

**Title: Doing “Life”: An Exploratory Study of the Experiences and Implications  
of Incarceration on Life-Serving Offenders**

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**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

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## ABSTRACT

The Department of Correctional Services in South Africa currently incarcerates more than 160,000 offenders, which is ranked ninth in the world and the highest in Africa. The number of life-serving offenders increased from 433 in 1995 to 13,847 in 2014. This constitutes a psycho-social burden on both offenders, their families and society as a whole. Despite this, very little scholarly research has been conducted on the lived experiences of life-sentenced offenders. This study seeks to address this by exploring the realities, experiences, and implications of serving a life sentence among offenders in the Department of Correctional Services. Using a representative voluntary sample of sixteen male life-serving offenders, a qualitative, exploratory approach using semi-structured schedules for face-to-face interviews was conducted at Voorberg Correctional Centre in the Western Cape of South Africa.

The findings reveal high levels of trauma and mental health challenges being faced daily by those sentenced to life imprisonment. Subsequently, high levels of hopelessness, helplessness, and fear were identified among participants. The study also identified the role of gangs in a correctional facility and overcrowding as a significant obstacle that life-serving offenders are confronted with and that impact their mental health. This study provides a comprehensive set of recommendations involving the cooperation and coordination of all criminal justice stakeholders. Additionally, there is a need for the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) to prioritise the strengthening of human resources, including professionals, provide resources, increase vocational training opportunities for offenders and improve infrastructure within correctional centres. The study concludes that not enough is known about the challenges faced by life sentence offenders and considerably more research needs to be carried out.

**Key words:** *inmate, offender, correctional centre, incarceration, life sentence.*

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## **CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This study explores the experiences and lived realities of life-serving offenders in the Department of Correctional Services (DCS), in Voorburg Management Area in the Western Cape. This chapter will present the context of the problem being researched, the rationale and the significance of the study, its overall aims and objectives, as well as the research ethics that were taken into consideration when the study was conducted. This section presents an outline of the chapters of the research report as well as the conclusion.

### **1.2. Problem Context**

Internationally, the system of correctional services has been utilised as a method of retribution and restriction for centuries. Numerous people have recognised that the circumstances found in correctional facilities are regularly inhumane and they impact the psychological state of offenders negatively (Garcia, 2011).

In contrast, several people are of the view that correctional facilities are beneficial to society because they contribute to the safety of society, by keeping the criminals who are posing danger to society in safe custody (Garcia, 2011). Nonetheless, during current period, the enquiry came up questioning whether correctional institutions are more detrimental than being useful. According to Walters (2010) correctional centres can also be perceived as institutions that are designed mainly to defuse social castoffs by isolating them physically from society.

Incarcerated offenders in South Africa, and in other countries are challenged with a distinctive set of incidents and problems that they are expected to respond and become accustomed to within the correctional environment in order to survive incarceration (Holtzhausen, 2012). Among other things, correctional institutions expect detainees to capitulate their freedom and independence to making their own choices and decisions. This practice needs excruciating conversion for several people and certainly there are people who are unable to fully adjust to incarceration (Holtzhausen, 2012).

After some time, offenders might develop the ability to adapt to the muting of self-initiative and independence that a correctional facility needs and to turn out to be progressively reliant on institutional contingencies that they previously resisted (Holtzhausen, 2012). Ultimately, it could appear more or less normal to be deprived of substantial control over daily choices. In the last phases of the journey, certain offenders may come to rely profoundly on decision makers of the institution to make choices for them and to rely on schedule of the institution to establish their daily routine. Despite the fact it hardly happens to that extent, certain individuals lack the judgement to make choices for themselves as well as the ability to initiate behavior on their own. In addition, many offenders are clearly dangerous (Holtzhausen, 2012). When they are in situations from which there is no exit or escape, offenders learn quickly to become hyper vigilant and ever-alert for signs of threat or personal risk (Holtzhausen, 2012). Because the stakes are high and because there are people in their immediate environment poised to take advantage of weaknesses, exploit carelessness or inattention, interpersonal distrust and suspicion often result.

Broadly, the term “life imprisonment” has different connotations and many times diverse meanings. This observation is supported by the Penal Reform International (2018) which shows that in some countries, being sentenced to life incarceration means that life-sentenced offenders have no right to be considered for release. In the United Kingdom jurisdictions, the minimum period to be served in a correctional facility is determined at the time of sentence by the trial judge. The law does not provide an absolute minimum period (European Committee for Prevention of Torture, 2016).

Similar to South Africa, life-sentenced offenders in most European countries are considered for release after they have served a definite period of detention in a correctional institution. The mandatory minimum period before an offender qualifies for release on parole differs from country to country, as do the conditions upon which they are granted parole.

Vollm, Clarke, Herrando, Seppanen, Gosek, Heitzman and Bulten (2020) cite that most of the countries that are imposing life sentences have a minimum period of between twenty and thirty years. For example, in Arizona, Florida, Kentucky, Tennessee and New

York, the lowest period served by offenders who are sentenced to life imprisonment is twenty five years and in Dakota, South Carolina, Minnesota and Indiana; it is thirty years. According to African Criminal Justice Reform ([ACJR], 2018), the law in South Africa grants the opportunity for offenders who are sentenced to life incarceration to be granted parole release when they have spent a mandatory minimum period in custody. A life sentence in South Africa equates to a sentence of twenty-five years (Criminal Law Amendment Act, 105 of 1997). African Criminal Justice Reform (2018) states that a paroled offender remains on parole for the rest of his or her natural life. Van Zyl Smit and Appleton (2018) discovered that approximately 479,000 persons were serving formal life sentences around the world in comparison with 261,000 in the year 2000, an increase of 84 % in fourteen years. Willis, Barbara and Zaitzow (2015) indicate that approximately 160,000 out of 2.2 million offenders in the United States are serving a life sentence.

Worldwide, South Africa is graded ninth and the highest in Africa as to the size of its offender population (Hargovan, 2015). In 1995 there were 433 offenders serving life sentences in South Africa. By the end of 2014, the total increased to 13,847 (Hargovan, 2015). Van der Westhuizen, (2017) reported that in the 243 correctional centres around South Africa, the population consisted of more than 161,000 inmates. Furthermore, van der Westhuizen (2017) specified that more than 16,000 of the 161,000 offenders are serving life sentences.

Van Zyl Smit and Appleton (2018) show that formal life incarceration exists in 183 out of 216 countries and territories. In 149 of these, it is the maximum penalty offered. It is also the greatest intense penalty in present international criminal courts and tribunals (Van Zyl Smith & Appleton, 2018). According to Van Zyl Smit and Appleton (2018) there are thirty-three countries that do not execute life sentence or the death penalty as the definitive sanction. Life with Parole is the most common type of life incarceration in the world. In 144 of the 183 countries with formal life imprisonment, there is some provision for release while 65 countries execute life sentences without parole.

**Table 1** shows the number and ratio of offenders serving formal life sentence as a percentage of the total prison and national populations in selected countries in 2014.

**Table 1:** Number and ratio of offenders serving life sentence in 2014

Country	Life-sentenced offenders	Percentage of sentenced offenders	Per 100,000 of national population
France	466	0.8	0.7
Germany	1,953	3.6	2.4
India	71,632	53.7	5.5
Kenya	3,676	11.4	8.2
Russia	1,766	0.4	1.2
South Africa	13,190	10.5	22.7
United Kingdom	8,661	11.0	13.4
United States	161,957	9.5	50.3

### 1.3 Definition of key concepts

**Inmate/offender** refers to “*any person, whether convicted or not, who is detained in custody in any correctional centre or is en route from one correctional centre to another correctional centre*” (Correctional Service Act 111 of 1998, p.11). The word inmate and offender are used interchangeably.

Sykes (1999, p.3) defines an inmate as “*a person imprisoned for a crime committed who is awaiting trial or who has been tried in a court of law and found guilty and sentenced for a specific period or for life. This word is used for both genders male and female, young and adult of all race groups whether they are in South Africa or of foreign origin*”.

**Sentenced offender** refers to “*any person who has been sentenced to imprisonment after conviction of an offence as well as a person with a community supervision sentence*” (Department of Correctional Services, Policy on Compulsory Rehabilitation Programs, 2006, p.3).

**Correctional centre** means “*any place established under the South African Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, as a place for the reception, detention, confinement, training*”

*or treatment of persons liable to detention in custody or to placement under protective custody, and all land, outbuildings and premises adjacent to any such place and used in connection therewith and all land and branches, outstations, camps, buildings, premises, or places to which any such persons have been sent for the purpose of incarceration, detention, protection, labour, treatment or otherwise, and all quarters of correctional officials used in connection with any such correctional centre, and for the purpose of section 115 and section 117 includes every place used as a police cell or lock-up”* (Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, 2008, p. 9)

**Incarceration** can be defined as *“the admission into a correctional facility, and confinement of an offender in a correctional centre for the duration determined by the court or in some instances, by statute”* (Llewelyn & Curlewis, 2016, p.2).

**Correctional official** refers to *“an employee of correctional services that should embody the values that the DCS hopes to instil in the offender, as it is this official who is to assist and facilitate the rehabilitation processes of the offender. An attitude of serving with excellence, a principled way of relating to others and above all a just and caring attitude are essential ingredients of the makeup of a correctional official”* (White Paper on Corrections, 2005, p.111).

Ferdik and Smith (2017, p.1) define a correctional official as someone *“who play a pivotal role within the wider correctional system as they are tasked with numerous responsibilities designed to ensure that their respective facilities are operating efficiently”*.

**Life sentence:** *“The Correctional Service Act provides that an offender sentenced to life remains in a correctional facility for the rest of his or her life (s 73 (1) (b) of the Correctional Service Act). A person sentenced to life may not be placed on parole until he or she has served at least 25 years of the sentence, but an offender may, on reaching the age of 65 years, be placed on parole if he or she has served at least 15 years of such sentence”* 73 (6) (b) (iv) of the Correctional Service Act (Llewelyn & Curlewis, 2016. p.6).

#### **1.4 Significance of the Research**

The study's significance rests on finding an understanding of what it is like to serve a life sentence and how long-term incarceration affects the offenders in the South African context. From the literature studied for this research, it is evident that there is a lack of information on the experiences and lived realities of life-serving offenders in South Africa. There is limited research in South Africa on the effects of incarceration and more so for life-sentenced offenders. Clearly, not enough is known about the challenges encountered by life-sentenced offenders (Geaney, 2008).

There is a significant breach in systematic, impartial evidence and very little in literature about life-serving offenders. This study consequently impacts on the gap that exists by bringing enriched understanding of the lived realities of life-serving offenders. This observation is supported by Wakai, Shelton, Trestman and Kesten (2009), who state that correctional facilities are highly structured organisations, and by design are risk-averse and frequently resistant to the changes associated with research. Numerous studies have been done examining the preparation of offenders for re-integration into society (Tomar, 2013). On the other hand there are few studies that have examined the support of offenders during incarceration (Tomar, 2013).

DCS will gain directly from this study as not much is known about the real experiences of life-serving offenders. Exploring the challenges that are encountered by life-serving offenders, as well as the qualitative consequences of serving a life sentence, can contribute towards improving service delivery to life-serving offenders in DCS.

The results of the study will assist the policymakers and practitioners to understand and respond to the challenges of life sentenced offenders. Policymakers will be able to make better decisions on how to deal with long term offenders so that proper intervention is in place. The policymakers will therefore be able to formulate relevant policies for correctional authorities. Correctional services will get an understanding of what needs to be done, by whom, and when, and thus effectively address the needs of life-sentenced offenders.

The findings of this study add value to the management of correctional services in South Africa by assisting the programme designers to develop programmes aimed at the treatment of life-serving offenders. The programme developers will be able to develop need-based programmes that could reduce the negative impact incarceration has on individuals serving a life sentence. The findings will contribute towards monitoring performance and legislative compliance in DCS. Furthermore, the study will contribute towards efforts aimed at improvement of management culture in DCS.

### **1.5 The overall aim of the study**

This is an exploratory study of experiences and lived realities of life-serving offenders from the standpoint of those offenders who are presently serving a life sentence. The purpose is to acquire an understanding and insight into experiences and direct consequences of serving a life sentence in South African correctional facilities. To achieve this goal, sixteen male adult offenders sentenced to a life sentence were interviewed to explore amongst others, the following:

1. To understand daily incarceration experiences as experienced by offenders serving life sentences.
2. To explore the impact long term incarceration has on offenders serving life sentences.
3. To explore the impact long term incarceration has on life-sentenced offender's families.
4. To explore how life-sentenced offenders cope with incarceration.
5. To determine the kinds of services that are available to life-serving offenders.
6. To establish what life-serving offenders think could be done to overcome the challenges they encounter.

### **1.6 Main Research Questions**

Constructed on the viewpoints and lived realities of the offenders who are serving a life sentence in Voorburg correctional facility, the study explores the implications and challenges of serving a life sentence to answer the following questions:

1. What are the consequences of serving a life sentence?

2. How do the life-sentenced offenders cope with their incarceration?
3. What impact does life incarceration have on their families?
4. What kind of services and support is available for life-sentenced inmates in Voorburg correctional facility?
5. What kind of services, programmes and interventions should be made available for life-sentenced offenders?

### **1.7. Research Methodology**

This section presents a brief overview of the research methodology of the study. For the purpose of this study, a qualitative research approach was selected. Qualitative research is a method that permits the researcher to examine people's experiences in detail by utilising an explicit set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions, observation, content analysis, visual techniques, and life histories or biographies (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020). The type of information required is qualitative in nature as the researcher wanted to acquire comprehensive understanding of the experiences and lived realities of life-serving offenders, therefore the qualitative research approach is suitable for this study.

The detailed discussion of methodology will be discussed in chapter 3.

### **1.8 Ethical Consideration**

Arifin (2018) highlights the significance of safeguarding the human subjects in research and according to him that can be achieved through the application of appropriate ethical principles. Additionally, Arifin (2018) states that ethical considerations in a qualitative study, have a specific resonance because of the nature of the study process which is in-depth in nature. The ethical responsibilities were considered by the researcher as an essential fragment of the arrangement and execution of research in this study. The following ethical reflections were taken into consideration:

#### **1.8.1 Informed consent**

Nnebue (2010) cite that one of the significant ethical principles of research on humans is informed consent. He further state that informed consent should be done prior to the

research process. He identifies effective communication as crucial to ensure that prospective participants make informed decision about participating in the research (Nnebue, 2010). Bless, Smith and Sithole (2013) highlight that it is essential for the people who will partake in the study to have full awareness about the research, concerning the goal of the study, how it will affect them, the risks and benefits of participation and the fact that they have the right to decline to partake if they choose to do so. Adequate and accurate information on the objective of the study and the processes were explained by the researcher to respondents individually, prior to the execution of the interviews.

The respondents were provided with a letter of consent which clarified the aim of the study as well as their rights regarding participation. The explanation was done with each individual respondent and they were provided with consent forms to sign before they were interviewed. This was done with the intention of certifying that respondents make well informed decisions, whether they want to partake in the study or not.

### **1.8.2 Deception of subjects and/or respondents**

Loewenburg and Dolgoff (1988), as cited by De Vos et al. (2009 p. 70), defines “*deception of the subject as deliberately misrepresenting facts to make another person believe what is not true, violating the respect to which every person is entitled*”. The researcher did not deny information or offer inappropriate information for the participation of respondents.

Hennink et al. (2020) highlight that the researcher should give a detailed explanation of the purpose of the study. Moreover, they pointed out that the researcher should ensure that the respondent’s rights are adhered to, like the right to receive information about the type of research in which they are participating in (Hennink et al., 2020). The respondents were not misled in any way by the researcher. That was done by providing the real goal of the study before conducting interviews with the respondents. The real function of the respondents was not hidden, as well as the experience in which the respondents would go through, was clearly explained before the conduct of interviews. The researcher presented the respondent with oral and written information on the purpose and main focus of the research. This was done individually to ensure that every respondent clearly understood the real goal of the study.

### **1.8.3 Voluntarily participation**

Rubin and Babie (2005) emphasise that it is not obligatory for the respondents to participate in the study. It was explained by the researcher, before conducting the interviews that respondents have a right to decline to participate or to withdraw their involvement at any time during the process if they choose to do so. Respondents were further informed that they had a right not to answer any research question that they did not wish to answer. All the respondents participated voluntarily.

### **1.8.4 Confidentiality**

Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole (2013) define “confidentiality” as a principle that is required in most research, where the information should be protected and not be accessible to anyone other than the researcher. According to Hennink et al. (2020) guaranteeing complete confidentiality is not easy for the reason that the results of the study are reported and the quotation of the respondents own words are used. However these cannot be connected to a particular respondent.

The issue of confidentiality was included in a consent form and the researcher ensured that the participants got the consent form prior conducting the interviews. Interviews were conducted in a private space and the consent form was explained to each respondent prior conducting any interviews and discussions. The researcher required that each respondent give permission to record their voices, which was granted by twelve respondents. Four of them did not want to be recorded. The respondents who refused to be recorded mentioned that they do not feel comfortable with being recorded. The researcher respected their feelings and adhered to their request and captured the data through writing.

The researcher assured the respondents that the information they shared would be handled in a confidential manner. It was mentioned by the researcher that the only person who can connect the data is the researcher. Respondents were assured that the data would be kept under secure conditions at all times. This allowed the respondents to participate liberally in the study. To maintain confidentiality, the participants were given codes (numbers) when transcribing and translating the data. The researcher ensured that the integrity of the collected data is maintained. That has been done by storing research

records properly. All signed consent forms, data notebook and recorder were kept in a lockable cabinet and the person with access to the cabinet is the researcher alone. The information from the recorder was documented on a hard copy and the recorded information was deleted. Hard copies are kept in a secured cabinet with no access to others except the researcher. The data will be stored for three years. Hard copies will be disposed of, by shredding, and thrown in the dustbin once they are no longer needed.

### **1.8.5 Anonymity**

Anonymity suggests that the researcher should be the only person who is capable of recognising the respondents after the study has been finalised (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont, 2014). Because data were collected through face to face interviews, full anonymity could not be ensured so only partial anonymity was ensured. It was explained to the respondents that the research information would be collected, analysed and reported anonymously. To ensure that respondents remain anonymous, they were kept unidentified throughout the study. There was no personal identifiable information collected. The names of respondents are not specified in the text so that responses cannot be connected to individual respondents. The researcher made use of numbers to identify the respondents. The researcher collected, analysed, and reported data without compromising the participant's identities.

### **1.8.6 Avoidance of harm**

The Research Ethics Committee ([REC], 2019) assert that the researcher has an obligation to ensure that participants are not exposed to any harm or other severe or unreasonable strain as result of the research. In humanities and social science research, the risk of participants being exposed to serious physical danger are diminutive, however, severe mental strain is a possibility (REC, 2019). According to De Vos et al. (2014) it is challenging to envision and determine emotional harm than physical discomfort.

The researcher made certain that the respondents were not vulnerable to any physical and emotional harm, and that was done by the researcher by being observant for any symptoms of uneasiness throughout the interviews. None of the respondents suffered

noticeable emotional harm during the interviews, and neither were they exposed to physical harm.

### **1.8.7 Right to withdraw from the study**

Bless et al. (2013) found that it is crucial to assure respondents that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without being required to explain. The researcher explained to the respondents that at any time and for any reason if they would like to stop participating, they would be allowed to do so and their decision would be respected.

## **1.9 Structure of the Report**

The structure of this report is as follows:

**Chapter 1** presents the statement of the problem, rationale and significance of the study. Study objectives, research questions and ethical considerations are presented.

**Chapter 2** lists the literature reviewed for this research and states the theoretical models, policies, and legislation on this topic.

