Reducing Recidivism through Entrepreneurship: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Recidivism is mostly defined as a repetitive act of crime involving ex-convict. The lack of job opportunities and the incapabilities of gaining income due to the status of being involved in criminal act in the past is one of the few factors frequently mentioned being the reason as to why recidivism among them occurred. However, entrepreneurship is said to be able to reduce recidivism as it provides ways for ex-convict to find decent jobs or obtain skills in order to gain income Therefore, this systematic review focuses on how entrepreneurship can reduce recidivism among ex-convict through reviewing a considerable amount of past studies. There were five key methodological steps included in the process namely guided by review protocol, formulation of research questions, systematic searching strategies which involves two mainly established databases namely Scopus and Web of Science and one supporting database namely Google Scholar, followed by quality appraisal and data extraction and analysis. Using thematic analysis, this review contains three themes namely 1) factor that leads to recidivism, 2) the importance of reducing recidivism and 3) entrepreneurship as tool to reduce recidivism. Further analysis from the two main themes leads to the establishment of few sub-themes. This review is expected to bring significant contributions especially in providing an in-depth understanding towards recidivism and how entrepreneurship can be used as a tool to help reduce recidivism. The findings explained the importance of reducing recidivism and how entrepreneurship can be considered as one of the available options for the prisoners/ex-prisoners to gain income and reintegrate into the community.

Keywords: Recidivism, Entrepreneurship, Ex-Convict, Jobs, Criminal

Introduction

Recidivism is a repetitive act of crime by formerly incarcerated people after being released from prison. McKean & Ransford (2004) specifically defined that recidivism is the relapse of an individual into taking part in a criminal activity based upon re-arrests for new offenses which lead to incarceration. However, the definition of recidivism might differ depending on

three major ways which are duration of the time monitored, types of offenses included and inclusions of parole violations. McKean & Ransford (2004) also mentioned that the duration of time monitored may significantly differ from state to state, program to program and the measurement of when duration start and end. The duration measurement may start from when the prisoners are released from prison or from parole supervision. Recidivism is also considered to be a critical social problem (Toader, 2021). USA's statistics shows that 67.5 % of prisoners went back to prison only after three years of released (Langan & Levin, 2002). This shows that the issue can lead to many serious concerns and the major high cost that was imposed to the society which involves the financial cost of both the crimes and the resulting imprisonment as well as increasing towards the crime rate which also took it tolls upon the society as well (Toader, 2021; Sonfield et al., 2001). Field (2020) in an article mentioned that in the US, all researchers have agreed that recidivism is still a huge problem with the increase of the rate of re-arrests. However, the real rate may vary as not all ex-offenders who are involved in criminal again are caught, arrested or even convicted (Mitsianis, 2020). Thus, it is important to reduce recidivism because crime is costly (Luallen et al., 2018).

Klingele (2019) found that the criminal justice system in America nationwide costs an estimated 180 billion US dollar of tax expenditures which probably could fund other government services as well or even utilised by the taxpayers. Meanwhile, Sonfield et al., 2001)stated that recidivism is the cycle in which formerly incarcerated individuals are back to crime and the following prison sentences. Matthew Sonfield, et al (2018) proposes the idea of utilizing small business and entrepreneurial training programmes for soon-to-released inmates and ex-convicts that recently released in 1992. High rate of recidivism occurs due to the difficulty that the ex-prisoners must face in obtaining employment once they are released from prisons (Sonfield, 2008). Hence, the idea was proposed to increase the opportunities for the formerly incarcerated people towards self-employment as well as reducing the rate of recidivism. Even though there are various literatures or other studies which focuses on the study of recidivism and its relation to entrepreneurship. However, a systematic review on the existing studies that identifies pattern and instigate possible theme on recidivism and entrepreneurship is still limited. Moreover, it should be noted that a comprehensive review on recidivism and its link to entrepreneurship has yet been conducted. Shaffril et al. (2020) mentioned that systematically reviewing past studies is very important as traditional literature review faces several issues such as transparency and bias whereby authors would choose articles that is simply related to their research.

