jonson, C. L., & Cullen, F. T. (2015). Prisoner re-entry programs. *Crime and justice, 44*(1), 517-575.

Johnson and Cullen (2015) review re-entry programs and their effectiveness in reducing recidivism in the US over the years; the systematic review describes the problem of re-entry, how the issue becomes a problem socially, the challenges in the implementation of the re-entry program, and the creation of “criminology entry “program. The findings of the review reflect the lack of credibility teachings informing programs, lack of evidence-based practice in the area and lack of regulations that guide civil liability. Only in the past decade has a prisoner re-entry. Recommended involve the development of a ‘criminology of re-entry' and use of evidence-based practice to evaluate programs in the re-entry. The majority of effective programs are in line with the ‘risk-need-responsive model.' The article is essential for my research as it provides a model for the evaluation of the effectiveness of re-entry programs.

Kendall, S., Redshaw, S., Ward, S., Wayland, S., & Sullivan, E. (2018). A systematic review of qualitative evaluations of re-entry programs addressing problematic drug use and mental health disorders amongst people transitioning from prison to communities. *Health & Justice, 6*(1), 4.

Kendal et al., (2018) focused on recently released adult ex-offenders, which had mental-health problems or drug use problems in the United States and identified and synthesized the essential factors that lead to successful reintegration back into the community as defined in qualitative evaluations of re-entry programs. This systematic review and meta-analysis of literature were carried out to analyse current research data in the area with results specifically targeting drug users and mental health individuals. The results suggested that housing, accesses to social support, caseworkers' interpersonal skills and care continuity are during the pre-release, and post-release time frames are all key factors that lead to re-entry program's success and reduction of recidivism. Recommendations included having qualitative data that contextualized the findings of statistical studies and identifies structural and social elements that are effective in reducing recidivism and improving the overall health of an individual. The article lacks clear guidelines on how to evaluate and assess the re-entry program that was recommended.

Smith, A., Heyes, K., Fox, C., Harrison, J., Kiss, Z., & Bradbury, A. (2018). The effectiveness of probation supervision towards reducing reoffending: A Rapid Evidence Assessment. *Probation Journal, 65*(4), 407–428. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0264550518796275>

Smith et al. (2018) carried out a “Rapid Evidence Assessment” of the empirical research in response to the lack of a universally acceptable agreement on the practical methods' probation supervision in articles from Australia, US, UK, and Canada. The findings reflect a reduction in recidivism for offenders who underwent supervision. The recommendation included future research further develops the evidence on the effectiveness of supervision in probation.

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