**Chapter 3** details the research design and methodology that were followed in this research.

**Chapter 4** presents the main findings using a framework of analysis.

**Chapter 5** offers recommendations based on the findings of the research and the researcher made final remarks.

## **1.10 Conclusion**

Chapter one contains the contextual background of the study, the significance of the study, the overall aims of the study, as well as the research ethics that were taken into consideration when the study was conducted. The chapter discusses specific objectives and delineates an outline of the chapters of the research report. The next chapter reviews the literature that is relevant to the research topic.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature reviewed for this research paper as well as the legislation and policies pertinent to the topic. Furthermore, it highlights the theoretical underpinnings of the research. Sources of literature included books, scientific articles, journals, thesis and dissertations. The researcher extensively consulted the available sources on the subject, including both South African and international sources.

This review presents outcomes of studies that have investigated the issue on which the current study is based. What other authors have written about serving a life sentence in the South African context, as well as internationally, was explored with the purpose of getting acquainted with the latest developments about the experiences and lived realities of the offenders who are serving a life sentence.

To sharpen and expand the theoretical framework of this study, the researcher focused on literature that is based on the correctional environment, serving a life sentence, challenges of serving a life sentence, consequences to serving a life sentence, adaptation and adjustment of serving life sentence, coping with incarceration, psychological impact of the long term incarceration, impact on physical well-being and the impact of serving a life sentence on family members. This chapter ends with a conclusion.

#### 2.2 The correctional environment

To understand what it is like is to serve a life sentence, the researcher found it necessary to explore the correctional environment in which life-serving offenders are spending their days of incarceration. Willis and Zaitzow (2015) are of the view that a custodial setting encourages a lifestyle that is highly challenging and a life style that needs a person to adjust to a culture that is unlike any other environment in the outside world. Spasova (2017) describes “correctional facility” as an institution that is characterised with extremely strict and repetitive functioning with people of the same sex. It is an

environment that consists of an internal culture which is a collection of offender-guard relationship, following a specific social organisation with distinct habits, traditions, customs, and hierarchy (Clemmer, 1958 as cited by Spasova, 2017).

The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005), states that the DCS underwent a paradigm transition from being a purely castigatory institution to becoming rehabilitative correctional centres. DCS is required to uphold and promote a just, peaceful, and safe society by correcting offending behaviour in a safe, secure and humane environment, and that is a legislative mandate, which is taken from the Correctional Services Act (1998), the Criminal Procedure Act (1977), the 2005 White Paper on Corrections and the 2014 White Paper on Remand Detention Management in South Africa.

In contrast with the legislative mandate of DCS, Liebling (2014) identifies correctional facilities as an environment that is emotionally fraught, intense, and risky. This observation is supported by James (2003) describing men's correctional centres as an emotionally volatile environment that is regularly soaked with violence and aggression. The correctional environment is defined by Willis and Zaitzow (2015) as a place with its own culture that is characterised by intensified attentiveness to violence and hostility, and hardening of sensation to adapt. Willis and Zaitzow (2015) further describe the correctional environment as apprehensive, depressing, and a frequently demeaning environment in which all offenders find it challenging to maintain a stable life, without being impacted by violence, exploitation, absence of privacy, intensive restrictions on family and community contacts.

There are numerous demises and grievances of attacks, documented by both DCS and the Judicial Inspectorate for correctional services, over numerous years that indicate that violence is a "normal" feature of the South African correctional system (Muntingh, 2009). Assault, rape and drug trafficking are common inside the correctional centres (Smith, 2016).

### **2. 3. Serving a life sentence**

Offenders who are sentenced to a life sentence will usually spend a significant time of their lives in a correctional institution, as compared with short term offenders. The

researcher wanted to know what other authors have discovered about serving a life sentence, in order to be acquainted with the realities that are encountered by life-serving offenders. Willis and Zaitzow (2015) argue that serving a sentence in a correctional facility, regardless of the length of sentence, is an encounter that cannot be related with life outside the correctional centre's walls. Added to this, Penal Reform International (2018) describes life incarceration as a painful experience, based on their interaction with long-term offenders. It is painful because of the uncertainty of release. Penal Reform International (2018, p.7) adds that individual offenders describe serving an unspecified sentence as a *"tunnel without light at the end"*, *"bad dream and nightmare"*, and even *"a slow, torturous death"*.

Smith (2016) accentuate that a life sentence is a devastating thing to face. Furthermore, Smith (2016) is of the view that there is no individual who has a life goal to be confined in a correctional institution, with a range of people from different cultural backgrounds for a period of more than fifteen years. An offender spends every day of his life with people of different races, cultures, beliefs, and opinions (Smith, 2016). This observation is supported by Haney (2001) stating that offenders enduring a life sentence have no control over the identity of the person with whom they must share space.

Offenders are usually deprived of their fundamental right to privacy and lose control over mundane parts of their being that the general population has long taken for granted. According to Haney (2012) offenders do not choose when they must get up or go to bed, or when or what they may eat. Routines and safeguards must be established in order to maintain safety and order within correctional facilities, consequently day-to-day choices are made for them. These daily choices include the time to wake up, what to do, eating periods, what food to eat, where to eat and the time to make telephone calls (National Academies Press, 2014). Over extended periods, such procedures can become gradually normal as custodial life is absolutely reutilised and restricted (Irwin, 2005). Irwin (2005) elaborates that months or years of getting up at a certain time to certain signals, going about the daily routinely, reacting to certain instructions, being among people who communicate in a certain way, and doing things repetitively, hardens offenders to a deeply rooted set of unconscious habits and automatic responses.

Willis and Zaitzow (2015) refer to what has been written by a few scholarly inmates about their incarceration experiences. According to these scholars, there are daily psychological impacts of coping with long-term incarceration. They pointed out that although certain days are more satisfactory than others, there are no great days. Smith (2016) describes correctional facilities as dangerous places where peace and comfort are almost impossible.

In contrast, de Wet (2005) is of the view that a correctional facility is a place that influences growth and behaviour just as other places do in the broader community.

#### **2.4 Challenges of serving life sentence**

The researcher observed the challenges of serving life in custody and wanted to determine connections, contradictions and other associations between various research results. Cohen and Taylor (1972) highlighted that one of the main problems encountered by life-serving offenders is that they are obliged to accept that the previous part of their life has been shut off, obliging them to create a fresh life inside the correctional facility. Therefore, they are required to adjust to custodial life and cultivate different ways of surviving with enforced social interaction and surveillance (Liebling, 2004). Harrington and Spohn (2007) support this observation, by stating that offenders are pushed to a point whereby they have to build their new life while incarcerated because their social links to the outside world have been disconnected. Offenders are exposed to agony, deprivation and enormously unusual patterns of interacting with others (Haney, 2001).

Crewe, Hulley and Wright (2019) are of the view that the most severe problems experienced by incarcerated offenders include 'missing someone', 'feeling that your life is being wasted', 'feeling sexually frustrated', 'missing little luxuries', and 'missing social life'. Boredom and becoming frustrated with other offenders are identified as problems experienced during the early stages of incarceration.

According to the National Academics Press (2014), incarceration creates harmful, disabling behavioural and bodily transformations in certain offenders. Some correctional centre's circumstances can seriously aggravate those changes. Additionally, the National Academics Press (2014) articulates that incarceration is not homogeneously distressing

or definitely harmful to individual offenders. Specific exposures and incapacities to survive and adjust can come to the forefront in the correctional environment. The conduct patterns and approaches that arise can take many forms, from deepening social and emotional withdrawal, to excessive hostility and viciousness (National Academics Press, 2014). Brent, Paterline, and Douglas (2016), identify violence as a side-effect of confining a large number of people with anti-social tendencies in close and frequently congested quarters.

## **2.5 Consequences to serving life sentence**

### **2.5.1 Gangs in correctional facilities**

The researcher wanted to explore the existing cultures that are operating in the correctional facilities to comprehend the impact they have in the operations of South African correctional institutions. Moreover, the researcher wanted to understand the link between gangs and life-serving offenders. Albertse (2007) argues that South African correctional facilities have been confronted with the challenge of gangs and their violent expressions for years. This observation is supported by Smith (2016), stating that offenders are exposed to violence in correctional centres, due to the active presence of numerous gangs. As a result sexual abuse and drugs are pervasive.

According to Nel (2017) gangs were predominantly designed as a method of self-protection from fellow inmates and correctional officials and they offer emotional care, security and a sense of belonging. Albertse (2007) describes gangs in correctional centres in South Africa as unique because of their form of operation and because they have a nation-wide organisation. Gang membership is characterised by a widespread national gang system which comprises all correctional centres in South Africa. A gang member is a member for life, irrespective of geographical area (Albertse, 2007). Members keep their superiority irrespective of where they are or whether they have been released. The position of a gang member is retained on re-entry to the correctional system (Albertse, 2007).

The dissimilarity among the gangs in South African correctional centres and gangs in other parts of the world is that, in South Africa, the gangs create their unique reality, a structure that exists in a correctional facility and has a distinctive history, an implicit

language, roles, rules, rituals, mythologies and invisible clothes which can only be identified by the initiated (Lewis, 2006). Albertse (2007) further describes South African gangs as structured, with ranks and a disciplinary code. Nel (2017) supports this observation stating that gangs in correctional centres are organised in a ranking systematic quasi-military structure and refer to themselves as “men of the number”. Affiliation is independent of race. The members are loyal, disciplined, well organised and respectful of the gang hierarchy.

Nel (2017) states that once an offender is inside the correctional facility walls, he has arrived in a distinctive world in every sense. Furthermore, Nel (2017) describes correctional centres as the world that is controlled by gangs, violence, drugs, smuggling, corruption and rape. The newly admitted offenders become vulnerable as the gang members intimidate them into joining the gangs. Gang members create fear and the newly admitted offenders experience insecurity and a sense of helplessness. That mental state is alleviated by gang association (Nel, 2017). Offenders who are newly admitted to the correctional facility encounter a range of challenges which include manipulation and intimidation to join the gang. The manipulation and intimidation motivates the newly admitted offenders to join gangs with the aim to secure protection inside the correctional centre and to satisfy their need for money and goods. The newly admitted offenders are further motivated to be gang members because of the need to be recognised, to be accepted, to acquire authority, have a support system and to have a sense of belonging (Nel, 2017).

Wood and Adler (2001) state that the events of the gangs that are taking place in a correctional environment encompasses terrorisation, illicit drugs, assault, exploitation of delicate inmates, extortion, protection, contraband weapons, strong-armed robbery, rackets, stealing, prostitution, rape, killing, corruption, arson, slavery and explosives. There is little relevance of ethical and humanistic concerns in correctional facilities and a position of authority are founded on power, control and gratification.

According to Forester (2017) there are three well known gangs in correctional centres which are 26s, 27s and 28s. They are jointly known as the “numbers gangs” and they are the dominant ones. Albertse (2007) identifies Big Fives, Desperadoes, 25’s, 29’s, Forty

Thieves, Fast Eleven, Spy 13, Black Power, Air force, etc. as the lesser-known gangs. Lötter (1988) found that each gang has its traditions and they use uniforms, tattoos, flags, salutes and other military paraphernalia.

Forester (2017) states that the main motive of a 26 gang member is money and receiving it by whichever way probable. There are two lines of 28s which include those that choose to ascent the ranks by sodomising other offenders and those who choose to stab correctional officials (Forester, 2017). Moreover, Forester (2017) adds that the 26s and 28s do not get along and their hatred frequently results in violence. The 27s gang are defined as a gang that focuses on drawing blood, particularly from correctional officials, and that it is associated as a definite way to climb the ranks as a 27 member. Van der Westhuizen (2017) cites that gangs in correctional centres, violence, unwelcome homosexual acts and smuggling of drugs, cell phones and food are integral to custodial life.

Nel (2017) argues that security and safety is compromised because of the activities of the gangs which have majority influence on keeping a secure and safe environment that is favourable to the rehabilitation efforts of DCS. Nel (2017) states that the operations of the gangs in the South African correctional facilities pose a serious threat to the orderly operation of DCS. This causes constant volatility in the correctional centres. One of the functions of the gangs include control of the everyday lives of all offenders, correctional officials, and management. Other offenders and staff are being intimidated by gang members, and sometimes they also corrupt some correctional personnel (Nel, 2017).

Brent, Paterline, and Douglas (2016) are of the view that as a result of confinement, offenders advance an oppositional attitude towards both the correctional institution they have been forced to become part of, and the staff of the institution and that is the result of confinement. Additionally, they state that the presence of oppositional attitudes in offenders contributes towards non-support to the institution's formal goals and policies (Brent, et al., 2016). The sustained presence and operation of gangs inhibit the actual application of the goals and objectives of DCS.

### 2.5.2 Overcrowding

The researcher has read what other authors have revealed about the effects of congestion of offenders in a correctional facility. The purpose is to ascertain the fundamental causes of overcrowding as well as consequences of overcrowding with the purpose of identifying specific recommendations to DCS. Walmsley (2008) asserts that the international criminal justice system is threatened with the utmost challenging problem in the rapid growth of correctional centres population that creates overcrowding. According to the International Centre for Prison Studies, *“in 71 per cent of the countries surveyed prison populations are increasing. This includes 64 per cent of countries in Africa, 83 per cent in America, 76 per cent in Asia, 68 per cent in Europe and 60 per cent in Oceania. In South Africa, the number of inmates stood at 162 875 as at 31 March 2019 against the bed spaces of 118 572 which translates to a 37% level of overcrowding”* (DCS Annual Performance Plan, 2019/2020).

Giffard and Muntingh (2006) highlight that overcrowding is a challenge that is confronted by incarcerated offenders in South Africa, and DCS considers overcrowding as its most significant challenge. Giffard and Muntingh (2006) further state that, in South Africa, the nature of overcrowding is associated with the physical design and construction of correctional centre’s buildings, which were designed and built during the apartheid years. It is reported by Giffard and Muntingh (2006) that most South African offenders are housed in big communal cells which are quite easy to overcrowd. This is supported by Matshaba (2007) stating that an enormous number of offenders are detained together in a cell.

According to the DCS Annual Performance Plan (2019/2020), the encounter of overcrowding within the correctional centres undermines the establishment and maintenance of a safe and secure environment for offenders and personnel at the coalface of service delivery as well as delivering efficient and effective rehabilitation. This observation is supported by Cavadino and Dignan (2013) stating that the reduction of recidivism and rehabilitation of offenders is negatively affected by overcrowding. Additionally, Cavadino and Dignan (2013) bring to light that due to overpopulation in correctional facilities, security is poor, living conditions are poor, there is insufficient human resources and offenders experience a sense of injustice. DCS finds it difficult to

deliver in terms of its new core business because of the negative implication associated with overcrowding (Giffard & Muntingh, 2006). Among the provisions in the South African Constitution (1996, p.12) is the right of *"everyone who is detained, including every sentenced prisoner to conditions of detention consistent with human dignity, including the provision, at state expense, of adequate accommodation"*. Steinberg (2005) argues that in South Africa the constitutional right of offenders is violated due to overcrowding of South African correctional centres. The Government has a constitutional obligation to act urgently on the matter of overcrowding as it compromises human dignity.

According to Matshaba (2007) overpopulation of correctional centres certainly intensifies the threat of epidemics and the dispersion of contagious infections. Giffard and Muntingh (2006) identified that the increasing number of offenders have severe and direct implications for offenders who have to spend longer periods confined in increasingly overcrowded correctional centre's conditions. They further state that overcrowding increases pressure on resources and infrastructure and it also intensifies the risks associated with security, safety and health of offenders. Overpopulation contributes towards destructive behaviour of offenders and that behaviour is characterised by being more vicious and frustrated with each other because of the confined space (Nel, 2017).

Brivik (2005) is of the view that the conditions of overcrowded correctional centres, with people who are prone to anti-social behaviour, contribute towards the lack of personal control. Research has shown that overcrowding has different effects daily on the correctional environment (Brivik, 2005). These effects include less of necessities like space to go around, so the same space and resources are made to expand even further. There are less opportunities for offenders to partake in self-improvement and rehabilitative programmes causing a deficit of work opportunities. The lack of these opportunities leads to offender idleness, often reinforcing the maxim that idleness breeds discontent and disruptive behaviour. Lack of resources can apply to anything an offender might need to use, such as washroom availability, library books, television lounge seating and recreational materials. The unavailability of resources can have twofold consequences. One is the frustration or unpleasantness of being limited or denied a resource. The other is the fact that competition and conflict over limited resources often lead to violence (Brivik, 2005).

Another consequence of overcrowding is on the individual offender's conduct. According to Brivik (2005) idleness, trepidation, the inability to uphold personal identity, or to turn off undesirable relations and stimulation, such as noise, all increases the stress of overcrowding. Brivik (2005) is of the view that whatsoever approach an offender takes to deal with overcrowding stress, they usually have a tendency to be methods which do not improve the well-being of the offender. Muntingh (2009) mentions that most offenders deal with extensive threats, being attacked, being sexually assaulted and even killed at the hands of correctional officials or fellow inmates.

## **2.6 Lived realities and experiences of offenders serving a life sentence**

### **2.6.1 Adaptation and adjustment to long term incarceration**

It has been identified by several scholars that a correctional facility is a very challenging environment that requires an individual to adapt to a very different lifestyle that they had not previously been exposed to. Liebling and Maruna, (2005) reveal that during early stages of incarceration, offenders experience high levels of distress, because this is a period when an individual is being dislocated from a previous lifestyle. It is mentioned by Crewe, Warr, Bennet, and Higson-Smith (2013) that life-sentenced offenders in the first few years of their sentence experience a form of trauma upon getting a very lengthy sentence, therefore the early years are characterised by feelings of shock and anger. Furthermore, Crewe et al., (2019) states that offenders find it difficult to accept the length of time in custody that lie ahead of them. During these early years, they find little determination or significance in life and very diminutive control over themselves. These observations are supported by Van Zyl Smit and Appleton (2018) citing that numerous life-sentenced offenders report a sense of shock and helplessness during the early phases of incarceration. This period is reflected as a difficult period especially for life-sentenced offenders, as they encounter intense modifications in their conditions, self-esteem and sense of the future (Hulley et al., 2014).

The National Academies Press (2014) argues that custodial stress can impact offenders in various ways and at various phases of their incarceration. As others experience stress during the first period of incarceration. Others survive the initial phase and discover themselves worn down by constant physical and psychological challenges including stress of detention.

Tomar (2013) argues that the major challenge that life-sentenced offenders encounter is dealing with being separated from loved ones and friends or coming to terms with the fact that the correctional centre is going to be their home for an extended period of time. Social isolation experienced by offenders is identified by Tomar (2013) as one of the core aspects which impact their coping with incarceration. This observation is supported by Van Zyl Smit and Appleton (2018), stating that social isolation and the loss of contact with the outside world is one of the most important effects of lengthy detention. These effects are based on life events that take place during the incarceration, which includes the loss of family members through death and incapability, to raising their offspring or supporting their family members (Van Zyl Smit & Appleton, 2018).

According to Crewe et al. (2013) offenders have to be emotionally strong to adapt in a correctional facility. Research has long documented that those sentenced to long custodial terms experience a plodding process of incarceration as a method of adjusting to the routines and demands of custodial life (Van Zyl Smit & Appleton, 2018). This is supported by Willis and Zaitzow (2015), who state that offenders who serve long sentences, including life, have different adaptation mechanisms, and for them, adaptation is a longer and a more intricate process.