One of the ways to review the existing literature systematically are by utilizing the systematically literature review or systematic review (Shaffril et al., 2020). Higgins et al. (2011) defined systematic literature review (SLR) as a formal method that thoroughly identifies relevant research, synthesis it and employs organized, transparent and repeatable procedures at every stage of the process. The protocol in SLR is specified before the review process itself whereby SLR involves a thorough search strategy which enables researchers to respond to specific query (Shaffril et al., 2020; Xiao & Watson, 2019). Even though there are attempts to review literatures on recidivism and entrepreneurship, however the focus was more on entrepreneurship education and its effect on the prisoners rather than reviewing the link of recidivism and entrepreneurship systematically. Guided by the main research question – "Can entrepreneurship reduce recidivism among ex-convict?". This study aims to conduct an SLR that focuses on recidivism and how entrepreneurship can be an option to reduce recidivism. Through this SLR, it is expected that the SLR can contribute to provide better understanding on recidivism and how entrepreneurship can be of help. This review also will

help provides in-depth understanding of the past literatures regarding recidivism and entrepreneurship and can be as reference for policymakers, correctional officials, government officials involved and non-governmental organizations that is involved in providing training and skills to the formerly incarcerated individuals.

Methodology
Review protocol – PRISMA
This review was guided by PRISMA or Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta- Analyses a published standard used to conduct systematic literature review. Shaffril et al (2019) stated that publication standard acquires authors to lead authors with the required information which helps them to assess and examine the quality of a review. Sierra-Correa & Cantera Kintz (2015) stated that PRISMA contains three well-defined advantages which are in order to carry out systematic highlights, PRISMA are able to define the research question specifically. Second, PRISMA can be utilised in order to select the inclusive and exclusive criteria and lastly, large database can be reviewed in a timely manner. PRISMA are used to discover past literatures regarding recidivism and entrepreneurship as a tool to reduce recidivism. The SLR process started with the formulation of the research questions using the PICo method where 'P' stands for Population or Problem, 'I' for interest and 'Co' for context. After the research question a systematical searching strategy was planned and conducted based on three systematic phases: identification, screening and eligibility. In order to ensure that each article selected are of high quality, the next process is the quality appraisal process which is conducted based on the criteria outlined by Hong et al. (2018). The main research question is used to guide the data extraction process, while thematic analysis was utilised in analysing the extracted data.

Formulation of the Research Question
Authors have utilised two sources in order to formulate the research question. Ideas from the previous studies such as Sonfield et al (2001); Sonfield (2009); Cooney (2012) are one of the two sources used to formulate the research questions. Ideas from the articles and all the articles chosen are related and able to describe recidivism and how entrepreneurship can help reduce recidivism. The second sources used is using mnemonics which is PICo, which are refer to 'P' as Population or Problem, 'I' as Interest and 'Co' as Context (Lockwood et al., 2015). Based on these concepts, authors have included three main expects in the searching strategies, ex-convicts (Population), Recidivism (Interest) and Entrepreneurship as a tool to reduce recidivism (Context). Thus, this concept allows authors to formulate the research question for the study as "Can entrepreneurship reduce recidivism among ex-convict?".

Systematic Searching Strategies
Shaffril et al. (2018) proposed that there are three systematic processes used to retrieve articles that are relevant to the study which ae identification, screening and eligibility process. These processes allow authors to draft a systematic and comprehensive plan that allow authors to retrieve articles and analyse them in a timely manner.

Identification
The first procedure of the systematically searching strategies is the identification process. Referring to the main research question, three main keywords for the study are obtained which are ex-convict, recidivism and entrepreneurship. Identification process provides more

option for authors to search for the related and relevant articles by searching through the selected database. Aside from the keywords developed from the main research question, the identification also includes the utilisation of an online thesaurus such thesaurus.com, keywords obtained from the past studies and keywords that is suggested by experts. The keywords and the combination were then processed into search strings and then utilised on Scopus and Web of Science (table 1). The keywords are also used to search in the supporting database selected which Google Scholar. A total of 38 articles are obtained from all the database selected for this study. Manual searching was also conducted in other database. However, result shows that articles obtained from other database are similar to the results obtained from the selected database. Therefore a total of 38 articles obtained through this process.

Screening

The first stage of screening process is to remove duplicate articles. In this screening process, this study has screened all 38 articles obtained from identification process. The screening process was based on the criteria sets beforehand in order to ease the review process as per suggested by Okoli (2015) where researchers are encouraged to determine the range of period of article that they are able to review as it is quite impossible to review all existed articles that is related to recidivism and entrepreneurship. Therefore, authors have decided that the criteria for the year of publication for the articles picked are from 2001 until 2020. Articles or studies from the year of 2000 and below are excluded. Furthermore, only articles published in English are taken into consideration to ease the review process. Through this process, ten articles were removed with seven being removed as they do not fit the inclusion criteria set and three duplicated articles. Thus, the remaining 28 articles went through the next process for the study which is eligibility process.

Eligibility

A total of 28 articles went through eligibility process whereby authors monitored and reviewed the articles manually. Every abstract and title of each remaining articles are read to ensure that the articles are in line with the criteria set and the main research question. This process excluded 18 articles in total whereby three articles are excluded from its abstract, six were excluded from the title and ten excluded from the content which are not focusing on recidivism and utilising entrepreneurship to reduce recidivism. Overall, there are nine articles ready to be review and underwent the next process which is the quality appraisal process.

Quality Appraisal

Authors have utilised the Mixed-Method Appraisal Tool (MMAT) by Hong, et al. (2018) for the quality appraisal stage. Shaffril, et al (2021) stated that this stage is carried out to make sure that the method and analysis of the chosen studies were done satisfactorily. Thus, MMAT tool are then utilised to accomplish this method. MMAT allows researchers to evaluate a systematic mixed-study review that also includes the evaluation of five different types of studies: qualitative research, randomised controlled trials, non-randomised studies, quantitative descriptive studies and mixed methods studies (Hong et al., 2018). This tool ensures the selected qualitative sources were rigorously analysed and had a strong methodology to assist in emphasizing criteria such as the suitability of the research questions to provide adequate data, the adequacy of qualitative data collection to address the research question and the coherence between qualitative data sources, data collection, analysis and

interpretation. Each article was read carefully with focus on the methodology section and assessed based on five criteria with three options provided: "yes", "no" and "can't tell". If the articles passed at least three criteria, articles are included in the review. Overall, all nine articles accessed through this process fulfilled all criteria in the tool.
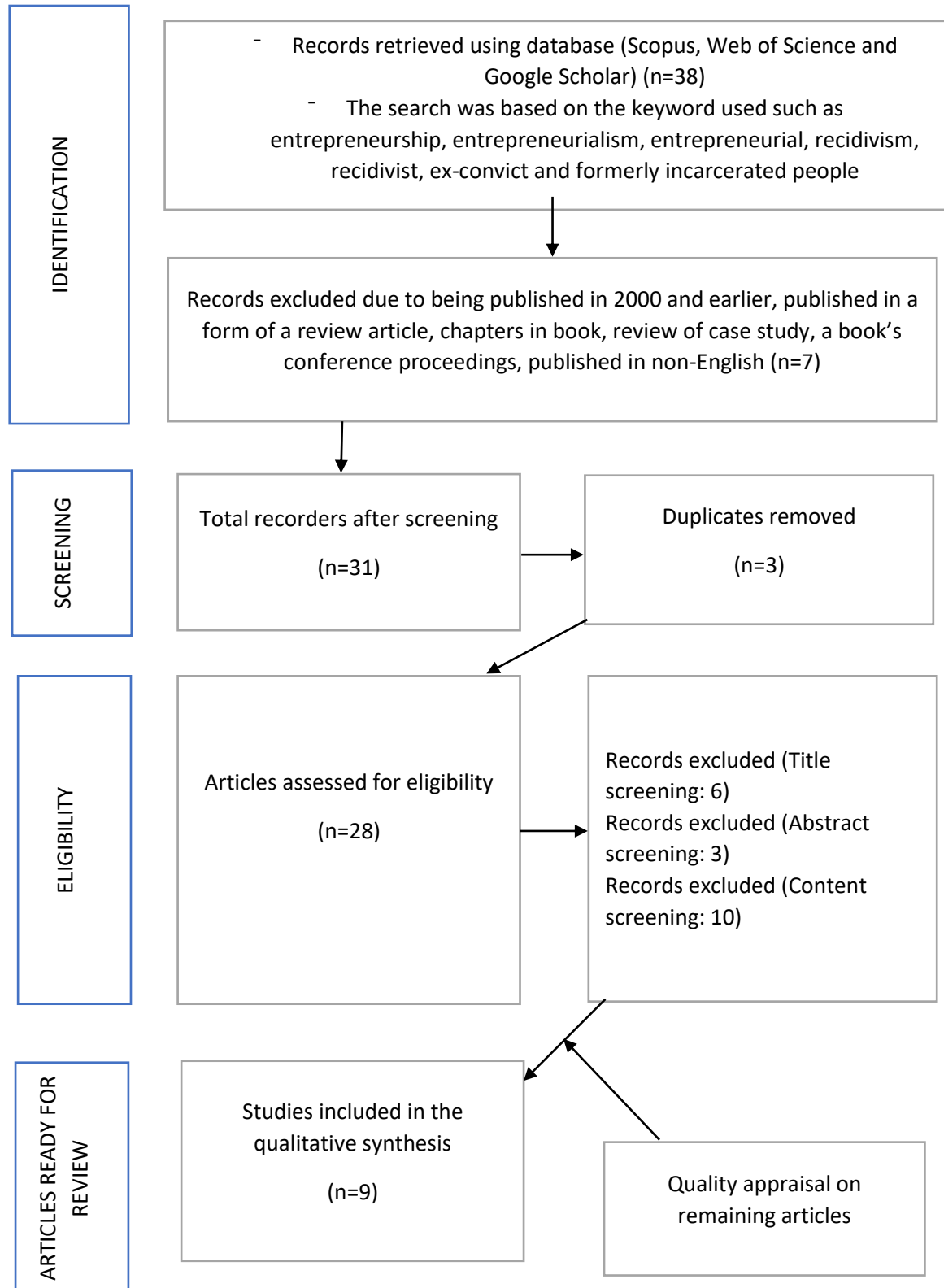