The offenders live in a dormitory setting surrounded by unfamiliar people with the diverse offenders' population who were convicted for a range of criminal offences. These offenders have mixed personalities coupled with diverse cultural backgrounds. They have unique emotional and mental scars that creates tension in the custodial environment (Willis & Zaitzow, 2015). It is highlighted by Harvey (2007) that offenders who are unable to effectively control their emotions will find adaptation to detention life more difficult to a great extent. Maladaptation to incarceration is characterised by violence, aggression, anxiety, depression, distress and suicide (Tomar, 2013). Crewe et al. (2013) reveal that offender's project toughness, while in reality, they are emotionally fragile. They further state that offenders display an emotional self that is inauthentic and they mask their emotions by using a defensive strategy to suppress traces of fear, pain, weakness and vulnerability (Crewe et al., 2013). It may be relatively accurate that emotional destruction comes from the fear of ill-treatment. Numerous offenders also fear losing their mental

stability, or being overwhelmed by feelings of gloom and sadness. This often happens when the situations takes place outside where they have no control (Crewe et al., 2013).

Haney (2001) stated that some offenders become hyper-vigilant and develop a reputation for toughness to cope with the threat of victimisation. Also, they assert that these offenders achieve that status by responding rapidly and impulsively to unimportant offences, minor insults, or the smallest signs of disrespect.

### **2.6.2 Coping with incarceration**

Having established that custodial life is a challenging experience for life-sentenced offenders, the researcher explored how life-serving offenders cope with this. The aim was for the researcher to understand methods of coping that are applied by life-serving offenders and how these methods impact their lives.

Geaney (2008) stated that one of the greater problems for long-term offenders is that they are obliged to assent that one part of their life has been shut off and they are required to build a new life inside the correctional facility. Offenders are required to adjust to custodial life and cultivate novel ways of surviving with enforced social interaction and surveillance (Liebling, 2004). Greer (2002) articulates that there are several strategies that could assist offenders to distract from feelings, to block and repress emotions, and that can be achieved through events such as spirituality and meditation. This can contribute towards camouflaging the emergence of possibly damaging internal thought patterns.

Thomas and Zaitzow (2006) are of the view that turning to religion and spirituality is a strategy for coping with other offenders. Additionally, it is stated by Thomas and Zaitzow (2006) that by becoming religious, offenders can find a sense of inner peace and a more optimistic outlook. Religion functions as a means of coming to terms with their misconduct (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006). Crewe et al. (2019) stated that offenders find ways of managing time through self-devised routines and that they often turn to spiritual and religious practices. These disciplines are identified as a form of practice that assists offenders to resolve their feeling of shame about their offences. This allows them to move on with their lives and find a sense of purpose and meaning in life (Crewe et al., 2019).

Convocar, Billones and Supiter (2020) define “spirituality” as an internal resource that assists male offenders to cope better with stress.

DCS (2019) identifies spiritual care as an essential fragment for rehabilitation of offenders. It is further described by DCS (2019) that spiritual care is primarily about conserving, re-enforcing under suitable settings, repairing the epicentre of character, the conscience, the internal divine being as the source of self-worth in social contacts and inspiring an advance to create self-control for ensuing re-integration into the society. Additionally, DCS (2019) cites that spiritual care can be associated with moral care, social care, emotional care, mental care and physical care. It is acknowledged by DCS (2019) that spiritual care is predominantly about the conviction in a supernatural being which impacts on the internal divine being, the seat of emotion, intellect and aids the person by word and modelling to take accountability for behaviour.

Another strategy used by life-serving offenders as a means of coping with the stresses of custody is the affiliation with gangs (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006). Leban, Cardwell, Copes and Brezina (2015) supports this view by stating that offenders form associates with fellow offenders who are able to offer safety or support. Gang membership can inflame some offenders’ to the use of violent conduct and disobedience as a means of surviving with the terror of succumbing to correctional authority and subsequent deterioration (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006). Leban et.al. (2015) is of the view that offenders are conscious about the people and places that are probable causes of stress and they avoid circumstances that have great potential for strain.

Mjaland (2016), revealed that the use of drugs in a correctional facility is a strategy to better cope with the adversities of incarceration and it is thus a method of self-medication. The justification that is used by offenders for drug use is that it gives them relaxation and relieves boredom (Bullock, 2003). The drugs that offenders use are cannabis, heroin and tranquilisers for the reason that the effects that they give are well-matched with the custodial environment and experience and that they ease the everyday pains of incarceration. Heroin is identified as a drug that kills time, lessens fretfulness and offers the users transitory escape from reality (Mjaland, 2016).

According to Batchelder and Pippert (2002) work is viewed by correctional officials as the greatest effective means of coping for offenders. However, Cohen and Taylor (1972) argue that due to the routine nature of custodial work, only a small percentage of life sentenced offenders cite work as something positive.

Receiving letters, making phone calls and the presence of visitors seem to have ambivalent effects on offenders. Nevertheless, they may offer vital relations to the outside world which bring a surge of pleasant feelings and enable open expressions of affection and love (Geaney, 2008). Emotional instability can be caused by both the presence and unexpected absence of these points of contact. While interaction with the outside world is regarded as essential for offenders coping with incarceration, some offenders decide to detach from the outside world (Wikberg & Foster, 1990). These offenders find life in a correctional facility more endurable and easier to cope with if you have nobody to care about outside the custodial walls (Crawley & Sparks, 2006).

According to Crewe (2013) kindness, generosity and emotional disclosure were permitted in custodial settings which include education buildings, art classrooms and chapels. Such places brought inspirational foundations of meaning, comfort, and psychological safety (Crewe, 2013).

### **2.6.3 The psychological impact of long term incarceration**

It has been identified by Haney (2011) that for certain offenders, incarceration is so hostile and mentally excruciating that it epitomizes a form of traumatic stress that is sufficiently intensive to cause post-traumatic stress responses when released. Furthermore, we currently comprehend that several individuals who have been sentenced of criminality in our society have definite basic commonalities that distinguish their lives. A "risk factors" model assists to clarify the intricate relationship of distressing childhood endeavours (like poverty, abusive and neglectful mistreatment, and other forms of victimisation) in the social backgrounds of numerous criminal offenders (Huff-Corzine, Corzine & Moore, 1991). As Masten and Garmezy (1985) have illustrated, the existence of these contextual risk elements and strains in childhood intensifies the likelihood that individuals will come across an entire array of difficulties well ahead in lifetime, comprising wrongdoing and criminal conduct.

Re-traumatisation is mostly likely to happen to those who are currently incarcerated due to the presence of childhood trauma and the exposure to severe, retributive, and the insensible nature of custodial life. A period spent in custody may regenerate not only the memories but the disabling psychological responses and consequences of these former harmful experiences.

The researcher explored deeper aspects of the direct impact of life incarceration to identify coping mechanisms to help offenders serving life sentences. Tomar (2013) reports that numerous early researchers established that incarceration is associated with harmful psychological and physical effects that leads inevitably to psychological deterioration. This view is supported by Schittker, Massoglia and Uggen (2012), indicating that incarceration is directly connected to negative emotional reactions like anxiety. Longer or repetitive incarceration leads to even more harmful reactions. In the context of correctional facilities, mental disorders are typically restricted to major depression, anxiety, psychosis, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, psychopathy and personality disorders (Fazel & Seewald, 2012). Research demonstrates that, while it differs from person to person, incarceration is connected to mood disorders including major depressive disorder and bipolar disorder (Quandt & Jones, 2021).

Abdullah (2006) articulates that incarceration can cause psychological damage for the reason that offenders are exposed to unending tension, harassment, stress, and strain of living in a setting that is unusual among thousands of different personalities and behaviours. Furthermore, Abdullah (2006) is of the view that the lengthier the person is confined; and the circumstances in which that particular person lives under during incarceration, defines the level of psychological harm that an individual can acquire. This opinion is supported by Putwain and Sammons (2002) stating that incarceration is an aversive experience, and that a correctional facility usually offers a tremendously unfriendly setting and there is some evidence that incarceration can harm offenders' psychological functioning.

Zamble and Proporino (1998) claim that anxiety and a sense of hopelessness signify psychological reactions to incarceration which decline as the offenders change to the condition. Emotional extraction, depression, suicidal thoughts or actions and increasing

levels of aggression are identified as the effects that are experienced by inmates (Tomar, 2013). The National Academies Press (2014) articulates several aspects of custodial life which expose inmates to powerful psychological stressors, comprising material deprivation, limited movement and freedom, lack of meaningful activity, a nearly total absence of personal privacy, and high levels of interpersonal uncertainty, danger, and fear. These stressors harmfully impact the emotional wellbeing of offenders.

According to Gibbs (1982) pre-existing psychological conditions might be aggravated by first experiences with incarceration. Severe custodial stress contributes towards added substantial psychological toll for some offenders. The National Academies Press (2014) specifies that the distinctive and powerful stresses of incarceration are probable to relate and magnify whatever pre-existing vulnerability offenders bring to the correctional facility. Consequently, the similar custodial experiences have diverse outcomes for diverse offenders. It is argued that several offenders have been exposed to hostile childhood experiences and they come from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. This might have made them more, rather than less, vulnerable to psychological stressors and unable to cope successfully with the chronic stresses of custodial life (Gibson et al., 1999; Greene et al., 2000; McClellan et al., 1997; Mullings et al., 2004; Zlotnick, 1997). Offenders must undergo many psychological conversions to cope with the constraints of custodial life.

Tomar (2013) asserts that the need for offenders to receive psychological services is essential for the reason that some offenders need assistance to cope with the length of their incarceration. Moreover, Tomar (2013) states that some offenders struggle to deal with their separation from loved ones and accommodating that prison is going to be their home for a long time.

## **2.7 Impact on physical wellbeing.**

The healthcare requirements of offenders are described as very multifaceted. Their health is extensively not as good as that of the broader population (Stewart, 2007). It is identified that inmates are at a high risk of developing sexually transmitted infections. However, correctional facilities have scarce means to deal with this difficulty (Smith, 2007; & Stewart, 2007). Among other things, offenders are at great danger of developing

cancer, heart disease and many other infectious diseases (Smith, 2007). The well-being of the offenders is jeopardised by the unhygienic practices of correctional facilities and widespread overcrowding.

According to Muthaphuli (2008) the correctional structure was not envisioned to be a shelter for the destitute, a medical care centre, a mental health hospital, a dialysis unit, a prenatal care hospice, or take on the other burdens that it currently accepts. Muthaphuli (2008) asserts that there should be sufficient water and toiletries to maintain the good personal hygiene of offenders. Kendig (2006) is of the view that a healthy offender population is the best investment a correctional institution can make. The reason is that an offender that is in good health has the capacity to better partake in the rehabilitation programs provided by the organisation.

## **2.8 Impact of serving a life sentence on the offender's family**

Having identified the direct impact of serving a life sentence on offenders, the researcher proceeded to explore the impact it has on their families. According to Martin (2014) family members of incarcerated offenders are referred to as hidden victims. This statement is supported by the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research (n. d.) stating that a custodial sentence has punitive consequences for families outside the correctional institution, and that families should be regarded as the innocent victims of crime.

Effects of crime are felt differently by every family, since each family is different. Comfort, McKay, Landwehr, Kennedy, Lindquist and Bir (2016) argue that when people are incarcerated, the family members they leave behind are faced with the challenge of adjusting not merely to the physical absence of their loved one but also to the vacuum left in the financial and useful contributions by that individual who is incarcerated. Additionally, Comfort et al. (2016) state that there is the additional burden specifically connected with maintaining a relationship with an offender, which include financial, social and emotional costs.

Families do not get the opportunity to share significant family events with the incarcerated family member (Houchin, 2005). The convicted family member cannot partake in family

occasions such as birthdays and Christmas, or even simple family gatherings such as eating meals together (Houchin, 2005).

### **2.8.1 Social stigma**

Due to the stigma associated with a crime committed by a close relative, families are treated adversely by other members of the community, or encounter unpleasant treatment from colleagues, peers, the media, and even friends and other family members (Houchin, 2005.). Furthermore, Houchin (2005) states that families are perceived as guilty by association although they are lawfully blameless and have no association in the commitment of the offence. According to Codd (2008) when families are visiting the correctional institution, they experience the feeling of shame and stigmatisation. Additionally, families report that they experience insolence, unfriendliness, and embarrassment upon visiting their incarcerated family members. They are also subjected to extensive security clearance procedures (Codd, 2008).

### **2.8.2 Financial impact**

Families who continuously have contact with a member who is incarcerated, drain their resources with phone calls and visits (Comfort et al., 2016). Those finances would have been otherwise utilised to pay domestic bills or purchase food (Comfort et al., 2016). The above author is supported by Hairston (2003), who shows that when the families try to maintain the relationship with the incarcerated member, the financial burden is greatest. Delgado (2011) cites that offenders are dependent on their families for financial support, telephone contact, and personal items during their incarceration period. Delgado (2011) further states that the families who are economically challenged find these responsibilities burdensome. Telephone contact, via collect calls or prepaid phone cards, is also very expensive, consequently restraining those who are socioeconomically deprived. Winter (2001) asserts that the geographical distance from the family home to a correctional facility can be economically and physically difficult for the offender's family.

### **2.8.3 Impact of incarceration on a spouse/partner**

Harman, Higson-Smith and Egan (2007) assert that separation due to incarceration is a distressing experience for individuals in intimate relationships. Bruns (2017) is of the view that there is a probability of divorce when one partner is incarcerated. Intimacy is essential for a healthy relationship, but due to incarceration, the contact necessary to maintain such intimacy is limited or non-existent (Harman et al., 2007). Moreover, Arditti (2003) is of the view that incarceration causes separation characterised by ambiguous loss because the incarcerated offender is physically absent but psychologically present.

It is reported that women with incarcerated partners, are distressed by the overwhelming child-rearing responsibilities that they are left to face alone. Houchin (2005) states that the partner of the incarcerated offender is obliged to take several roles and accountabilities, mainly where the incarcerated family member formerly occupied an active role in the household. Moreover, it is specified that the strain is increased by loss of economic support and providing financial assistance to the incarcerated partner (Harman et al., 2007). The feeling of isolation intensifies the grief of losing contact with an intimate partner (Harman et al., 2007).

Research suggests that 45% of offenders lose contact with their families during their incarceration and 22% of married offenders divorce or separate (Salmon, 2007). According to Delgado (2011) the probable reason is that correctional centres are usually geographically secluded, causing travel to and from the facility difficult. For those families who do make the trip, they are often confronted with insufficient visiting facilities that obstruct healthy family interaction. Furthermore, the difficulty in repairing the challenges that are caused by the strain and toll of incarceration of a partner is identified (Harman et al., 2007). According to Nesmith and Ruhland (2008) familial relationships may be additionally strained by stropy phone calls that consist of artificial chats in which hurting or personal topics are eluded. Petersilia, (2003) is of the view that a solid, intimate relationship can offer emotional support, but the stress of incarceration frequently damages or ends the relationship.

#### **2.8.4 Impact of incarceration on children of the incarcerated offender**

Children of an incarcerated parent are at greater threat to develop mental health problems and are three times more likely to be involved in anti-social or offending conduct than their peers, who do not have a parent in a correctional facility (Crime and Justice Research, n. d.). Winter (2001) posits that the trauma of incarceration of a parent can influence the normal development stages and growth milestones of children, causing violent conduct, learning problems and maladaptive behavioural forms, as well as antisocial conduct.

It has been found that the factors that result in behavioural and developmental problems to children of offenders are stigma, shame, guilt, grief and feelings of abandonment (Roguski & Chauvel, 2009). Wright and Seymour (2000) assert that the impact of parental incarceration on children can cause behavioural and emotional reactions which include fear and anxiety, sadness, physical symptoms and increased health problems as well as regressive behaviour such as bed-wetting.

The International Review of the Red Cross (2016) articulates that lack of communication and distance makes it intractable for fathers to uphold relationships with their offspring. For fathers, the physical separation from their children is difficult to deal with. It is reported that children of an incarcerated offender can cultivate a conviction that they did something erroneous that instigated the parent to leave (Winter, 2001).

#### **2.9 Department of correctional services programmes**

One of the core responsibilities of DCS is to ensure that effective rehabilitation programmes are provided to sentenced offenders to reintegrate them into the community as rehabilitated law-abiding citizens (DCS Annual Performance Plan, 2019/2020). DCS has made rehabilitation a top priority and has programmes that are intended to decrease the likelihood of future misconduct and to shape offenders to become valuable members of society. Rehabilitation includes the practise of providing offenders with a range of services, containing development and therapeutic programmes.

According to the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005), a method that has been adopted by correctional services for rehabilitation and for effective service delivery

is a needs-based approach. Needs-based interventions are types of interventions that definitely balance the fundamental issues with the distinctive crime outline of the individual offender (White Paper Corrections in South Africa, 2005).

Correctional centres are regarded as institutions of a fresh start, where learning and development of skills are at the centre of corrections. However, life sentenced offenders are not completely partaking in skills development, correctional programmes, social work and psychological sessions that are utilised to help offenders in their treatment process (DCS Annual Performance Plan, 2019/2020). Non-participation in rehabilitation programmes places life sentenced offenders in a disadvantaged position when it comes to the parole application for the reason that there may be inadequate evidence to reveal that they have been effectively involved in rehabilitative interventions that can prepare them for re-integration into society.

DCS will continue to render services to life-sentenced offenders and other offenders in order to ensure that effective rehabilitation is accomplished. Rehabilitation can be achieved by allowing offenders to attend and partake in essential programmes and sessions. Social workers, psychologists and other professionals are mandated to document professional reports for those offenders who benefited from their professional interventions (DCS Annual Performance Plan, 2019/2020). This is done to reduce recidivism, which, in turn, will allow the department to construct a safer environment for all as part of its contribution to the National Development Plan.

DCS operates five programmes which are Administration, Incarceration, Rehabilitation, Care and Social Reintegration (Department of Correctional Services, 2016).

**Incarceration:** Correctional Services is obliged to provide a safe, secured and human environment for persons awaiting trial and sentencing and those in custody. It is a constitutional mandate (Section 10) that an offender must be treated with dignity.

**Rehabilitation:** Provide offenders with needs-based programmes and interventions to facilitate their rehabilitation, social responsibility, human

development and enable their social re-integrations. All offenders have equal right to benefit on available rehabilitation programmes during their incarceration period (DCS, 2016). Holomisa (2019) stated that offenders are skilled through working in the different departmental workshops, which include wood, steel, and textiles workshops, bakeries, a shoe factory and agricultural facilities.

**Care:** Correctional Services is obliged to provide nutritional and health care services. The department provides daily meals to offenders; provide HIV/AIDS, TB and health care services to offenders for them to maintain their good health. Therefore a long and healthy life for all South Africans is promoted so that all people in South Africa can feel safe. This is derived from a constitutional mandate (Section 27) – the right to health care service.

**Re-integrations:** DCS delivers services that are concentrated on an offender's preparation for release, operational supervision of offenders allocated under the structure of community corrections and facilitation of social re-integration into their communities. As stipulated in section 12 of the Constitution Section 12- people have the right to freedom of movement. Offenders have a right to be released from correctional facilities and reintegrate with the community (DCS, 2016).

According to DCS (2015), the behaviour of offenders is corrected through access to psychological, social work and spiritual services. It is further stated that rehabilitation can be achieved by managing and ensuring the execution of these needs-based services to offenders to improve their health and emotional wellbeing to help them rehabilitate and re-integrate with the community.

### **2.9.1 Religious programmes**

The researcher investigated the impact of religious involvement on offenders, particularly with regard to adjustment to incarceration. It revealed that there are two ways that religion might help offenders to improve this adjustment (Clear, Stout, Dammer, Kelly, Hardman & Shapiro, 1992). It was discovered that religion contributes towards better adjustment to incarceration; as well as better handling of emotional strains of incarceration and deprivation. There is also an interesting distinction between religion and the correctional

environment; as the correctional environment is known for immoral behaviour, including crime and retribution. Religion is known for bringing an attitude of holiness and devotion. According to Clear et al. (1992), inmates are perceived as social outcasts, rejected by the community and religion promises to change the custodial experience from “you are caught” to “you are free”.