Figure 1: Flow diagram of the searching process

Table 1

Criteria used to determine the methodological rigour and analytical rigour of the selected articles

Research design	Assessment criteria
Qualitative	QA1- Is the qualitative approach appropriate to answer to research question? QA2 – Are the qualitative data collection methods adequate to address the research question? QA3 – Are the findings adequately derived from the data? QA4 – Is the interpretation of results sufficiently substantiated by data? QA5 – Is there coherence between qualitative data sources, collection, analysis and interpretation?
Quantitative (descriptive)	QA1 – Is the sampling strategy relevant to address the research question? QA2 – Is the sample representative of the target population? QA3 – Are the measurements appropriate? QA4 – Is the risk of nonresponse bias low? QA5 – Is the statistical analysis appropriate to answer the research question?
Quantitative (non-randomised)	QA1 – Are the participants representative of the target population? QA2 – Are measurements appropriate regarding both the outcome and intervention (or exposure)? QA3 – Are the complete outcome data? QA4 – Are the confounders accounted for in the design and analysis? QA5 – During the study period, is the intervention administered (or exposure occurred) as intended?
Mixed methods	QA1 – Is there an adequate rationale for using a mixed methods design to address the research question? QA2 – Are the different components of the study effectively integrated to answer the research question? QA3 – Are the outputs of the integration of qualitative and quantitative components adequately interpreted? QA4 – Are divergences and inconsistencies between quantitative and qualitative results adequately addressed? QA5 – Do the different components of the study adhere to the quality criteria of each tradition of the methods involved?

Source: (Hong et al., 2018)

Table 2

Results of the quality assessment

Study	Research Design	QA1	QA2	QA3	QA4	QA5	Number of criteria fulfilled	Inclusion in the review
Thomas M. Cooney(2012)	QL	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5	✓
Abdullah, et al. (2021)	QN(DC)	✓	✓	✓	C	✓	4/5	✓
Keena and Simmons (2015)	QL	✓	✓	C	✓	✓	4/5/	✓
Irankunda, et al. (2020)	QN(NR)	✓	C	✓	✓	✓	4/5	✓
Hwang and Phillips (2020)	QN(NR)	✓	✓	✓	C	✓	4/5	✓
Matthew C. Sonfield (2009)	QN(DC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5	✓
Mwakahesya, U.A (2019)	MX	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5	✓
Sonfield, et al. (2001)	QN(DC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	5/5	✓
Crystal Downing (2012)	QL	✓	C	C	✓	✓	3/5	✓

QA = Quality Assessment; QN(DC) = Quantitative Descriptive; QN(NR) = Quantitative non-randomised; QL = Qualitative; MX = Mixed-Method; C = Can't tell

Data Abstraction and Analysis

In this process, all the articles were analysed thematically, given that the best ways to analyse or synthesise diverse and integrative data is by performing qualitative synthesizing due to its flexible mode (Flemming et al., 2019). A thematic analysis is a type of analysis that identify any similarities or links that may exist in the data obtained from the pattern of previous studies (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Referring from the studies carried by Shaffril, et al (2020), the first step to thematic analysis of this review is to generate themes. In this process, authors familiarise themselves with the concept and important notes of the entire articles selected through active and careful reading. Patterns are then identified from the readings and data are then abstracted from the articles reviewed. The similar pattern identified are then pooled and grouped. This process leads to the findings of three main themes for the review namely factors that leads to recidivism, the importance of reducing recidivism and entrepreneurship as a tool to reduce recidivism. The main data are grouped, and its data were re-examined. This activity then leads to the finding of four sub themes from the articles.

Results

Background of the chosen articles

A total of ten articles were obtained for this review following the methodology guided by the protocol for this systematic review and two themes were then generated for the review referring to the thematic analysis used namely factors that leads to recidivism and

entrepreneurship as a tool to reduce recidivism. Further review and careful analysis lead to the production of four sub-themes. A total of four articles from the overall articles obtained are from the year 2012 and 2020, which two articles are from 2012 and two from 2020. One article each were published from the year 2001, 2009, 2015, 2019 and 2021 each.

Factors that Lead to Recidivism
Stigma
One of the issues faced by many ex-prisoners or formerly incarcerated people that would usually lead them to becoming a recidivist is stigma (Mwakahesya, 2019; Hwang & Phillips, 2020). Severe discrimination faced by the ex-prisoners is one of the important factors that block the success of the reintegration process for them after released from prison (Hwang & Phillips, 2020). Criminal records possessed by the formerly incarcerated people or ex-prisoners portrays a bad and negative perception from the society, thus resulting to ex-prisoners being rejected from both aspects that is socially and economically (Mwakahesya, 2019). The discrimination faced by the ex-prisoners are one of the factors that explains recidivism and leads to them feeling left behind and unaccepted, resulting to them looking for companions who understands and accept them which usually come from the peers or circle from before they were in prison (Cooney, 2012; Mwakahesya, 2019). Mwakahesya (2019) defined stigma in his study as three types of stigmas which are family stigma, community stigma and individual stigma. Family stigma happens when family members of the ex-prisoners or recidivist themselves do not trust their family member and do not believe that they have successfully reintegrated and will no longer involved with any crime activity. Whereas community stigma is categorised into two namely rural community stigma and urban community stigma. Rural community stigma tends to give former inmates more difficult times during their re-integration process as rural people tends to be busy pursuing others life matters and story especially ex-convicts. Then, they tend to isolate ex-convicts which in return causing the ex-convicts to feel discouraged and resulted to them joining with the peers and circle where they feel accepted which probably comes from those before their incarceration period. On the other hand, urban community stigma consists of community which tend to be busy with their own life and do not interfere with other people's affair in which gives former inmates room to focus on their life after prison and work on their reintegration. Individual stigma is a situation where prisoners themselves tends to label their own selves and each other as criminal in which lead to the creation of criminality mindset between themselves. Respondents from this study mentioned that they were devastated and disappointed as normal human being due to their imprisonment which led them to feel scared and felt like a habitual offender psychologically as the environment tempted them to be so.

Table 3

Stigma and Recidivism

No	Stigma	Description
1	Family Stigma	Family members do not trust their family members who are recidivist are able to successfully reintegrate.
2	Community Stigma	• **Rural community stigma** consists of people who are tends to be busy pursuing others life matters and story of other people especially ex-convicts. • **Urban community stigma** consists of people who are occupied with their own life. However, there is stigma when it comes to employment opportunity and business establishment.
3	Individual prisoners' stigma	Prisoner themselves label each other as criminal and lead to the creation of criminal mindset within themselves. They were devastated and disappointed due to their imprisonment which led them feeling scared and felt like a habitual offender psychologically.