Muthaphuli (2008) describes religion as a vital component that contributes towards restraint of destructive behaviour amongst offenders. Muthaphuli (2008) further defines the role that religion plays as a positive role that brings change in offender’s behaviour and further states that such a change in human behaviour makes it easier to implement rehabilitation programmes as offenders will be encouraged to change. It is reported that religion assists offenders to deal with guilt. They turn to religion for relief and it allows offenders to take responsibility for their wrongdoings (Clear et al., 1992). It is further indicated that religion helps offenders to find a better mode of life as offenders who accept religion are likely to be profoundly dedicated to doctrinaire models of religious living. Additionally, religion is identified as a method of helping offenders to deal with loss, especially the loss of freedom. Offenders who are profoundly devoted to their religion frequently report that the foremost value of their faith is a sense of peace (Clear et al., 1992).

### **2.9.2 Programmes aimed at rehabilitation of offenders**

According to Taylor (2017) the primary aim of rehabilitation programmes in a correctional facility is to reduce re-offending behaviour. The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005, p.71) defines rehabilitation as “*a result of the process that combines the correction of offending behaviour, human development and promotion of social responsibility and values*”. Nel (2017) accentuates that re-offending must be prevented and vital programmes should be provided to offenders. Those programmes must target their rehabilitation.

DCS can respond to its core business of rehabilitation by ascertaining that services are rendered to those who are convicted for transgressing the law. That will allow inmates to leave the correctional centres as law abiding citizens (DCS Social Work Services Policy, 2007). During the incarceration period, offenders take part in different rehabilitation

programmes that are aimed to increase the probability that offenders will lead a useful, crime-free life upon release from a correctional institution by tackling the fundamental issues that contributed towards their criminal actions (Taylor, 2017). Numerous studies demonstrate that when such programmes are well-designed and applied effectively, the number recidivism can be minimised (Taylor, 2017).

Life-serving offenders are usually de-prioritised when it comes to rehabilitation and their needs considered less urgent (Van Zyl Smit & Appleton, 2018). Van Zyl Smit and Appleton (2018) are of the view that rehabilitation is especially significant for life-sentenced offenders who may find it difficult to re-adjust to life outside of the correctional system.

### **2.9.2.1 Key principles for rehabilitation programmes to reduce recidivism**

Research demonstrates that there are three principles that the programme should possess to indicate its effectiveness in reducing recidivism. Firstly it is paramount that the programme should be “evidence-based”, meaning it is modelled after a programme revealed to diminish re-offending and functions in the same manner as the verified programme. Secondly, the programme ought to be assessed for cost-effectiveness. Thirdly, the programme should concentrate on the highest-risk and highest-need offenders, as this has the utmost probability to decrease reoffending (Taylor, 2017).

Miceli (2009) identifies that risk assessment is a core element to an effective programme and suggests that it should be an element assessed before a programme being implemented. Miceli (2009) is of the view that in absence of risk assessment, offenders can be allocated into programmes that will not be constructive to their criminogenic needs, cognitive abilities and interpersonal skills.

According to Casella (2003), a comprehensive programme must meet the following goals:

- It ought to have a comprehensive, personalised assessment and action path
- An offender should take accountability for his or her wrongdoings and be mindful of his or her patterns

- An offender needs to learn to intervene, to look into their misdemeanour pattern and to discontinue the conduct
- Rehabilitation and re-socialisation must replace anti-social beliefs
- An offender requires an extended period to safely test the newly acquired insights and control mechanisms
- Offenders require a post-treatment support group and continued post-release access to therapy
- The rehabilitation programmes presented to offenders comprise education, counselling, casework, recreation and behavioural, psychological, social and vocational programmes.

### **2.9.3 Educational Programmes**

Brewster (2002) classifies education as a major part of rehabilitation. Furthermore, he cites that offenders who partake in learning programmes have a lesser tendency to reoffend and they cope better when they are re-integrated into the community. Gowdy, Travis, and Sutton, (2003, p.14), are of the opinion that *“programmes that include communication skills, general education, basic academic skills, general equivalency diploma preparation, vocational training, post-secondary education and other educational programmes are all programmes required by the offender population”*.

According to Nel (2017) Correctional education must meet the following standards

- All incarcerated offenders should be able to access education.
- There should be full availability of elementary schooling, creative, religious and cultural events, literacy programmes, recreational education and activities, social education, library facilities and higher education to offenders.
- Enormous support should be provided by all parties that are liable for the functioning of the correctional institution.
- At all costs, impediments for participating in approved formal educational programmes should be addressed.
- Education inside and outside the correctional centre must be encouraged.
- Community involvement in education should be promoted.

- The development of the offender must take place through vocational training and the conditions of the labour market must be adapted.
- Cultural activities should be stimulated in order to enable the offenders to develop themselves.
- Educational programmes should recognise and take into consideration the offender's social, cultural and economic background.

#### **2.9.4 Recreational programmes**

According to van Voorhis, Braswell, and Lester (2004), it is not necessary for the offenders to have the ability to read and write to be involved in recreational programmes. All categories of offenders can partake in recreational programmes, for an example, a physically incapacitated offender can partake in activities such as art and craft or music.

According to Nel (2017) sexual assaults and personal depression are most likely to happen to offenders when deprived of such programmes and that occurs because they encounter additional physical and emotional clashes amongst each other. These programmes contribute to the development of offenders' thoughts and in this manner they recognise the capacity they possess to transform their lives. Their mental well-being recovers during this programme and they even acquire the sense to trust others (Van Voorhis et al., 2004).

#### **2.9.5 Psychological Programmes**

The emphasis of psychological programmes is based on the treatment of the fundamental, emotional or mental problems that lead to criminal conduct. There are two approaches to such programmes: psychotherapeutic approaches and group treatment (Nel, 2017).

**Psychotherapeutic approaches** – the treatment of the mind within the correctional setting. Here, the need for, and the goals of the treatment process, is determined by therapists.

**Group treatment** – mutual problems are discussed by a group of offenders. These approaches consist of reality therapy, confrontation therapy, transactional analysis and cognitive skills building (Clear & Cole, 2000 p.323).

According to Friedo, Herbig, and Hesselink (2012) the contribution of psychologists that are working for Correctional Services lies in the identification and treatment of personality anxieties and cognitive distortions, as well as with in-depth, long-term therapy of offenders. They concentrated mainly concentrate on the mental health functioning of convicted offenders. The target areas for psychological services comprise suicide risk management, psychological intervention when requested by a court of law, psychological counselling, risk management of persons under supervision inside the community, and offenders guilty of aggressive and sexual offences. Johann et al. (2012) are of the view that effective therapy, intervention and treatment efforts are limited due to the scarcity of psychologists in DCS.

### **2.9.6 Counselling and Case Management**

Nel (2017) cites that group therapeutic programmes are being conducted by correctional counsellors and they focus on addressing drug abuse, sexual offending and suicide prevention. Therapists attempt to support offenders to cope within the correctional institution so that they may not experience severe frustration and deterioration. With the assistance of the therapists, offenders are motivated to be transformed.

### **2.9.7 Behavioural Therapy**

Behavioural therapy is defined by Taylor (2017) as behavioural programmes that are intended to assist offenders to transform ranges of behaviour that directed them to criminal action. These programmes specifically offer numerous methods of treatment to address rehabilitative needs, such as criminal thinking and anger management that if left unattended, can upsurge the probability of reoffending.

Nel (2017), stresses that behavioural therapy happens through role modelling and other active methods of education. This practise is not limited to modifying the misconduct of the offenders, but also aims at certain difficulties linked with the criminal lifestyle.

### **2.9.8 Social Therapy**

Social Work Policy Corrections, (2007, p.1) indicates that “*the core function of social work services in the Department of Correctional Services is to assess the offenders and provide need-based programmes and services to enhance the adjustment, social functioning and reintegration of offenders back into the community*”. This observation is supported by Friedo et al. (2012) stating that the primary purpose of social work services in DCS is based on maintaining and improving social functioning contributing to reintegration.

Treatment comprises an extensive variety of social problems, ranging from supportive services to intensive counselling, which is provided mostly on an individual basis and/or through the case or group work. It is articulated by Prendergast, Hall and Wexler (2004) that usual programmes that social workers facilitate in South African correctional centres include life skills, anger management, a sexual offenders’ programme and the pre-release programme. Other areas of focus are the orientation of imprisonment, HIV/AIDS counselling, substance abuse, and adaptation problems, marital and family problems, aggressive and sexual behaviour, support services, trauma debriefing, and preparation for release and after-care services (Friedo et al., 2012).

### **2.9.9 Restorative Justice**

Restorative Justice is identified as a significant part of rehabilitation and common practice within the DCS (Johann et al., 2012). It is further stated that restorative justice forms the foundation of numerous programmes and counselling activities, facilitated by DCS in partnership with non-government organisations such as National Institute for Crime and Re-integration of Offenders (NICRO) and Khulisa. Offenders are fortified to be involved with victims and the community to bridge the gap between crime, criminality, rehabilitation and society (Friedo et al., 2012).

According to Gxubane (2012) restorative justice highlights the need for offenders to take responsibility. This observation is supported by Friedo et al., (2012) stating that the restorative justice process assists offenders to recognise their responsibilities and to stimulate healing. It seeks to repair personal accountability for criminal behaviour and its consequences, restore a sense of control, make amends, and restore a belief that the

justice process and outcomes were fair and just. Within the South African corrections context, restorative justice accentuates the importance of the victims, families and community members by actively involving them in the justice process (Johann et al., 2012).

## **2.10 Theoretical Framework:**

The theories utilised for this study are inter alia the Deprivation Model, Coping Theory and Need Responsivity Model.

### **2.10.1 Deprivation Model**

In order to best comprehend the existing realities of life-serving offenders, the researcher identified the deprivation model as the theory that is related to the study, because incarceration includes considerably further than a time of segregation from the community and inmates encounter deprivation socially and physically. Brent, et al. (2016, p.71) define the deprivation model as *“the theoretical position that argues that the circumstances within prisons account for the formation of prison countercultures”*. It is contended by the deprivation theory that incarceration is an adaptive process applied by offenders to manage with the social and physical deprivations of incarceration (Brent et al., 2016).

The deprivation model focuses mainly on the correctional setting as producing burdens on and reaction by offenders (Paris, 1982). The model believes that when offenders go into custody, they are faced with primary social and psychological inconveniences that are consequently from the loss of freedom, status, dignity, possessions, autonomy, security and personal relationships (De Wet, 2005).

According to this model, offenders are in a similar position of being confronted with deprivation which encourages them to try to resolve their complications jointly. When such a united response happens, an inmate society begins to form, *“a society that includes a network of positions, which reflect various types and levels of commitment to sub-cultural norms as well as adaptive reactions to the problems of confinement”* (Thomas & Petersen, 1977, p. 49).

Following the deprivation model, the formation of such a sub-cultural system is perceived as an operational means of resolving several problems of custodial life (Brent et al., 2016). Advocates of the deprivation model contended that the subculture into which offenders are integrated is a reflection of the pains of incarceration that are created by the structure of the custodial organisation. This means that an understanding of offender's attitudes, values, and behaviour can be gained through an examination of the influences that are indigenous to the correctional setting (Brent et al, 2016).

On a daily basis, life in a correctional facility is characterised with five fundamental deprivations which are jointly known as "pains of imprisonment" (Skyles, 2007).

#### **2.10.1.1. Deprivation of liberty**

As stated by Shammas (2017) the central foundation of correctional facilities is to eliminate or limit liberty. Offenders are exposed to an extensive variety of control measures inside the walls of correctional centres and those measures include cells, checkpoints, passes, and military-style formations in moving from one part of the correctional facility to another (Shammas, 2017). This is supported by Sykes (1958/2007) stating that incarcerated individuals are physically restricted to the correctional facility and its strict rules and regulations. The aim of incapacitating offenders is to ensure that communities are secured as offenders will no longer be able to cause them harm. (Shammas, 2017). Another consequence of losing liberty includes the disbanding of connections to family and friends due to constraints or complications related with getting visitors, sending and receiving mail, or making telephone calls.

#### **2.10.1.2 Deprivation of autonomy**

Offenders lose the ability to make elementary choices about their everyday lives. They are unable to choose the kind of food to eat, when and how physical functions should be taken care of, and when and how to move within the restricted confines of the correctional facility (Shammas, 2017). It is believed by Sykes (1958/2007) that the loss of independence was detrimental for the reason that it reduced offenders to a child-like state through a series of public disgrace and involuntary deeds of respect. The discomfort of self-government ascend as the uniformed workforce takes a more laissez-faire approach to running the correctional centre (Crewe, 2011). According to Shammas, (2017) as

offenders are granted a wider choice of possible activities and control to make choices. They are also held accountable for failures to live up to the principles of rehabilitative interventions like profoundly intrusive cognitive behavioural programmes.

#### **2.10.1.3 Deprivation of goods and services**

The presence of deprivation of goods and services can be determined by the standard of living enjoyed by offenders prior to incarceration (Shammas, 2017). Offenders who have been living a lifestyle that is characterised with homelessness, poverty, poor living conditions and substance abuse may experience a sense of relief by being incarcerated since their need for shelter, clothing, regular diet and health care will be met in a correctional facility (Shammas, 2017). According to Skyes (1958/2007) there are offenders who experience some material insufficiency through absence of tobacco, alcohol, various foods, individual clothing, furniture, and privacy. Moreover, Skyes (1958/2007) is of the view that people define themselves by the material possessions and what they consume. This has been alleviated by western societies. Consequently, when there is incapacity to buy, hold or enjoy a multitude of consumer goods it causes one to suffer deep loss (Skyes, 1958/2007).

#### **2.10.1.4. Deprivation of heterosexual relationships**

Sykes (1958/2007) asserts that offenders are deprived of heterosexual relationships and identifies this kind of loss as very profound for offenders as intimate relationships are significant for social normal life. Sykes (1958/2007) argues that existence of homosexual tendencies in correctional facilities are caused by the absence of heterosexual relations. According to Nel (2017) homosexual relationships amongst offenders happens because of the natural setting of a correctional environment where offenders are deprived of heterosexual relationships. Nel (2017) further states that even though sexual intercourse between offenders is not permitted, it occurs often and cannot be stopped due to the intrinsic nature of human beings and present problems regarding overcrowding and the failure to successfully monitor offenders at all times.

Sykes (1958/ 2007) identifies involuntary celibacy as causing emotional, psychological and physical difficulties to the population of offenders. Sexual assault that happens

between males is recognised as an outlet of homosexuality. Furthermore, he considers an enforced loss of sexual relations as causing tension, anxiety and a deteriorated self-image for offenders (Sykes, 1958/2007).

#### **2.10.1.5. Deprivation of security**

Shammas (2017) cites that correctional centres can be violent, dangerous places that function as a breeding ground of criminality. Moreover, he states that the use of substance and dependence on, are both dominant in a correctional population. The use of substances is likely to contribute to an unsafe correctional environment because it diminishes self-control, upsurges violence and creates unlawful economic dealings. Shammas (2017) argues that the justification of insecurity in correctional facilities differ.

Sykes (1958/2007) is of the view that offender's conduct is a direct reaction to various perceived deficiencies and stressors in the correctional environment. Sykes (1958/2007) further states that offenders will act aggressively, disobey or express subjective frustration in a negatively stimulating environment.

#### **2.11 Coping theory**

Coping theory is one of the major theories which has been used to explain the patterns and methods of coping that are applied by offenders. Lazarus (1993) describes coping as a continuing cognitive and behavioural effort to manage particular external and/or internal demands that are considered as beyond the resources of the person.

According to Zamble and Proporino (1988) offenders who arrive in a correctional facility with insufficient methods of surviving will leave the correctional facility with a similar deficiency of adaptive capabilities. Lazarus (1996) asserts that individuals differ in their appraisals of stress, based on a multitude of factors, including personality, motivation, belief systems about the environment and one's capacity to influence it, education and level of sophistication. People with a criminal demeanour possess reduced survival capacities and therefore they could channel their insufficient capacity into criminal behaviour (Zamble & Proporino, 1988). According to this theory, insufficient surviving may be an aspect that may cause these individuals more likely to turn into crime.

## 2.12 Risk need- responsivity model

According to Bonta and Andrews (2007) the risk-need responsivity is obtained from main principles that have been presented to improve the complete efficiency of the correctional treatment programmes. Furthermore, Bonta and Andrews (2007) are of the view that the use of the RNR model is extremely effective in therapy for the reason that it addresses the risks of re-offending, the requirements of the offender that must be targeted in therapy, and the style of treatment that works best depending on each offender's risk level and need.

Holtzhausen (2012) cites that the risk-need-responsivity model supports offender rehabilitation and is based on three principles which are the risk principle, the need principle and the responsivity principle. Furthermore, Holzhausen (2012) articulates that the risk- need responsivity principles are the following:

- The risk principle emphasises that criminal conduct can be consistently projected and that treatment should concentrate on the higher risk offenders,
- The need principle highlights the significance of aligning the design and delivery of treatment with criminal fundamental elements
- The responsivity principle defines how the therapy must be delivered effectively.

Andrews (2001) indicates that in order to develop offender suitable treatment, programmes and correctional therapeutic services should concentrate on multi-modal needs. Intervention should target aspects that are placing the offender at future risks. Those factors are regularly defined as 'criminogenic' as they may be social or personal in that they have a fundamental or responsible role in criminal performance. Recidivism behaviour can therefore be minimised by ensuring that future risk factors are addressed in an appropriate manner by ensuring that proper intervention is rendered. Holtzhausen et al. (2012, p.10) states that "*all offenders display criminogenic and non-criminogenic needs. Crimonogenic needs are divided into dynamic (changeable) and static (unchangeable) risk factors which when reduced, are followed by reduced re-offending.*" According to Serin and Kennedy (1997, p. 6) "*Important dynamic risk factors include: anger, prior treatment compliance, personality style, impulsiveness, psychopathy,*

*cognitive impairment, violent fantasies, unemployment and substance abuse*". These are the factors that are consistent predictors of re-offending conduct and if changed, the likelihood of criminal conduct can be reduced or eliminated.

## **2.13 Policies and legislations**

The relevant policies and legislations that the researcher has identified for the study are White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) and the Correctional Service Act 111 of (1998).

### **2.13.1 White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005)**

The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005) has been identified as the relevant policy for this study because it is the crucial strategic document tailored to regulate the management and service provision of DCS (White Paper on Corrections in South Africa, 2005). The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005) obliges a system of government that enables DCS to execute its part as an institution accountable for the promotion of public safety through contravention of the cycle of crime and develop DCS into an institution of rehabilitation and social reintegration that encourages corrections as a public responsibility.

It is suggested that DCS should not incarcerate offenders only. It must develop the institution to rehabilitate and integrate offenders back into society and promote societal responsibility after they have been released (White paper on Corrections in South Africa, 2005). DCS placed rehabilitation at the centre of all its activities. The responsibility of facilitating offender's rehabilitation is mandated by various articles of legislation, including the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996).

It is required that offenders be treated as human beings continuously. Furthermore, it is stipulated that offenders are eligible to all the privileges of any citizen of South Africa (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). However, it is specified that there are rights that are excluded due to incarceration or those that are removed as a result of the individual persons conduct. Due to the act of incarceration, fundamental rights of freedom of

movement and the right to communication are limited (White Paper on Corrections, 2005).

The White Paper on Corrections (2005) identifies the connection between staff and offenders as the key to correction and rehabilitation. The Correctional Officials are required to exemplify the morals that DCS expect to impart in offenders. The reason that the responsibility of assisting and facilitating rehabilitation processes to the offenders is upon Correctional Officials (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). A caring attitude is also required of the correctional officials as well as integrity, honesty and sound work practices (White Paper on Corrections, 2005).

The necessity of DCS to be involved in community initiatives and projects has been identified (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). It is specified that community participation can be achieved through the utilisation of offenders and a noticeable contribution of personnel in community projects (White Paper on Corrections, 2005). The White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (2005) recognises that correcting offending behaviour is not the responsibility of a particular department, it requires an integrated approach that will include all social organisations and individuals. This begins with the family, educational needs, religious activities, sport and cultural institutions in a variety of government departments.

### **2.13.2 Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996**

In this section, the researcher will discuss the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) sets the foundation for the obligation of DCS. The Constitution forces DCS to adhere to the following sections in terms of the treatment of offenders: Section 9 chapter ii of the Constitution, (1996, p.7) stipulates that *“everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law. Section 10 states that everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected”*.

Section 36 chapter 2 of the Constitution (1996) states that the rights in the Bill of Rights may be restricted only in terms of regulation of general application to the extent that the restraint is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human

dignity, equality and freedom, taking into account all relevant factors. Section 35 of the Constitution (1996, p.6) *“specifically provides for the rights of detained, arrested and accused persons to the extent that they have the right to be incarcerated under circumstances that are congruent with human dignity”*.

### **2.13.3 Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998**

The Correctional Services Act 111 of (1998, p.14) *“stipulates that the purpose of the correctional system is to contribute to maintaining and protecting a just, peaceful and safe society. According to this act, that can be achieved by enforcing sentences of the courts in the manner prescribed by this Act, detaining all offenders in safe custody while ensuring their human dignity as well as promoting the social responsibility and human development of all sentenced offenders”*.

It is specified in the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998 that DCS must provide social and psychological services to develop and support sentenced offenders by promoting their social functioning and mental health. Additionally, it is stated that DCS is required to offer, as far as possible, other development and support programmes which meet the definite needs of sentenced offenders.

The Act indicates that convicted offenders may be obligated to partake in programmes and use existing services in terms of subsection (1), (3) and (4) wherein the view of the commissioner is that their involvement is vital taking into regard the nature of their earlier criminal conduct and the danger they pose to the community.

### **2.14 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the literature that is relevant to the study. The literature was drawn from various authors. The theoretical models applicable to the study were discussed, followed by legislation and policies pertinent to this study. The next chapter presents the research methodology that was followed when conducting this research.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3. Introduction

This chapter explicates the study's research design and methodology. This section will also present the population of the study, sampling, data collection approach, and data collection tools and data analysis. The use of a certain research design and methodology will be explained by the researcher, reflecting the reason why the researcher chose those methods for the study.

#### 3.1 Research Design

Majid (2018, p.1) defines research design as "*the use of evidence-based procedures, protocols and guidelines that provide the tools and framework for conducting a research study*". Moreover, Majid (2018) states that the selection of the study design is a methodological choice made by the researcher prior to submitting the study for an ethics evaluation and preliminary data gathering. Study design is also a result of research questions, research objectives, phenomena of interest, population and sampling strategies (Majid, 2018). These components are assimilated in such a way that their unity often proposes the nature of the study to be conducted (Majid, 2018).

The research design is applied so that suitable research methods are used to ensure the attainment of the goals and objectives as set out in chapter one and the researcher selected qualitative research method. The researcher developed research questions and study objectives. Additionally the existing literature was reviewed and theory was incorporated and then a conceptual framework was developed by the researcher.

Qualitative research design in this study was selected for the reason that the researcher desired to explore how the respondents view and understand the world construct meaning out of their experiences. The type of information required in this study is qualitative in nature, as it is an attempt to understand the experiences and lived realities of offenders who are serving life sentences. Investigation of the manner in which people

make meaning out of their own actual, real life experiences in their own thoughts and in their own words is defined as a main property of qualitative research (Cropley, 2021).

## **3.2 Methodology**

### **3.2.1 Qualitative research method**

Hennink et al. (2020, p.10) describes qualitative research as “*an approach that allows the researcher to examine peoples experiences in detail by using a specific set of research methods, such as in depth interviews, focus group discussions, observation, content analysis, visual methods and life histories*”. Additionally, Hennink et al. (2020) asserts that qualitative research studies people in their normal settings to ascertain how their practises and conduct are moulded by the context of their lives, such as the social, economic, cultural or physical context in which they live.

The researcher adopted this design to investigate and explore about life in a correctional facility from the perspective of offenders who are convicted to life sentences. This was the best approach for the researcher because it allowed the researcher to gain an in- depth understanding of the experiences and lived realities of life-serving offenders. One of the unique attributes of qualitative research is that the approach permits the researcher to recognise issues from the viewpoint of the study participants and comprehend the meaning and interpretations that they provide to behaviour, events or objects (Hennink et al., 2020).

Furthermore, this approach allowed the researcher to acquire a thorough understanding of what is happening in the lives of offenders who are serving life sentences. It also bestowed an opportunity for the researcher to obtain richness of detail from life serving offenders concerning their daily experiences and the implications of being in a correctional facility while serving a life sentence. Probing technique was used by the researcher to acquire fresh comprehension about the kind of encounters that the life serving inmates experience and to discover the perceived impact of life incarceration.

Qualitative research is holistic, inductive and contextual based on narratives because it uses small samples that are studied in great depth. Qualitative research is also narrative rather than numerical (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Delpont, 2014). The researcher could

not use quantitative approach because it originates with a series of prearranged classifications and uses standardised quantitative measures. These results are then used to make broad and generalised comparisons (Bless et.al, 2013). In such research, all findings are general and the data is objective (Bless et al 2013).

According to Babbie and Mouton (2009) the main features that distinguish qualitative research from quantitative research include the natural environment of social actors in which the research is conducted. Furthermore, they state that qualitative research accentuates processes rather than results and the viewpoint of the actors is emphasised. The key objective is comprehensive description and understanding of actions and events (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). The significance of understanding social actions in relation to its explicit context rather than to generalise to some theoretical population is highlighted. (Babbie & Mouton, 2009). The approach of the research process is identified as mostly inductive and that is consequential in the generation of new hypothesis, theories and qualitative research that is constantly perceived as the key mechanism in the research process (Babbie & Mouton, 2009).

The mixed method approach was not utilised by the researcher because the problem under investigation does not demand both approaches in the same study.

### **3.2.2 Goal of this study**

The goal of this study was to explore the experiences and implications of incarceration on life-serving offenders. The study is explorative because the researcher wanted to acquire a comprehensive understanding of lived realities of offenders who are serving a life sentence. There is very limited knowledge or existing information about offenders who are serving life sentences. Because offenders are isolated from the normal society, there is relatively little that has been published about the lived realities of offenders, particularly those who are serving life sentences. Stebbins (2008, p.111) asserts that “*researchers explore when they possess little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity, or situation they want to examine but nevertheless have reason to contains elements worth discovering*”.

### **3.2.3 Population of interest**

According to Majid (2018, p.3) "*population of interest is the study's target population that intends to study or treat*". In this study, sixteen participants were selected from the population of incarcerated offenders with a specific focus on those who are serving life sentences in Voorburg Management Area, in the Western Cape Province. They were selected out of the population of 250 offenders who are serving their life sentences in Voorburg correctional facility. The population consists of male offenders from different cultural backgrounds, different age groups, different racial groups and they are convicted for different criminal offences.

#### **3.2.3.1 Sampling**

This subsection will discuss sampling strategies, sampling techniques and sample criteria. A sample is defined as the subcategory of the entire population which is explored by a researcher and whose features will be generalised to the whole population (Bless et al. 2013). Sixteen incarcerated offenders, who are serving life sentences, were selected, ranging from age 35-55.

##### **3.2.3.1.1 The pilot study**

The pilot study was not conducted since offenders are a difficult population to reach as they are in a security environment.

#### **3.2.3.2 Sampling strategy**

Majid (2018) cites that there are varied approaches that researchers can utilise to acquire a representative sample from the population of interest. According to De Vos et al. (2011) sampling involves two basic methods which are non-probability sampling and probability sampling. "*Probability sampling is when the probability of including each element of the population can be determined*" (Bless et al., 2013, p. 166). "*In contrast, non-probability sampling is when the probability of including each element of the population in a sample is unknown*" (Bless et al., 2013, p.166). It is further stated by Bless et al. (2013) that in non-probability sampling, it is unmanageable to regulate the probability of the inclusion of all representative elements of the population. In undertaking the study, purposive sampling was used as a method to select a sample from the population.

The purposive sampling technique was used by the researcher for the purpose that the researcher was precise about the people she required for participation in the study. A purposive sample, also commonly called a judgmental sample, is selected by the researcher based on the purpose of the study which is an exploration of experiences and lived realities of offenders who are serving life incarceration.

According to Johnson, Adkins & Chauvin (2019, p.8) "*purposive sampling reflects intentional research participants to optimise data sources for answering the research question*". There was a designated correctional official to assist the researcher. The designated correctional official provided the researcher with the profile list of offenders who are serving a life sentence. Out of 250 offenders who are serving life sentences and detained in Voorburg correctional facility, the researcher purposefully selected sixteen offenders, who have served more than three years of their sentence. The selection of the sample was also based on feasibility and they were representing the population from which the sample was drawn. The selected offenders became rich samples for an in-depth study of the topic under investigation. The researcher obtained profound understanding of the lived realities of life-serving offenders.

The researcher used her judgment to select the respondents. The researcher knew the characteristics of targets and the respondents were selected with purpose. The researcher targeted offenders who are convicted to life sentences and who have already served more than three years in their sentences, irrespective of offences they have committed. The reason for selecting those offenders who have already served more than three years of their sentence is that the researcher wanted offenders who have already spent time in a correctional facility. The respondents were targeted purposefully to obtain systematic information. This sampling strategy depended on the availability and willingness of the targeted research respondents' voluntary participation.

Snowball sampling, which is another non-probability sampling technique, that some consider being a form of accidental sampling, was not used in this study. Snowball sampling is suitable when the members of the special population are difficult to find (Barbie & Mouton, 2007). When using this technique, data is gathered on limited members of the target population that can be located, and then questioning those

individuals to offer the information required to find other members of that population whom they happen to know. The researcher did not need to utilise this kind of technique because the targeted respondents were confined in one centre, as they are offenders who are incarcerated in a correctional facility. The researcher did not have to ask the targeted offenders to find other life sentenced offenders for the study.

The researcher could not use probability sampling because it is suitable for a quantitative research study. Barbie and Mouton (2007) accentuate that in probability sampling random selection is crucial. They further state that in the random selection, every element has an equal chance of selection, independent of any other event in the selection process.

### **3.3 Method of gaining consent**

According to Barbie and Mouton (2007) the researcher ought to follow particular strategies to create contact with the respondents. The researcher requested entry by writing a letter to DCS and forwarded it to the National Head Office. The Head Office provided the researcher with application forms to complete and those application forms were completed then submitted to the National Head Office. Permission was granted to the researcher and an approval letter was provided. The National Head Office designated an employee at the Regional level to assist the researcher further in order to gain access to Voorburg Management Area. The regional office liaised with Voorburg Management Area. The Area Commissioner of Voorburg Management Area granted permission for the researcher to collect data in his institution.

There was a correctional official designated in Voorburg Management Area to assist the researcher to gain access to the Institution and to have access to the respondents. The researcher informed the willing participants about the rationale and the aim of the study before research interviews started. Individual consent was negotiated with each offender who agreed to participate in the study. The researcher ensured that written consent for participation was obtained from respondents (See Appendix ii for the consent form).

### **3.4 Data collection approach**

This subsection presents the data collection approach. Data collection tools will be presented. Bless et al. (2013, p. 183) states that “*data consists of measurement collected as a result of scientific observation*”. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with sixteen incarcerated offenders. The interviews were conducted in English and IsiXhosa, at the correctional centre where the respondents were being incarcerated.

The researcher interviewed respondents who speak isiXhosa in their language and Coloured participants were interviewed in English. Participants who speak isiXhosa were interviewed with their mother tongue, for the reason that the researcher wanted the respondents to be comfortable in expressing themselves. The Afrikaans speaking respondents were interviewed in English mixed with a little bit of Afrikaans for the reason that the researcher is not fluent with the Afrikaans language. However the respondents who were able to speak English understood and this removed complications with the language barrier. The interviews lasted forty-five minutes to an hour. The researcher was guided by the objectives of the study.

#### **3.4.1 Data collection method**

Bless et al., (2013) accentuate that social scientists can select whether they wish to utilise unobtrusive approaches where the respondents in the study are unaware of being studied, or reactive approaches in which respondents respond to stimuli such as questions presented by the researcher. The data for this investigation were collected through personal interviews administered to a sample of sixteen male offenders, who are serving life sentences and incarcerated in Voorburg Correctional Facility in the region of the Western Cape. The data was collected between the 12 June 2019 and 25 June 2019. The researcher utilised a semi-structured interview schedule to collect data (See Appendix 2) and the researcher had the flexibility to use probing throughout to gain more information about the lived realities of offenders who are serving life sentences.

The permission to bring a digital recorder was requested from the institution because interviews were conducted in a secure institution. The permission was granted and the researcher made use of a digital voice recorder and notes were taken for the respondents who refused to be recorded. Consent was obtained from twelve respondents for utilisation

of a digital recorder and the rest of the respondents indicated that they are uncomfortable with recording. The researcher respected their feelings and notes were taken during interviews. According to Smit et al. (1995, p.17) as cited by de Vos et al. (2005) "*a tape recorder permits much more detail than notes taken during the interview*".

A semi-structured interview schedule was developed earlier. That assisted the researcher to prepare and determine what to find out from respondents and obtain in-depth information. Semi-structured interviews are defined by De Vos et al. (2014) as questions organised around areas of particular interest, while still allowing considerable flexibility in scope and depth. Open-ended questions were included in the interview schedule and the researcher made use of open-ended questions because they do not predetermine the answers and it allowed room for the respondents to respond in their own terms. Interviews were administered face-to-face with each research respondent. The semi-structured interview scheduled face-to-face with the research respondent ensured that the respondent's understood the questions. The goal was to understand the respondent's perspectives and experiences in their own words.

According to Bless et al. (2013) an interview involves direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to answer questions relating to the research subject. It is important to capture what respondents have to say, in their own words, to understand their experiences and perceptions within their natural setting and how they construct "reality".

### **3.4.2 Data analysis method**

As observed by De Vos et al., (2011, p.397), "*data analysis involves constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed*". The analysis of research data began by listening to the recorded interviews. The researcher listened to the recorded data for repeatedly before starting with the process of transcription. This approach provided the researcher with an opportunity to get a complete impression of each interview. It also assisted the researcher to remember the recollections of the major themes each respondent highlighted in their individual interviews.

Regarding interviews that were not recorded on tape, they were recorded on a note book and the researcher read the entire interview. The major topics were identified as well as unique topics and secondary topics. (Tesch, 1990). These topics were categorised into themes, sub-themes and categories. The researcher wrote descriptive paragraphs about the themes and looked for a relationship between the themes, sub-themes and categories. The researcher used Tesch's proposed eight steps in analysing the data collected (Tesch, 1990).

- All the transcripts were carefully read through by the researcher constructing notes of ideas that came to mind.
- One interview was selected by the researcher and read through it. Trying to discover connotation in the information by writing down thoughts coming to mind.
- After going through the transcripts the researcher organised comparable topics in groups by creating columns, categorised key topics, exceptional topics and secondary topics.
- The topics were shortened by the researcher as codes and wrote the codes next to the suitable segments of the text. The researcher then observed the organisation of data to check if new categories or codes emerged.
- The most descriptive wording were identified by the researcher for the topics and transformed them into groups. The purpose was to minimise the overall list of categories by grouping topics together that relate to each other.
- A final decision was then made on the abbreviation of each category and the codes were arranged.
- The data material fitting to each category was put together in one place and preliminary analysis was accomplished.
- The data were then transcribed accordingly by writing down conclusions based on categories and themes.

### **3.5 Unit of analysis**

Unit of analysis is of utmost importance of any investigation, as the entire study is constructed upon the unit of analysis (Khan, 2014). In qualitative design the data is composed to explore the unit of analysis, which may be a phenomenon, in lived experiences of individuals or groups (Dieumergard, Nogry, Ollagnier-Beldame & Perrin, 2019). Within qualitative research, though one must permit for researcher flexibility in shaping the unit of analysis grounded upon the research problem, there are some illustrations from the literature exhibiting the use of units of analysis (Caster & Bridier, 2021).

Magilvy and Thomas (2009) cite that data analysis constructs logic and understanding of the phenomenon of the study. The individual offenders who are in custody is the unit of analysis in this study with all the data describing the individual lived realities in a correctional facility whilst serving a life sentence.

### **3.6 Reliability and trustworthiness**

Tanveer (2008) defines the term “reliability” as a concept utilised for examining or evaluating qualitative research. He further states that an idea is most frequently utilised in all types of research. In qualitative paradigm the notion of testing is regarded as a way of information elicitation. The quality of the research is therefore viewed as the most significant test for any qualitative research (Tanveer, 2008). According to Cypress (2017), researchers define trustworthiness in different methods. “*Trustworthiness refers to quality, authenticity and truthfulness of findings of qualitative research*” (Cypress, 2017). In qualitative research there is no hypothesis to be verified and the focus is on comprehension of the phenomenon within the intricacy of its natural context (Cypress, 2017). The methodology of the enquiry is an additional bendable one and measurement is not necessitated (Bless et al., 2013).

The researcher was not biased. The researcher was impartial and upheld herself with honesty and integrity. That has been achieved by not misconstruing the research discoveries and gave true results. Furthermore, the researcher effectively defined the sampling procedure utilised and the sample that accurately contributed to the research. It was made definite by the researcher that the sufficient data has been collected to

replicate the full variation and depth of the topic of this research. Numerous direct quotes from the original data were included in the research report, so that the exact words of the respondent's voices could be amplified.

### **3.6.1 Credibility**

Korstjens and Moser (2018) define "credibility" as the assurance that can be found in the reliability of research findings. Credibility establishes whether the research outcome signifies credible evidence drawn from the respondent's original data and is a precise interpretation of the respondent's original views (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). For my research to be credible, I cautiously presented respondents views as reflected in the transcripts of their response to lived realities and experiences of serving life in custody. The precise and honest depiction of respondents lived experiences in a correctional facility was accomplished in this study.

Moreover, the study was authenticated by the reviewed literature. The literature reviewed as related to this research, as the researcher collected data on the similar phenomenon, using various literature sources.

### **3.6.2 Transferability**

According to Bless et al. (2013, p. 237) "*transferability can be compared to external validity since it refers to the extent to which results apply to other, similar, situations.*" The researcher is required to offer a comprehensive narrative of the context in which the data was collected. When the context is understood from which findings emerge profoundly and can envisage numerous other contexts where such findings might be significant, the study can therefore be recognised as transferable (Bless et al., 2013).

The researcher described the context of the life serving offenders. The description was not limited to their experiences and lived realities of being in a correctional facility. Dense description of the phenomena under study, and of the context in which the study took place, is the most influential method for facilitating transferability decisions (Nassaji, 2020).

### **3.6.3 Dependability**

Nassaji (2020) cites that to check dependability of a qualitative study, one is required to look and see if the researcher has been inconsiderate or made errors in conceptualising the study, collecting the data, interpreting the results and reporting the findings. Dependability comprises the features of consistency. The analysis should be checked whether the analysis process is in line with the recognized standards for an actual design (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The researcher has provided a complete set of notes on the decisions made during the research process, sampling and research material adopted. The research questions were clearly established and the features of the design of the study are well-suited with them.