The stigma experienced by ex-convicts also affected the opportunity towards a successful reintegration as it creates a negative impact and bad perceptions among potential employers thus leading to another factor that causes recidivism which is unemployment (Sonfield et al., 2001; Keena & Simmons, 2015). They are frequently isolated and ostracised due to their past criminal records and any efforts from the government or any individuals attempting to help with the support services for the formerly incarcerated people are usually met with response from most public questioning on why such effort should be taken on helping ex criminals (Cooney, 2012). Formerly incarcerated people mostly knows and aware they are not free even though they are free from prison as they would face labour discrimination or stigma that led towards unemployment as most employers are cautious upon hiring such people with records and moreover, certain federal and state laws would usually band ex-prisoners from certain field of employment (Sonfield, 2009; Hwang & Phillips, 2020). Some of the ex-prisoners that were employed also revealed that they did not disclose their criminal records due to the fear of being fired (Mwakahesya, 2019).

Unemployment/Underemployment
Lacking opportunities towards employment is one of the important factors that contributes to recidivism (Cooney, 2012; Sonfield, 2009; Keena & Simmons, 2015; Hwang & Phillips, 2020). Most employers have a negative perception towards individuals with criminal records, making extremely difficult for ex-prisoners to obtain employment and lead to recidivism and recidivism between ex-convict who are unable to be employed are higher (Sonfield et al., 2001). Most ex-convicts are unable to lead a decent life like everyone due to the limited opportunity for them to land a job even though that obtained skills from their incarceration period (Mwakahesya, 2019; Abdullah et al., 2021). Mwakahesya (2019) in his study found that the majority of respondent had less than five years since released before going back to prison which signals the issue of recidivism. Recidivism is related to stigma that affect and limit the employment opportunity for ex-prisoners (Mwakahesya, 2019; Sonfield et al., 2001; Hwang & Phillips, 2020). Even though, there are few employers that are willing to hire former inmates for work, however they would usually not willing to advance them to position that requires responsibility due to the negative perceptions on former inmates (Keena & Simmons, 2015). Former inmates would also usually able to land a job with low payment that requires minimum skills (Mwakahesya, 2019). The recent mechanisation trend in the working industry

replaces or limit opportunity of lack of skills, training or personal qualities possessed by ex-convicts (Cooney, 2012). Securing employment is crucial as it enables ex-convicts to be productive, gain responsibility, able to take care of their family, developed valuable life skills as well as strengthening their self-esteem and social connectedness thus ensuring successful re-entry (Keena & Simmons, 2015). Due to the various challenges faced by former inmates to obtain employment, the alternative of fostering self-employment through entrepreneurship for the formerly incarcerated people should be considered (Sonfield et al., 2001).

The Importance of Reducing Recidivism
Cooney (2012) mentioned that prison system nowadays is facing challenges from the 'over-crowding' and 'revolving-door routine'. Moreover, the high cost of incarceration during economic downturns underscores the need to review and improve the existing prison systems and prison rehabilitation practices in many countries. Therefore, to tackle these problems and break the cycle of career criminality, it is crucial for recidivism to be reduced (Cooney, 2012). Recidivism is costly as the increment towards the spending of building of and maintaining prisons are getting out of hand and would lead to tax's increment and recidivism also are risking the safety of public and weakens the ties between family and community therefore takes up major costs to society both on the crimes and the resulting incarceration (Sonfield, 2009; Sonfield et al., 2001). As a result of mass imprisonment, a growing number of people are being released from prisons and returned to society, proving that it becomes more crucial than ever to think about how incarceration affects re-entry and how former inmates who have been released from prison can avoid the traditional path to unemployment and recidivism (Hwang & Phillips, 2020)