### **3.6.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability concerns the characteristic of impartiality (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). The other researchers or observers should be capable in acquiring comparable findings by following a similar research process in a similar context (Bless et al., 2013). The researcher presented critical evaluation of the methodology that has been used in the study. The interpretation of the research is not founded on the researcher's specific preferences and viewpoints but it is constructed in the data. Confirmability was met by sustaining a reflexive journal during the research procedure to retain and manuscript introspections daily that would be valuable and relevant throughout the study. As the main tool of this study, the researcher upheld self-awareness of her role.

### **3.7 Limitation of the Study**

It is essential for the researcher to be conscious of the limitations of the study (De Vos et al., 2002). The limitations and challenges in this study concerning research design, sampling procedure, and data collection were considered by the researcher. The study is contextual and perceptions of experiences are related to the respondents in the specific context. The nature of the research design which is qualitative research design, is a limitation in the study. The reason is that the findings could not be easily generalised and the sample size was limited to sixteen respondents. The fact that the researcher could not interview all the inmates who are sentenced to life incarceration was the limitation because the researcher relied on the results of the respondents that were interviewed.

To estimate the representation of the population from the sample was difficult. The researcher therefore greatly relied on the subjectivity of the selected respondents.

### **3.8 Conclusion**

The qualitative research design and the research methodology followed in this study were presented in this chapter. The qualitative approach and processes were discussed, including data collection methods and the data analysis procedure. The methods that the researcher applied to collecting the data were discussed. Content analysis was discussed in this chapter. The next chapter delineates the study's findings.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS

#### 4. Introduction

This chapter is an analysis of the study's findings which were obtained by conducting personal interviews which were administered to a sample of sixteen male offenders who are incarcerated and convicted to life sentences. The selected offenders have committed different criminal offences and they are all adults from different racial groups. The information that was acquired is based on the personal experiences and lived realities of those selected sixteen offenders. The researcher utilised a semi-structured interview schedule to collect data.

This chapter is comprised of direct narratives of the offenders who participated in the study. Chapter four also contains the demographic profile of the respondents and the framework of analysis. Core themes were identified and analysed to interpret the data. Themes which originate from the study's objectives are broken down into sub-themes and categories. At the end of the chapter a brief conclusion is provided.

#### 4.1 Profile of respondents

**Table 2** presents the profile of the respondents. The profile of respondents consists of the respondent's number, gender, race, current offence and previous offences. The researcher made use of the respondent's number instead of the respondent's names to ensure confidentiality and anonymity.

**Table 2 Profile of respondents**

Respondents	Gender	Race	Current offence	Previous offences
1	Male	Coloured	Kidnapping and murder	2 x House breaking and 1 assault
2	Male	Coloured	House breaking, theft, attempted murder and rape	2 x Theft
3	Male	Coloured	Murder and armed robbery	None
4	Male	Coloured	Murder and 4 attempted murders	Economic offences
5	Male	Coloured	Murder	3 x Serious assault and possession of stolen goods

Respondents	Gender	Race	Current offence	Previous offences
6	Male	Coloured	Rape	None
7	Male	Black	Murder	None
8	Male	Black	Rape	2 x Serious assault, possession of dagga, house breaking and theft
9	Male	Black	Rape	None
10	Male	Coloured	Rape	None
11	Male	Black	Murder and robbery	None
12	Male	Black	Rape and murder	None
13	Male	Black	Assault and murder	None
14	Male	Coloured	Murder x 3 and robbery x 2	Serious assault, possession of unlicensed firearm and ammunition, robbery and possession of drugs
15	Male	Coloured	Rape	Rape, house breaking, theft and serious assault
16	Male	Black	Rape x 6	None

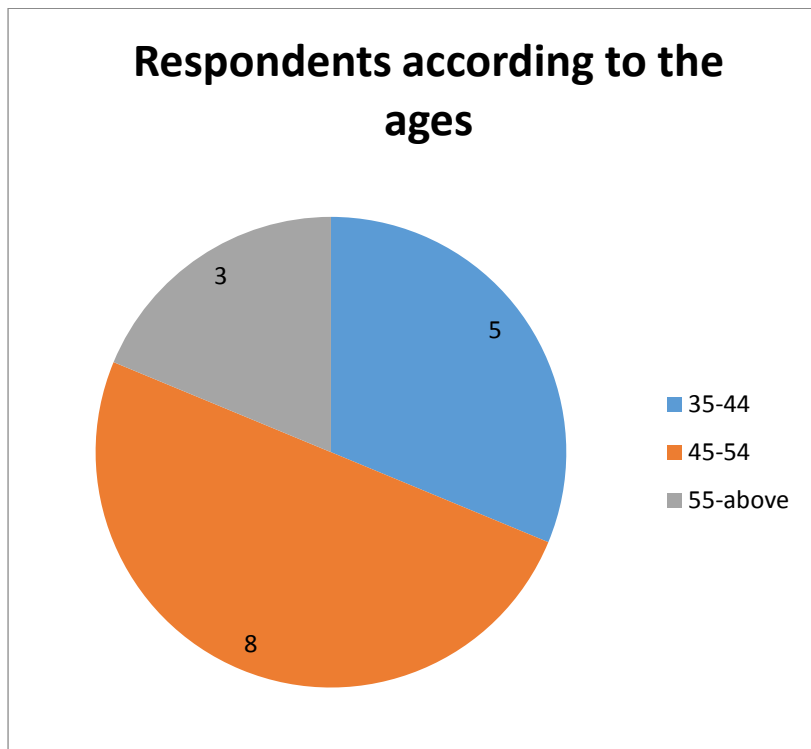


Figure 1: Respondents by age

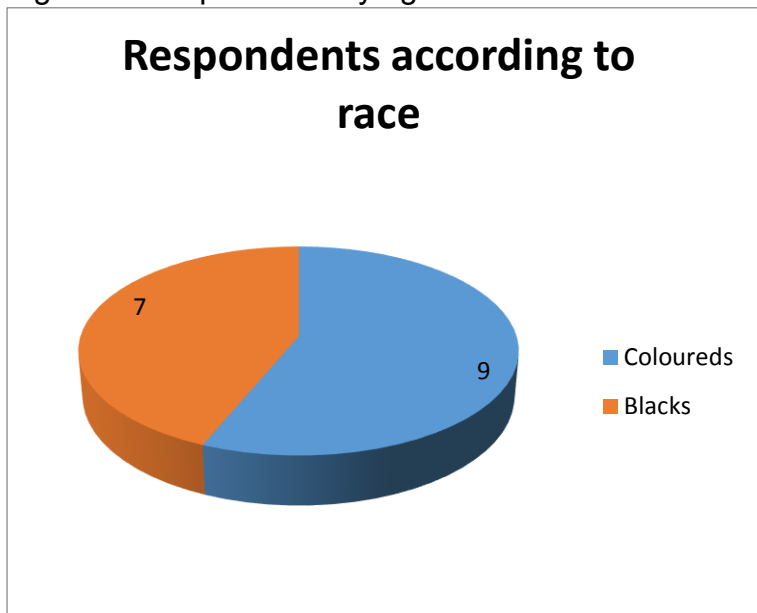


Figure 2: Respondents by race

#### 4.2 Discussion on the profile of respondents

The respondents consisted of sixteen male offenders who are sentenced to life incarceration. The representation of different races was significant, for the reason that crime is committed by people from different racial groups. The researcher was able to acquire a rich amount of data regarding lived realities of life-serving offenders from a different perspective as the respondents are from different racial groups and different cultural backgrounds. There were nine Coloured respondents and seven Black African respondents.

The ages of respondents ranged from 35 to 67. The respondents were all serving life sentences and are convicted for different criminal offences. The respondents were coming from the total population of 250 life-sentenced offenders where only sixteen offenders were interviewed.

Seven of the respondents were not first-time offenders while nine of the respondents indicated that they did not have previous convictions. However, out of those respondents who did not have previous convictions, most reported that they had committed a crime before, but that they were not proven guilty by the court of law. Due to that, they could not be convicted.

### 4.3 Framework for Analysis

**Table 2** represents the framework for analysis. The data is presented according to themes, sub-themes and categories that emerged from the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews.

**Table 3 Framework for analysis**

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
1. Adaptation and adjustment	1.1. First day experience	1.1.1.Despondent
		1.1.2.Darkest day
		1.1.3.Hopelessness
		1.1.4Nothing to live for
	1.2. Daily inspirations	1.2.1.Family Support
		1.2.2.Hope
		1.2.3. Faith in God
	1.3. Daily challenges	1.3.1.Confinement
		1.3.2. Overcrowding
		1.3.3. Gangs
		1.3.4.Dangerous environment Missing family
	1.4. Coping strategies	1.4.1.Joining the gangs
		1.4.2.Positive mind-set
		1.4.3.Spiritual groups
		1.4.4.Taking responsibility
		1.4.5.Hope of getting released
	1.5. Adjustment period	1.5.1.Took longer to accept the sentence
		1.5.2.Longer period to adjust
	1.6. Correctional Officials role	1.6.1Not supportive
2. Psychological impact of long term incarceration	2.1. Mental illness diagnosis	2.1.1.No professional diagnosis
		2.1.2.No psychological intervention
	2.2. Suicidal thoughts/self-harm	2.2.1.Suicidal plans
		2.2.2.Attempted suicide

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
	2.3. Relationship between imprisonment and psychological wellbeing	2.3.1. Stress
		2.3.2. Anxiety
		2.3.3. Feeling depressed
		2.3.4. Suicidal thoughts
3. Factors that lead to stress	3.1. Losing loved ones	3.1.1. Inability to attend funerals of your immediate family members.
	3.2. Uncertainty about the future	3.2.1. Not knowing your release date
		3.3.5. Lack of support
	3.2. Social impact of long term imprisonment	3.2.1. Isolation from the outside world
		3.2.2. Lost friends
	3.3. Prison culture	3.3.1. Prison gangs & gang activities
		3.3.2. Recruitment to join gangs
		3.3.3. Physical violence
4. Challenges	4.1. Overcrowding	4.1.1. Limited resources
		4.1.2. Pressure to join gangs
		4.1.3. Feeling of unsafety
5. Impact of life imprisonment on families	5.1. Family relationship	5.1.1. Divorce / separation
		5.1.2. Broken relationships
		5.1.3. Anger
		5.1.3. Physical absence
	5.2. Connection with children	5.2.1. Inability to raise children
		5.2.2. Loss of a father figure
		5.2.3. Disconnection
	5.3. Financial impact	5.3.1. Financial strain
		5.3.2. Loss of income
		5.3.3. Costly visits
		5.3.4. Phone calls
	5.4. Strengthening of family ties	5.4.1. Family days
		5.4.2. Placed in close correctional centres
		6.1.1. Rehabilitation programmes

Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
6. Kind of services	6.1. Types of programmes attended	6.1.2. Skills and development programmes
		6.1.3. Educational programmes
	6.2 Perceived impact of services rendered	6.2.1. Behavioural change
		6.2.2. Change of mind-set
		6.2.3. Positive self-image
		6.2.4. Empowerment
7. Acquired skills	7.1. Benefits of acquired skills	4.1.1. Self-employment
		4.1.2. Source of income
8. Policies and legislations	8.1. Awareness with regard to policies	8.1.1. No awareness
9. Recommendations	9.1. Overcoming challenges	9.1.1. More family days
		9.1.2. Allowance to bury loved ones
		9.1.3. Intensive and continuous training of correctional officials
		9.1.4. Placement of offenders nearer to their families
		9.1.5. Early intervention
		9.1.6. Awareness about life sentence
		9.1.7. Family support structures
		9.1.8. Giving back to the community projects
		9.1.9. Extension of human resource

#### 4.4 Discussion of findings:

Nine themes were generated from the data and are presented in Table 2. These themes include adaptation and adjustment, psychological impact of long term incarceration, factors that lead to stress, challenges, impact of serving a life sentence on families, kind of services, acquired skills, policies, legislations and recommendations.

#### 4.4.1 Adaptation and adjustment

##### 4.4.1.1 First-day experience

When the respondents were asked about their first-day experience when the life sentence was imposed on them, there was an immediate, strong response from all respondents that the first day was very distressing and that they were filled with a feeling of hopelessness and helplessness.

It has been found that being sentenced to a life sentence is very devastating. Those who are sentenced to life incarceration experience a sense of hopelessness and helplessness. These findings are supported by Smith (2016) who states that a life sentence is a devastating thing to face. Additionally, Penal Reform International (2018) reported that different individuals describe serving unspecified sentence as a “*tunnel without light at the end*”, “*bad dream and nightmare*” and even “*a slow, torturous death*”.

*I felt that my life was over, and I thought that I will spend the rest of my life in prison. I felt that there is nothing to live for and I was hopeless. I was sad that I will not see my children growing up. I thought that they will also grow up without a father like me. I tried to kill myself (respondent 2).*

*It was the darkest day of my life. I felt like opening a grave and burying myself. In my mind, I thought that how am I going to spend the rest of my life in prison. I was thinking of my children who will grow up without a father (respondent 5).*

*I was very frustrated and I was thinking of my children. I felt that my life was over, and I thought that I will spend the rest of my life in prison. I felt that there is nothing to live for and I felt hopeless (respondent 13).*

The above narratives provide evidence in this study that being convicted to a life sentence is a very distressing and devastating experience. As stated by Penal Reform International (2018) numerous life-sentenced inmates report a sense of shock and powerlessness during the early stages of incarceration. It is clear from the above extracts that life-

sentenced offenders are struggling to deal with the fact that fragments of their lives have been shut off and that they are expected to construct a new life within the correctional centres (Tomar, 2013). Offenders struggle to deal with their separation from loved ones and accepting that prison is going to be their home for a long time (Tomar, 2013).

#### **4.4.1.2 Adjustment period**

It has been found that it took longer for offenders who are sentenced to life incarceration to accept and to adjust in a correctional facility and this was reported by all the respondents. These findings are supported by Willis and Zaitzow (2015) who state that offenders who serve long sentences that comprises a life sentence have different adaptation mechanisms, and for them, adaptation is a longer and more intricate process.

*To be honest with you, I really accepted my sentence after seven years (respondent 1).*

*It took me four years, everyday prison works on your mind (respondent 4).*

*It took me three years to fully adjust; otherwise I took one day at a time (respondent 12).*

Respondents of this research made it clear that it is not an easy process to adjust to a correctional facility. They reported that it took longer for them to accept and to adjust in a correctional centre, while serving a life sentence. This evidence is supported by Crewe et al., (2019) citing that offenders find it difficult to accept the length of time that lay ahead of them in a correctional facility. During these early years they find little purpose or meaning in life and very little control over their lives. This period is reflected as a difficult period especially for life-sentenced offenders, as they encounter intense modifications in their conditions, self-esteem and sense of the future (Hulley et al., 2014). In contrast, National Academies Press (2014) argues that custodial stress can impact offenders in various ways and at various phases of their incarceration, as others experience stress during the first period of incarceration while others survive the initial phase and discover

themselves worn down by constant physical and psychological challenges with the stress of detention.

#### **4.4.1.3 Daily aspirations**

The respondents of this study were asked about what keeps them going daily in a correctional environment. Ten out of sixteen respondents said that their faith in a higher power and hope to be reunited with their families keep them going daily. Greer (2002) articulates that there are a number of strategies that could assist offenders to distract from feelings by blocking, and repressing emotions. This can be achieved through activities such as spirituality and meditation which can assist offenders to mask the emergence of potentially damaging internal thought patterns.

*Mostly, my religion and my children outside are my motivation because I want to go and spend time with my children and grandchildren (respondent 4).*

*Firstly, it is God, the one who gives me strength every day, secondly the outlook of interacting again with my family when I get out on parole (respondent 10).*

*It is my faith in God, and my mind-set as I try to be positive all the time. I pray a lot, and I have faith that I will be reunited with my family (respondent 13).*

The aforementioned narratives from respondents of this study indicate that their spiritual beliefs and hope to be reunited with their families keep them going on a daily basis. It was discovered that religion helps to improve adjustment to incarceration, as well as dealing with emotional strains of incarceration. Thomas and Zaitzow (2006), support this evidence, stating that turning to religion and spirituality is a strategy for coping for other offenders. They contend that by becoming religious, offenders can find a sense of inner peace and a more optimistic outlook in life (Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006). Crewe et al. (2019) agrees that the positive impact of religious involvement helps offenders find ways of managing time through self-devised routines. They often turn to spiritual and religious practices. These disciplines are identified as a form of practice that assists offenders to

resolve their feelings of shame about their offences. That allows them to move on with their lives, find sense of purpose and meaning in life.

#### **4.4.1.4 Coping strategies**

All the respondents reported that they belong to a group inside the correctional centre; either a church group or a gang group. Ten respondents belonged to a spiritual group and six of them belonged to a gang group. These findings are supported by Clear et al. (1992) stating that religion assists inmates to deal with guilt as inmates turn to religion for relief. It allows inmates to take responsibility for their wrongdoings. Nel (2017) cites that newly admitted offenders succumb to pressure to join the gangs after they have been manipulated and intimidated. Nel (2017) further states that the intent to join the gang is to ensure their safety and security inside a correctional centre; to gratify their necessity for money and goods; for safety and access to support systems; to be recognised; to be accepted; to gain power, prestige and status; to experience a sense of belonging and to share the same views, outlook on life and aspirations of a gang.

*I am currently in a church group and it is a bible study group; and it helped me a lot to grow spiritually and also assisted me to forgive myself and my parents, because I blamed my mother for a very long time that my life has been messed up like this (respondent 2).*

*I belong to the church group that is called AGAPE and I find hope in church and I find strength. God is a wonderful God (respondent 6).*

*I felt obliged to join the gang and I joined the 28 gangs and that made it easy for me to survive prison. I joined the gangs because I did not want to be victimised by the gangs, therefore I joined the gang for my safety (respondent 12).*

From the above narrative, it is clear in this study that belonging to a group inside the correctional centre is a coping mechanism that helps life-serving offenders with their incarceration. Religion helps offenders to find a different approach in life, as inmates who embrace religion tend to be strongly dedicated to doctrinaire models of religious living.

Moreover, religion assists offenders to deal with the loss, especially the loss of freedom and offenders who are deeply devoted to their religion frequently report that the foremost value of their faith is a sense of peace (Clear et al., 1992).

#### **4.4.1.5 Correctional Official's role**

The respondents were asked about the contribution that correctional officials have towards life-serving offenders in terms of adapting to a correctional facility. Eleven respondents out of sixteen reported that no support is being offered by correctional officials in terms of adapting in a correctional facility. The White Paper on Corrections (2005) states that how each staff member performs his or her responsibilities can either contribute to the creation of a rehabilitation-encouraging environment or influence against rehabilitation and the correction of the offending conduct.

*It is a beautiful picture that the Department of Correctional Services is painting to the people about special programmes, but there are not enough resources and nobody encourages you in the sections. The case officers are overloaded; as they are required to attend to 46 inmates; and they do not get a chance to get to one person. The inmates end up surrendering to external influences in prison. They join the gangs and the officers cannot get to you on time, and you end up doing the wrong things because you feel that nobody cares. You just give up (respondent 3).*

*When you are newly admitted, no one is there to carry you through the journey. There is nothing that is done by the officials that helps you to adjust. They only tell you about the rules which you should follow during your incarceration period (respondent 12).*

*You do not get support from the officials and you have to find your own ways to adjust. It is the most difficult time because you were just been sentenced to life imprisonment. At that time the gangs are there recruiting you to join them and it becomes easy to join the gangs because you are scared (respondent 16).*

The data of this research shows that there is no support that is being offered by correctional officials to life-sentenced offenders in terms of adapting to a correctional environment. Offenders in the correctional facility, where the study was conducted, have to find ways to adapt in a correctional centre. This is contrary with what is specified in the Correctional Services Act 111 of 1998, that DCS must certify that there is availability of social and psychological services in order to develop and support sentenced offenders by promoting their social functioning and mental health. Moreover, it is stated that the department must deliver, as far as possible, other development and support programmes which meet the definite requirements of sentenced offenders.