Entrepreneurship as a Tool to Reduce Recidivism
Self-employment – Entrepreneurship
A study conducted by Sonfield (2009) mentioned that self-employment through entrepreneurship is one of the possible options to employment after incarceration and ways to reduce recidivism. Due to the lack of employment opportunities for the formerly incarcerated people, some of them choose to be entrepreneurs as it offers them chance to overcome the barriers both economically and socially thus successfully reintegrate through closing the income gap and decreasing the recidivism rate (Hwang & Phillips, 2020). Entrepreneurship also provides community acceptance, financial freedom and the opportunity for a fresh start in community life as ex-inmates start their own business and become sole proprietorships (Mwakahesya, 2019). Self-employment (entrepreneurship) as an alternative career option for the former inmates would benefit not only them but for the prison service and the society (Cooney, 2012). Sonfield et al (2001) study found that some former inmates do possess high level of entrepreneurial aptitude and it appears to be broad among the tested inmates and the result is not dependent upon specific inmates with attributes or exposures to small business or self-employment training. The study further mentions that some former inmates with high level of entrepreneurial propensity and able to successfully reintegrate and avoid recidivism through self-employment comparing through employment that only offer limited opportunity for ex-convicts.
Cooney (2012) compares the activity of crime and its similarities to entrepreneurship and mentioned that both requires the same key characteristics which is a willingness to take risk. This is aligned with Sonfield et al (2001) who emphasized that self-employment would be a great alternative for ex-convict and if such entrepreneurial propensity existed within them,

then a self-employment training for inmates would be able to help them prepare and venture into varieties of new opportunities of entrepreneurship and mitigate the risk of recidivism and help them to adapt socially (Sonfield et al., 2001; Abdullah et al., 2021; Hwang & Phillips, 2020). The benefit of implementing entrepreneurial skills and knowledge to ex-convicts can be seen in the case of the study from (Downing, 2012). Entrepreneurial setting in the Bolivian prison setting is one of the reasons that leads to low recidivism rate as it creates a successive rehabilitative environment as former inmates are released from prison with skills and personal characteristics which allows them to sustain a more stable and law-abiding lives comparing from before being incarcerated (Downing, 2012).

Entrepreneurship Program in Prison
Mwakahesya (2019) define rehabilitation program as a sequence of opportunities planned for inmate to learn with the overall purpose of reducing their subsequent criminal recidivism. Education program within prison traditionally is provided with a rehabilitative component to incarceration with the aims to prepare offenders to return to society and reducing recidivism with a least make them competitive within the job market (Keena & Simmons, 2015). However, rehabilitative program in most prison mainly focuses on employment intervention or education program that provides and teach inmates with vocational skills. Even though, vocational skills is a significant measure to increase employability but it does not prepare them to adapt to the environmental changes such as high employment (Keena & Simmons, 2015). Abdullah et al (2021) findings are aligned with this as they mentioned that emphasizing entrepreneurship skills would enhance management skills through self-accomplishment to build a future career. Entrepreneurship training also provide prisoners ideas and ways on how to deal with problem and risk in the search to become financially independent (Abdullah et al., 2021). Entrepreneurial training or program provided in prison promote entrepreneurship skills among inmates would enable them to establish their own business and foster new entrepreneurs as entrepreneurship education would help them to think beyond employment as act to survive financially (Mwakahesya, 2019; Irankunda et al., 2020; Keena & Simmons, 2015).

A study conducted by Keena & Simmons (2015) found that majority of the respondents learnt through the entrepreneurship program that entrepreneurs are perpetual learners who understand the power of effort together with knowledge. This proves that entrepreneurship education increases the inmate's motivation confidence and their desire to learn. Therefore, in order to help former inmates to be financially independent, career opportunities should be redesigned and if entrepreneurship can be a viable prospects for them, the importance of venturing towards entrepreneurship programs and policies to facilitate the entrepreneurial activities after inmate released as well as understanding the discrimination faced the ex-prisoners in the employment markets should not be taken lightly and noted for further action (Cooney, 2012; Hwang & Phillips, 2020). Entrepreneurial and managerial skills are visible and as successful between drug dealers and its employee comparing with the owners and employees of legitimate business operations thus proving that entrepreneurial or self-employment emphasized training can be a potential can be a potential alternative used to help in reducing recidivism rate if entrepreneurial attribute can be seen among current or former inmate (Sonfield, 2009). Even though entrepreneurial aptitudes may not been visible within all prisoners and such programs may not be suitable for all prisoners, however the entrepreneurship skills and knowledge can offer a various career option or opportunities for the prison community thus would be able to reduce recidivism as they can consider self-

employment through entrepreneurship as viable option to generate income and survived major issue such as stigma and unemployment after released from prison (Cooney, 2012; Sonfield et al., 2001; Mwakahesya, 2019).

Discussion

The objective of this systematic study was to conduct a systematic literature on reducing recidivism among ex-convicts by using entrepreneurship as a tools to reduce residivis. Using thematic analysis, the study has developed three themes and four sub-themes. Further discussion on the developed themes are presented on this section which the challenges faced by former inmates in terms of pursuing entrepreneurship and the importance of providing them with the platform to start their business. Entrepreneurship element is a crucial aspect that should be embedded among inmates undergoing treatment at rehabilitation centre (Abd Rahman & Sanep, 2011). Entrepreneurship is also expected to offer formerly incarcerated people greater economic opportunities than employment, further reducing the tendency of reoffending (Hwang & Phillips, 2020). However, there are a few notable challenges that former inmates have to face in order for them to pursue entrepreneurship or start up a new business such as access to financial assistance to start business as they have no credit history or bank account and the likelihood for them to access loan through the normal channel as individuals with no criminal records is expected to be very difficult (Cooney, 2012). Therefore, removing barriers or challenges that limit the ex-offenders' access to seed capital and expanding entrepreneurship education or training program would be beneficial not only in reducing crime or recidivism rate but improving mass incarceration and complement pro-growth economic policies that encourage more self-employment and entrepreneurship (Irankunda et al., 2020). Even though, entrepreneurship might come with a risk towards the possibility of failure and uncertainty, the stigma that they experience can also means that the expected return from employment is lower for former inmates than the return from pursuing entrepreneurship (Hwang & Phillips, 2020). Moreover, entrepreneurship would offer ex-prisoners with social and psychological incentives that's beneficial to refrain them from additional involvement with criminal activities as entrepreneurship needs responsibility for their business and sometimes the sustenance of others who works for them which in the end, increase the sense of responsibility and commitment of former inmates who runs a business (Hwang & Phillips, 2020).

Conclusion

There are various scholars who has carried out research or studies regarding entrepreneurship and its importance to former inmates in order to reduce recidivism. However, a study that systematically review on this topic is still lacking. By adopting this method, it allows authors to summarize the retrieved articles related to the research question for this study and produced a review that will help those who are directly involved, whether to study entrepreneurship and its benefit to former inmates or to those that are directly involved in the policy planning for the prison community before and after incarceration period. SLR approach were utilised for this study and a total of nine articles were retrieved and appraised for their quality. Moreover, thematic analysis are used since the review are depending on the diversification of research design. A total of nine selected articles are appraised and reviewed resulting to the creation of three main themes for this study namely: (1) factors that leads to recidivism, (2) the importance of reducing recidivism and (3) entrepreneurship as a tool to reduce recidivism. These themes then produce four sub-themes

for this study. The review concluded that former inmates or ex-prisoners are far from free even though they are no longer incarcerated and released from prison as the biggest challenges for them were stigma and the difficulty to get a job. Even if they wanted to turn over a new leaf, stigma and unemployment is the huge hurdles that they must cross over and bare in order to successfully reintegrate. Former inmates will tend to reoffend as they are used to the activity and not willing to go through the discrimination others put on them even if they wanted to change. Both factors relate to one another as negative perception from the community limits the opportunity for the ex-prisoners to be employed or survived. Certain people assume that those who have been involved with crime previously and have a history participating in an illegal activity should not be in the community again. However, scholars who recommends entrepreneurship as an alternative to help former inmates and those who participate in making change to the life of the former inmates believed that these individuals should be given a chance to change and expand their opportunity to reintegrate into the community again and do their part as a responsible citizen and be of benefit to the community again. This SLR bring significant contributions especially in providing an in-depth understanding towards recidivism and how entrepreneurship can be used as a tool to help reduce recidivism. The findings explained the importance of reducing recidivism and how entrepreneurship can be considered as one of the available options for the prisoners/ex-prisoners to gain income and reintegrate into the community. This review also help provides in-depth understanding of the past literatures regarding recidivism and entrepreneurship and can be as reference for policymakers, correctional officials, government officials involved and non-governmental organizations that is involved in providing training and skills to the formerly incarcerated individuals.

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