#### **4.4.2 The psychological impact of long term incarceration**

##### **4.4.2.1 Mental Health Services**

Fifteen respondents reported that there was never a professional diagnosis of psychological problem/illness and only one respondent indicated that he had a psychological diagnosis. Tomar (2013) asserts that the need for offenders to receive psychological services is essential, for the reason that some offenders need assistance to cope with the length of their incarceration.

*The only time that we get to see the psychologist is when we are about to see the Parole Board, and at that time we already spent many years in prison and we have accepted the fact that we are serving life imprisonment (respondent 16).*

*I have never been diagnosed of a psychological problem/illness by a professional (respondent 9).*

The above narratives infer that life-sentenced offenders who participated in this study have never been diagnosed with a mental illness or psychological problem because there was no professional intervention by the psychologist. Tomar (2013) states that some offenders struggle to deal with their separation from loved ones and friends or accepting that the correctional facility is going to be their home for some time. Therefore psychological intervention is vital. Incarceration is directly connected to negative emotional reactions like anxiety (Schittker et al., 2012).

These findings revealed that the major responsibility of the psychologist in DCS is the management of psychological/mental health programmes. Where the offender should be assisted to adjust in a correctional centre and learn new coping skills within the correctional facility, is not adhered to by psychologists.

#### **4.4.2.2 Suicidal ideation and self-harm**

It was indicated by eight respondents that they thought of killing themselves. Three respondents indicated that they attempted to commit suicide. That happened during the early stages of their sentence. Five respondents indicated that they did not think or attempt to commit suicide or harm themselves although they were feeling the intensive stress of incarceration. Pre-existing psychological disorders may be aggravated by initial experiences with incarceration (National Academies Press, 2014). For certain offenders, extreme incarceration stress takes a more significant psychological toll.

*I thought of killing myself but that happened early in my sentence. I broke a glass bottle which I got from hospital with heartburn medication; and I stabbed myself in the stomach but I was rescued on time (respondent 1).*

*I attempted to commit suicide twice by overdosing with anti-retroviral tablets; which I got from other offenders who were on HIV treatment. I could not wake up and the offenders who provided me with tablets could not report me to the authorities because they would be in trouble. I woke up after a day without any assistance and my cell mates were scared (respondent 2).*

*I thought of killing myself but that happened early in my sentence. I thought of committing suicide by hanging myself (respondent 8).*

The above narratives of this study infer that life-sentenced offenders experience suicidal thoughts and others attempt to kill themselves. That happens during the early stages of their incarceration. It is therefore shown by this study that although the psychological intervention/diagnosis does not take place in offenders, offenders do suffer from

psychological illnesses. This evidence is supported by Tomar (2013) reporting that many early researchers came to the conclusion that incarceration is associated with negative psychological and physical effects that lead to psychological deterioration of inmates. Emotional withdrawal, depression, suicidal thoughts or actions and increasing levels of hostility are identified as the effects that are experienced by inmates (Tomar, 2013). It is articulated by National Academies Press (2014) that several aspects of life in custody, which expose inmates to powerful psychological stressors, comprising material deprivation, limited movement, limited freedom, lack of meaningful activity, a nearly total absence of personal privacy, high levels of interpersonal uncertainty, danger and fear detrimentally influence the emotional well-being of offenders.

#### **4.4.2.3 Relationship between incarceration and psychological wellbeing**

When respondents were asked about the relationship between incarceration and psychological wellbeing, fifteen respondents out of sixteen specified that there is a connection concerning incarceration and psychological wellbeing with one respondent being uncertain. Schittker, Massoglia and Uggen (2012) cite that incarceration is directly connected with negative emotional reactions like anxiety and that longer or repetitive incarceration leads to even more harmful reactions.

*Yes, I was stressing a lot and it is not easy to accept the sentence because life sentence is very harsh; and I thought that I will die in prison. I did not have the understanding about life sentence (respondent 1).*

*Yes, there is a strong link, especially during those days when you are just sentenced to life imprisonment; you feel that your life is over (respondent 5).*

*Yes, especially in your early days of your sentence, you stress a lot. I could not sleep and I could not eat and I felt hopeless and I was just depressed (respondent 12).*

It is shown by the data from this study that offenders experience psychological symptoms, mostly during the early days of their sentence, as they struggle to accept their conviction.

Abdullah (2006) states that incarceration can cause psychological damage for the reason that inmates are exposed to infinite tension, harassment, stress and strain of living in an environment that is abnormal among thousands of different personalities and attitudes. Furthermore, Addullah (2006) is of the view that once an offender is in custody for a long period of time, and when the living conditions are unfavourable during incarceration, that determines the level of psychological damage that an individual can acquire. Tomar (2013) reports that numerous early researchers established that incarceration is associated with harmful psychological and physical effects that leads inevitably to psychological deterioration. It is specified by National Academies Press (2014) that the distinctive and powerful stresses of incarceration are probable to relate and magnify whatever pre-existing vulnerability offenders bring to the correctional facility.

#### **4.4.3 Factors that lead to stress**

##### **4.4.3.1 Losing loved ones and uncertainty about future**

Nine respondents reported that their mental state was being affected by many factors. These include the inability to bury their loved ones that they have lost during their time of incarceration. Furthermore, they reported that a lack of understanding of the meaning of a life sentence leads to stress. Penal Reform International, (2018) asserts that there are life changing events that take place during the incarceration of the offenders which include loss of family members through death, as well as not being able to have or raise children or offer support for family members.

*When I was sentenced to life imprisonment, I was thinking about spending the rest of my life in prison and I thought of killing myself. When someone dies from your family, you are not allowed to go to the funeral (respondent 9).*

*When I heard that I am convicted to life imprisonment, it was difficult to hear that because I knew that I will spend a lot of years behind bars. We must be allowed to go out and bury loved ones, I lost both of my parents while I am here, but I was not given an opportunity to attend the funeral because I am serving life sentence. It is really unfair to us because we are here for a long time (respondent 14).*

*When I heard that my sentence is life imprisonment, I thought I will spend the rest of my life in prison and that my life was over. Inability to attend the funeral of close family members is really stressing you inside; because you do not get the opportunity to find closure. I lost both of my parents, my two brothers and my son and I did not bury any of them; because I was not allowed to attend the funeral (respondent 16).*

According to the data of this research, the most fundamental factors that are leading to stress include uncertainty about the time that offenders will spend in custody as well as the inability to bury their loved ones due to incarceration. Penal Reform International (2018), states that a life sentence is reported by life-serving inmates as a painful experience because of the uncertainty of release. The data of this study indicated that the life-sentenced offenders are not granted the opportunity to attend funerals of their close family members.

According to Brent, Paterline and Douglas (2016) offenders are characterised by a system of guidelines, a rigid hierarchy of authority, a reliance on coercive power and a low degree of individual autonomy. Shammass (2017) supports Brent et al. (2016) stating that offenders lose the ability to make elementary choices about their everyday lives. They are unable to choose the kind of food to eat, when and how physical functions should be taken care of, and when and how to move within the restricted confines of the correctional facility. According to the deprivation theory on deprivation of liberty, loss of liberty includes the disbanding of connections to family and friends.

#### **4.4.3.2 Culture that exist in a correctional environment**

It has been established in this study that there is a gang culture in a correctional centre where the study was conducted. All respondents reported that there are different gangs which include the twenty-six, twenty-seven and the twenty-eight gangs. These findings are supported by Nel (2017) stating that once an offender arrives at the correctional centre, he has entered into a unique world in every sense. This is a world dominated by gangs, violence, drugs, smuggling, corruption and rape. Gang members intimidate the newly admitted offenders to generate terror. This causes the new offenders to be more

vulnerable and they develop a sense of insecurity. They feel helpless and that mental condition is alleviated by joining the gangs (Nel, 2017).

*In prison there is gang culture; which include 26, 27, and 28. There are France (Non-gang members) and Christian culture (Brothers). Previously there were Air Forces and Big Five but those gangs no longer exists in prison. Air Forces were specialising in smuggling and they would escape to smuggle drugs and come back. The big five were reporting the wrong doing to the officials (Pimp). The twenty eight gangs are about blood (stabbing a Correctional Officer or a member of the other gang group, sex by sodomising and smuggling). Stabbing a high rank official or a high rank gang member is recommended in order for you to get the rank within the gang. All the gangs are doing the same thing (respondent 1).*

*There is gang culture in prison and when you are newly admitted you are recruited to join the gang. When you think about your sentence, you prefer to join the gangs so that you may benefit and feel protected, as a result I joined the 28 gangs (respondent 5).*

*There is gang culture in prison and I joined the 28 and that made it easy for me to survive prison. I have been in a very dangerous prison, and I was scared and I did not want to be assaulted. Thinking about the length of my sentence, I felt obliged to join the gangs in order for me to be protected (respondent 9).*

*Here, we have gangs and most offenders belong to the gangs because we recruit them when they are admitted. We have 26, 27 and 28 gangs. We do have offenders who do not join gangs because there are offenders who are converted Christians. If you are a non-gang member, it is really difficult especially in prisons where gangs are highly active because people get abused (respondent 14).*

The above narratives indicate that gang culture exists in the correctional centre where the study was conducted and there are different gangs. Albertse (2007) argues that South African correctional facilities have been confronted with the challenge of gangs and their violent expressions for years. The gangs practice gang-related activities and recruit other

offenders to join them. It is revealed by the data of this research that offenders join the gangs for protection. This is supported by Nel (2017) stating that newly admitted offenders succumb to the pressure by joining the gangs and they do so once manipulation and pressure took place. They succumb to the pressure of gangs in order to guarantee their safety and security inside a correctional centre, to gratify their requirement for financial gain and goods and access to support systems, to be acknowledged, to be accepted, to acquire supremacy, prestige and status, to experience a sense of belonging and to share the similar opinions, outlook on life and ambitions of a gang (Nel, 2017).

Forester (2017), cites that there are three well know gangs in correctional facilities which are 26s, 27s and 28s who are jointly identified as the 'numbers gangs'. Forester (2017) describes them as gangs that are notorious around the world, and are ranked much like the South African military service, from generals to privates. The sole force of a 26 gang member is money and getting it by any means possible, while there are two lines of 28s which include those that choose to climb the ranks by sodomising other prisoners and those who choose to stab correctional officials (Forester, 2017). The 26s and 28s do not get along and their hatred frequently results in violence (Forester, 2017). The 27s gang is defined as a gang that focuses on drawing blood, particularly from a correctional official and that is associated as a definite way to climb the ranks as a 27 gang member. Brent et al., (2016) are of the view that offenders develop an oppositional attitude towards both the correctional institution they have been forced to become part of, and the staff of the institution and this is the main consequence of confinement.

#### **4.4.4 Challenges**

##### **4.4.4.1 Overcrowding**

Fifteen out of sixteen respondents reported that there were too many offenders in one cell. They reported that the cells were overcrowded and there were insufficient resources. Giffard and Muntingh (2006) indicate that overcrowding increases a burden on resources and infrastructure and it also intensifies the dangers related with security, safety and health of incarcerated offenders. Matshaba (2007) accentuate that overpopulation of offenders certainly intensifies the threat of epidemics and the dispersion of contagious infections.

*The number of offenders in the cell is not appropriate, we have to share the space and we are overcrowded because we were supposed to be twenty inmates in that cell but we are 26 (respondent 4).*

*We are overcrowded; because there is one toilet and one bathroom and we are 26 cellmates (respondent 6).*

*We are too many for that cell, others are smoking and we are sharing one shower and one toilet (respondent 8).*

*We are 24 cellmates and it is the lowest number compared to other prisons that I have been. The problem is that you are accommodated with other offenders and others are sick; but you have to cope in that environment (respondent 11).*

The above narratives show that there is overcrowding in the correctional centre where this study was conducted and that they have to share one toilet and one shower. The data indicated that some offenders are smoking while they are allocated with non-smokers with others being sick. These findings are supported by Giffard and Muntingh (2006) stating that most South African offenders are detained in large communal cells which are relatively easy to overcrowd. Cavadino and Dignan (2013) accentuate that due to overpopulation in correctional facilities, security is deprived, living conditions are poor and there is insufficient human resources so offenders experience a sense of injustice. This is in contrast with what is stipulated in the Constitution of South Africa 1996 which states that “everyone who is detained, including every sentenced offender to conditions of detention consistent with human dignity, including the provision, at state expense, of adequate accommodation”. This study shows that the constitutional right of the offenders who are detained in the correctional facility where the study took place are violated.

#### **4.4.4.2 Pressure to join gangs**

All respondents reported that they have been recruited to join gangs and six participants indicated that they joined the gangs because they needed protection. Other respondents joined the gangs at the beginning of their sentence and after a while, they transformed their lives and became converted Christians. The newly admitted offenders are being

threatened by gang members. The threats are causing the newly admitted offenders to be more vulnerable and to join gangs. Due to those threats, newly admitted offenders develop a sense of insecurity and a sense of helplessness that their mental state is relieved by joining the gangs (Nel, 2017).

*Yes, I joined the gang and that made it easy for me to survive prison. I have been in a very dangerous prison, and I did not want to be raped or assaulted. Thinking about the length of my sentence, I felt obliged to join the gangs in order for me to survive (respondent 2).*

*In prison there are 26, 27, 28 gangs and they want to run prison. They are forcing other inmates to join them and they assault you, but for me I was stubborn and I did not join them but others end up joining the gangs. I did not join because gangsterism is not for me. They smuggle, rape people and assault people. Fortunately, they did not rape me. I had to clean the toilet and the bathroom every day because I did not want to be part of them (respondent 6).*

*I felt obliged to join the gang and I joined the 28 gang and that made it easy for me to survive prison. I joined the gang because I did not want to be victimized by the gangs; therefore I joined the gang for my safety. Currently I am not active; I am a converted Christian (respondent 12).*

The data of this study indicated that all offenders are recruited by the gangs to join them. Others succumb to the pressure to join the gangs because they want to be protected and they do not want to be victimised by the gangs. Another motive for them to be part of the gangs is to gratify their requirement for financial gain and goods; for security and access to support systems, to be acknowledged, to be accepted, to acquire power, admiration and status; to experience a sense of belonging and to share the same understandings, outlook on life and desires of a gang (Nel, 2017). Brent et al., (2016) argue that offenders advance an oppositional attitude towards both the correctional institution they have been forced to become part of and the staff of the institution. Furthermore, Brent et al., are of the view that the presence of oppositional attitudes in offenders contributes towards non-support to the institution's formal goals and policies.

#### 4.4.4.3 Feeling unsafe

When the respondents were asked if they have ever felt that their lives are in danger, fourteen out of sixteen respondents reported that the correctional environment is dangerous because fights happen often. They reported that it is not safe for offenders as well as for the correctional officials. According to Muntingh (2009), there are numerous deaths and grievances of attacks documented by both DCS and the Judicial Inspectorate for correctional services over many years, and that indicates that brutality is a “normal” feature of the South African correctional system. Theory on deprivation of security reveals that correctional centres can be violent, dangerous places that function as a breeding ground of criminality (Shammas, 2017).

*Yes, because I am not a gang member and sometimes you are surrounded by gangs and they talk using their language; and you do not know whether they are planning to assault you. Our lives are in danger because others are threatened and someone can be killed in your presence and there is nothing you can do (respondent 11).*

*In this place anything is possible, I have witnessed fights in this place and each and everyone's life is in danger, including the lives of correctional officials. The officials can be stabbed by inmates and those incidents are always gang related; because instruction can be given for the blood to be shed. As long as you are here, your life is in danger (respondent 12).*

*Yes, the environment is not safe because we are mixed with gangs and the gangs can fight anytime because of their beliefs. They believe that blood of a non-gang member must be shed to clean their blood when they had a fight amongst each other. The officials are not safe as well, because the gangs sometimes demand the blood of an official to obtain a higher rank in the gangs (respondent 13).*

*You must watch your back here; because all the time your life is in danger because we are different gangs. Within a minute, anything is possible and it is not only the*

*lives of offenders that are in danger, also the lives of correctional officials are in danger (respondent 14).*

The above narratives indicate that the correctional environment is not a safe environment for the offenders as well as for the employees of DCS. The data indicates that safety is ruined by the gangs that are operating in the correctional centre where the study took place. This is supported by James (2003) describing men's correctional centres as an emotionally volatile environment that is regularly soaked with violence and aggression. Liebling (2014) identifies a correctional facility as an environment that is emotionally fraught, intense and risk loaded.

#### **4.4.5. Impact of life imprisonment on families**

##### **4.4.5.1 Family relationship**

The respondents were asked to describe their relationships with their families. Twelve respondents reported that they have a good relationship with their families and four respondents reported that they do not have a relationship with their families at all.

*My relationship with my family is good but my wife divorced me, however our relationship is still good. I understand why she divorced me and I do not blame her at all. My family encourages me to change my life and they give me money for toiletry (respondent 5).*

*My relationship with my family is good. My children are visiting me at the centre and my mother visits me and my siblings. My father passed away while I am here. My family gives me money for toiletry and goodies (respondent 12).*

*My relationship with my family is good and my family is my strong support structure. My family renders support by visiting me on monthly basis (respondent 13).*

The above narratives show that offenders in this study are supported by their families during their incarceration period. Comfort et al. (2016) states that there is the burden of

many difficulties and costs precisely connected with sustaining a connection with an offender which include monetary, social and emotional costs.

#### **4.4.5.2 Relationship with spouse/partner**

Out of eight respondents who were married, six of them reported that they got divorced during their incarceration period, while two respondents remained married. Two respondents who were in a long term relationship stated that they were separated with their partners during their incarceration period. Long periods of separation results in the instability of a marriage and eventual divorce (Harman, Higson-Smith, & Egan, 2007).

*My girlfriend waited for me for seventeen years; but she gave up on me and moved on with her life. She wanted to get married to me (respondent 2).*

*My wife divorced me after seven years of my incarceration and she moved on with her life. Anyway, I do not blame her because I could have done the same if I was in her position (respondent 12).*

*My ex-girlfriend who is the mother of my children is smoking drugs now. I think she could not cope to raise our children on her own (respondent 14).*

*My wife does not want anything to do with me, she does not visit me and there is absolutely no contact between us (respondent 15).*

The above narratives from this study shows that long term incarceration affects marriages and relationships negatively. It is depicted by the data from this study that long term incarceration leads to divorce or separation. These findings are supported by Petersilia, (2003) identifying that the strain of incarceration frequently seriously damages or ends the relationships.

#### **4.4.5.3 Relationship with children**

The respondents of this study were asked about how their incarceration affected their relationship with their children. All respondents who are fathers reported that their

incarceration has affected the relationship with their children very badly because they are not physically present in the lives of their children. According to Wright and Seymour (2000) the effects of parental incarceration on their offsprings can cause behavioural and emotional reactions which include distress, fretfulness, grief, physical symptoms and augmented health difficulties as well as regressive conduct such as bed-wetting.

*My children have to grow up without a father. I am not physically present every day in their lives and I cannot go out with them. My son is using drugs and I blame myself, because I am not a good role model to my children (respondent 5).*

*Very bad, because I lost my daughter and my daughter was on drugs and she died because of an overdose of drugs. My son is on drugs and is having criminal conduct and my other son is sick (respondent 8).*

*Very bad, because I am not there physically as a father and I left them while they were young. One of my children is angry with me and claims that other things that have happened in his life could not have happened, if I was there as a father (respondent 11).*

*Very bad, because my son has followed my footsteps and he was using drugs. My daughter is living with a boyfriend and she is a mother at a young age and she dropped out of school. I am not there physically as a father and I believe my imprisonment has affected them. My children do not have anyone because their mother is on drugs (respondent 14).*

These quotes by respondents of this study indicate that incarceration does not only negatively impact the relationship between the offender and their children, it also negatively affects the behaviour of the children who have to grow up without a father. Crime and Justice Research, (n. d.) indicate that children with an incarcerated parent are at a greater risk of developing mental health problems and are three times more probable to participate in anti-social or offending behaviour than their peers who do not have a parent in custody. Children of incarcerated offenders encounter an emotional state that is characterised with resentment, embarrassment, guilt, segregation, and misperception

about their parent's behaviour. They battle concerning this and how they have been taught to behave (Winter; 2001). According to deprivation theory, another consequence of loss of liberty includes the disbanding of connections to family and friends due to constraints or complications related with getting visitors, sending and receiving mail, or placing telephone calls (Shammas, 2017).

#### **4.4.5.4 Financial impact on families**

Fourteen out of sixteen respondents reported that their incarceration has had a negative financial impact on their families. According to International Review of the Red Cross (2016) families who continuously have contact with a family member that are incarcerated, drain the resources through financial costs of phone calls and visits, and that those finances would otherwise have been used to pay household bills or buy food.

*Both of my parents are pensioners now, and they would take their pension money and pay for the taxi and come and visit me and share their pension money with me. My incarceration has placed financial strain on them (respondent 1).*

*Had negative impact on my family finances, and my family has to travel to visit me and they must also support me financially. I am not earning a salary, instead I am financially dependent on them (respondent 8).*

*It had a negative impact on my family finances and my ex-wife had to look for work in order to be able to support my children. Currently, my family have to travel to visit me and I am dependent on them for financial support. I do not have financial contribution to my children as a father. I am supposed to be a provider (respondent 12).*

The data of this research shows that incarceration brings financial strain to families as other offenders were primary financial providers for their families. There is a loss of income and added financial responsibility as the families had to pay for transport to visit the offender and provide the offender with money for telephone calls and toiletries. International Review of the Red Cross (2016) argue that when people are incarcerated, the family members they leave behind are faced with the challenges to modify not only

the physical absence of their loved ones but also to the absence of financial and practical contributions which that person made to the household.

#### **4.4.5.5 Strengthening of family ties**

The respondents were asked about what can be done to strengthen family ties between life-serving offenders and their families. Thirteen respondents stated that there should be more family days and that offenders should be placed in correctional centres that are nearer to their families.

*Offenders who are serving life imprisonment are placed in prisons that are too far from their families, they should be placed nearer to their families to strengthen moral support. It is expensive for the families to visit their loved ones who are in prison. Families lose contact and that bond between offenders and their families is not strengthened when that happens (respondent 4).*

*There should be more family days and the life-sentenced offenders should be placed in correctional centres that are nearer to their families, in order for our families to be able to visit us more often. We should be allowed to go to funerals, so that we can be there for our families in times when we are most needed (respondent 5).*

The data shows that hosting of family days and placing life-sentenced offenders in correctional centres that are closer to their families could assist in strengthening family ties. Winter (2001) asserts that the geographical distance from the family home to correctional centres can be economically and physically difficult for the offender's family where visiting is concerned. This is supported by Delgado (2011) stating that the probable reason is that correctional centres are usually secluded, causing travel to and from the facility difficult.

#### **4.4.6 Kinds of services that are being offered for life-sentenced offenders**

All sixteen respondents stated that there are social work programmes, correctional programmes, restorative justice programmes, skills and development programmes,

educational programmes, spiritual programmes, psychological services and computer programmes. According to DCS (2015), the behaviour of offenders is corrected through access to psychological, social work and spiritual services.

*There are social work programmes, spiritual programmes, correctional programmes, skills and development programmes, educational programmes, computer programmes, sport and recreational programmes (respondent 9).*

*There are social work programmes, restorative justice programme, adult basic education and training (respondent 8).*

*There are social work programmes, spiritual programmes, restorative justice programme, skills and development programme (respondent 15).*

These answers demonstrate that offenders who participated in this study are aware of the kind of services that are available to them. DCS has made rehabilitation a top priority and has programmes that are intended to decrease the possibility of upcoming transgression and to transform inmates into useful members of society. Rehabilitation includes the practise of offering offenders with a range of services that are inclusive of development and therapeutic programmes. These findings are supported by Taylor (2017) stating that during the incarceration period, offenders partake in different therapeutic programmes that are targeted to mend the probability that offenders will live a productive, crime-free life upon release by addressing the fundamental causes that led to their criminal conduct.

#### **4.4.7 Rehabilitation programmes attended**

All sixteen respondents reported that they have attended social work programmes. Nine respondents out of sixteen reported that they attended a restorative justice programme. Seven respondents indicated that they attended other programmes, in addition to social work programmes.

*I am a recovering addict; I attended social work programmes and correctional programmes (respondent 3).*

*I attended social work programmes, restorative justice programme and skills and development programme (respondent 5).*

*I did a sexual offender programme, life skills programme, restorative justice programme and funda mzantsi (respondent 9).*

*I did social work programmes, spiritual programmes, restorative justice programme, computer programme, funda mzantsi and skills and development programme (respondent 2).*

According to the data of this research, life-sentenced offenders benefit from attending rehabilitation programmes that are available at correctional facilities, specifically social work programmes. The data also revealed that the multi-disciplinary approach is not applied in the rehabilitation of offenders as they do not have the opportunity to attend other programmes like skills and recreation programmes, and psychological programmes. It is stated that all offenders have equal right to benefit on available rehabilitation programmes during their incarceration period (DCS, 2016).

#### **4.4.8 Perceived impact of service rendered**

The respondents were asked about the impact of the programmes that they have attended. All sixteen respondents reported that rehabilitation programmes have assisted them to make the necessary changes in their lives. The respondents who attended skills and a development programme; stated that they have acquired skills that could help them to be financially independent when they are released.

*They have helped me to see the clear picture of how you must live your life and be a law abiding citizen. If you apply what you have learned inside, you will never be in conflict with the law again (respondent 1).*

*I will speak about myself, I was smoking drugs and I managed to quit smoking, I was easily angered, and now I can control my anger and that assisted me to cope in this environment because here you live with different people from different backgrounds (respondent 5).*

*I manage my anger better now and I know that there is still a lot that I need to change with my life. I have witnessed people transforming their lives completely inside, and I hope I will do that one day (respondent 14).*

*The programmes were helpful because they have changed my perspective towards life, and I have improved my knowledge and I acquired a lot of skills (respondent 15).*

According to the data of this study, the rehabilitation programmes are effective in implementing their goals. According to DCS (2016) rehabilitation provide offenders with programmes that are based on their specific needs and interventions to facilitate their rehabilitation, social responsibility, human advancement and permit their social re-integration.

#### **4.4.9 Acquired skills**

The respondents were asked about skills that they have acquired during the incarceration period. Thirteen respondents reported that they acquired skills like plumbing, computer skills, brick laying, furniture making and welding. Three respondents reported that they did not acquire any skill during their incarceration period. Respondents were asked if the acquired skills will be helpful when they reintegrate with the community. All respondents who acquired skills reported that the skills will assist them in generating an income.

*I have acquired plumbing skills and painting skills. I have a criminal record and these skills will assist me to generate an income because I can open my own business (respondent 1).*

*I acquired skills in plumbing and brick laying. The skills that I have acquired will be helpful, because I can use the skills for my benefit by opening my own business. To get a job outside is not easy, and it is extra difficult when you have a criminal record and also considering my age, because we are getting old in prison (respondent 5).*

*I have acquired computer skills and furniture making. I can use the acquired skills to open my own business (respondent 9).*

*I have acquired skills in plumbing, furniture making, assistant chef, bricklaying and upholstery. I will use the acquired skills to open my own business and I would also create employment for others (respondent 15).*

The narratives above show that the offenders acquired skills during the incarceration period. Those skills could help them generate an income as they intend to open their own business when they re-integrate with the community. The data also shows that the offenders understand that getting employment while having a criminal record is a challenge. According to Holomisa (2019) inmates are skilled through working in the different departmental workshops, which include wood, steel, and textiles workshops, bakeries, a shoe factory and agricultural facilities.

## **4.5 Policies and legislations**

### **4.5.1 Awareness with regard to policies**

The respondents were asked about their awareness concerning the policies of DCS. Only two respondents out of sixteen have a partial understanding of what is stipulated in policies.

*I know that offenders should be treated with dignity and human respect (respondent 1).*

*I know that DCS is here for the safety of the inmates, its members and the community. DCS is having a mandate to rehabilitate us so that we can be re-integrated to society as better human beings (respondent 2).*

*I do not know about policies (respondent 4).*

*I do not know about policies (respondent 6).*

*I do not know anything about policies (respondent 9).*

According to this research, offenders do not have awareness of the various DCS policies. In the Constitution of Republic of South Africa, (1996, p.7) section 10 states that “everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected”. Section 35 of the Constitution (1996, p. 16) particularly delivers for the rights of imprisoned, arrested and accused persons to the extent that “they have the right to be detained under conditions that are congruent with human dignity”. The White Paper on Corrections (2005) identifies the association amongst the correctional officials and offenders as significant to correction and rehabilitation.

#### **4.6 Treatment by correctional officials**

The respondents were asked about their treatment by correctional officials. Thirteen respondents reported that correctional officials are not the same. Some officials do not have good manners and there are those who do have good manners. Few respondents reported that officials are good.

*Sometimes, correctional officials are swearing at offenders and they do not show respect to offenders. Some of the Officials are not good role models because they are unable to treat offenders with human dignity (respondent 1).*

*The officials are not the same; some do not have a right attitude towards us as offenders. They do not have good manners and do not know how to communicate or treat us. They do not show respect to us and I do not understand because they*

*are supposed to rehabilitate us. I think some officials should also attend these rehabilitation programmes like anger management and life skills, so that they can learn how to communicate and learn about respect (respondent 5).*

*Correctional officials are not the same; there are good ones and the bad ones. The bad ones are rude towards us, they smuggle drugs and they do not have passion to work with us. You can see that they are just here for money and they are not good role models (respondent 9).*

*Some officials are working with gangs and they fear the gangs, because officials are being stabbed (respondent 11).*

The above narratives in this study show that there are correctional officials who do not adhere to the policies of DCS, which require offenders to be treated with respect and human dignity. These findings are contrary to what is stipulated in the White Paper on Corrections (2005) about the ideal correctional official. According to the White Paper on Corrections (2005), the responsibility in assisting and facilitating the rehabilitation process of offenders is upon correctional officials. Therefore they are required to exemplify the morals that DCS hopes to impart in the offenders.

#### **4.7 Respondents' recommendations on overcoming the identified challenges**

Twelve respondents recommended that there should be more family days and offenders should be placed in correctional centres that are nearer to their families. Furthermore, respondents recommended that they should be allowed to attend funerals of their loved ones.

Giving back to the community by using skills acquired or transferring skills was recommended by eleven respondents. They want to give back to the community by utilising skills like brick-laying to build or renovate schools and build houses for the underprivileged communities. They would also like to have sewing projects, where they can sew school uniforms for under-privileged learners and transfer the sewing skill to the unemployed and they also want to transfer computer skills to the community members.

Furthermore, they would like to transfer brick-laying, plumbing and carpentry skills through training and development of the unskilled and unemployed community members.

It was also recommended by nine respondents that there should be more skills and development programmes for life-sentenced offenders. That should be done intensively. Early intervention in terms of rehabilitation programmes was recommended. Intensive training of correctional officials was also recommended so that they would be able to deal with offenders effectively.

*People should help offenders willingly and officials are here for money but not for making an impact. Officials do not care and you cannot tell me that I should change my life and you come to work smelling of alcohol (respondent 3).*

*We should be allowed to work with the community and give back. Interventions should be done earlier in the sentence of an offender who is serving life imprisonment. Members must be trained and monitored that they are doing their jobs appropriately, and those who are smuggling must be severely punished because if they were not involved, it is not going to be easy to get drugs in prison (respondent 12).*

*The human resource should be extended, so that there could be sufficient officers to attend to our needs. The correctional officials must be properly trained on how to deal with offenders effectively, because we are here to be rehabilitated and they are rehabilitators. They should be good role models to offenders (respondent 13).*

According to this research, there is a need for intensive training of correctional officials and the need for sufficient human resource, as well as continuous monitoring and evaluation of DCS employees in terms of service delivery. The data also shows that there is an outcry for giving back to the community by making use of the skills acquired during incarceration or transferring those skills to the community. Moreover, the data indicated that there is a need for more skills and development programmes that will be offered to life-serving offenders. This is supported by the White Paper on Corrections (2005) stating that there is a necessity of DCS to be involved in community initiatives and developments.

It is specified by the White Paper on Corrections (2005, p.179) that the “*community involvement can be done through the utilisation of offenders and visible involvement of personnel in community projects*”.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter; the demographic profile of respondents was presented, followed by the framework for analysis which was presented according to themes, sub-themes and categories that were identified during the analysis of data. Findings were discussed; respondents narratives quoted and comparisons with the literature review were made. The next chapter is the final chapter of this research report, and it will present the conclusion and recommendations of the author based on the findings of the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS (GOVERNMENT, POLICY MAKERS, PRACTITIONERS AND LAW MAKERS)

#### 5. Introduction

The overall aim of the study was an exploratory investigation into the experiences and implications of life-serving offenders in DCS; in Voorburg Management Area. This paper focused on the direct and indirect impact of serving a life sentence. Conclusion founded on the objectives of the study will be presented. The researcher will recommend what can be done in addressing the lived realities of life-serving offenders. The researcher's recommendations are constructed from the discoveries of this study.

#### 5.1 Objectives

Based on Chapter 1, section 1.5 the study objectives are as follows:

1. To understand the daily challenges encountered by life-serving offenders and their lived realities
2. To explore the impact long term incarceration has on offenders serving life sentences
3. To explore the impact long term incarceration has on life-sentenced offender's families
4. To explore how life-sentenced offenders cope with incarceration
5. To determine the kinds of services that are available for life-serving offenders
6. To establish what life-serving offenders think could be done to overcome the challenges that they encounter during their incarceration period.

##### **5.1.1 To understand the daily challenges encountered by life-serving offenders and their lived realities.**

It was discovered that life-sentenced offenders are faced with a variety of challenges. These challenges include overcrowded correctional facilities and culture in correctional facilities that is characterised by gangsterism. The study shows that overcrowding impacts on insufficient resources. Gangsterism exposes offenders and correctional

officials to personal danger. Offenders are vulnerable to gangs and most offenders succumb to the pressure of joining a gang in correctional facilities for survival and protection.

#### **5.1.1.1. Recommendation**

It is recommended that the criminal justice system should look at practical, cost-effective and relevant improvements to sentencing in order to minimise overcrowding. Comprehensive efforts should be made by the entire criminal justice system in collaboration and coordination with all criminal justice stakeholders. There should be an alternative sentencing option, especially for the first-time offenders who do not pose a danger to society. Non-custodial measures ought to be taken into consideration then the criminal justice system can alleviate the problem with community-based sentencing.

DCS should adhere to its policies. The White Paper on Corrections (2005) states that correctional centres of the department ought to be evidently intended to offer facilities which make provision for rehabilitation, sufficient safety and circumstances consistent with human dignity. DCS should be administered in a way that reflects basic human rights and principles.

Furthermore, it is recommended that correctional programme developers should devise an anti-gang programme to discourage newly admitted offenders from joining gangs. The anti-gang programme should be facilitated as early as possible when offenders are newly admitted to a correctional facility. Such programmes should be facilitated by specially trained correctional officials.

A classification system for determining placement and degree of supervision must be delivered. Moreover, offenders who are non-gang members should be separated from gang members. The offenders who are gang members should be placed in a separate unit. They must be separated from each other and be closely monitored in order to reduce the practice of gang related activities. The correctional officials who work with gangsters must be knowledgeable about gangsterism in a correctional facility and be well equipped to deal with them effectively. Special programmes should be developed for the offenders

who are gang members so that they may be empowered with necessary skills/knowledge that could help them transform from being gang members. Furthermore, it is recommended that gang members must be kept busy at all times with constructive activities such as education and job training. Strict drug control measures must be in place and DCS ought to ascertain that the concept of correction is based on granting offenders opportunity to transform their lives because retribution has been recognised as ineffective.

### **5.1.2. To explore the impact long term incarceration has on life serving offenders**

The study revealed that being sentenced to life incarceration has harmful impact on the psychological well-being of life-serving offenders. It is evident that during the early stages of incarceration, life-sentenced offenders experience psychological illnesses which are depicted by suicidal thoughts, attempted suicide, depression, high stress levels and anxiety.

Additionally, it was found that the most fundamental factors that are leading to stress in life-serving offenders includes uncertainty about the time that they will spend in custody, as well as inability to bury their loved ones due to incarceration.

#### **5.1.2.1 Recommendation**

Significantly, policy makers are aware that there are extensive mental disorders experienced by life-serving offenders during the early stages of incarceration. Proper diagnosis upon arrival in a correctional facility should be obligatory for life-sentenced offenders, to identify the individuals that are at risk of developing mental illness. It is recommended that risk assessment and the awareness of the aspects of the correctional environment that influence psychological health should be done by the psychologists.

Intervention should be inclusive of trauma-focused strategies and the policy makers should bear in mind that good mental health in a correctional facility is beneficial not only for the offenders but to employees as well. Furthermore, a support group is recommended for newly sentenced offenders for them to adjust in a correctional facility which could be facilitated by life-sentenced offenders who have already accepted their

sentence. It is recommended that the support group be facilitated by life serving offenders for the reason that they can share their own personal experiences in order for the newly admitted offender to relate to them. The life sentenced offenders who have served their sentence could be able to give hope to the newly admitted offenders.

DCS should ensure that the orientation process is inclusive of the meaning of a life sentence so that offenders understand the implications in the South African context. It is also recommended that every life-sentenced offender should be orientated by all role-players immediately as the offender is admitted to a correctional facility.

Policy makers should ensure that life-serving offenders are not disqualified from burying their loved ones because of the state of their sentence. It is therefore recommended that the policies of DCS should include the needs of life-serving offenders by granting compassionate leave to them to bury their immediate family members and for them to find closure with regard to the loss of a loved one.

### **5.1.3 To explore the impact long term incarceration has on life-sentenced offender's families**

The study revealed incarceration impacts families negatively and that families are secondary victims. It is shown by the study that long term incarceration leads to divorce or separation which negatively affects the behaviour of children. It also brings financial strain to families as other offenders were primary financial providers in their families. There is a loss of income and added financial responsibility as the families have to pay for transport to visit the offender and provide the offender with money for telephone calls and toiletries.

#### **5.1.3.1 Recommendation**

It is recommended that the government should have a component at the Department of Social Development (DSD) that specifically works with families of offenders who are sentenced to life imprisonment. Child and family impact assessment should be conducted by the DSD practitioners to ensure effective intervention. The DSD should work closely

with DCS as well as with Community Based Organisations (CBOs), to assist families of incarcerated offenders to adjust to the absence of the detained person.

Additionally, DCS should ensure that life-serving offenders are placed in correctional centres that are nearer to their families, so that it will not be difficult for family members to regularly visit the incarcerated family member. Family ties should be strengthened by having Family Group Conferences facilitated by social workers of DCS and on a quarterly basis have family days facilitated by the Head of Centre together with correctional officials.

#### **5.1.4 To explore how life-sentenced offenders cope with incarceration**

It was found that offenders who are serving life incarceration are inspired by their faith in a higher power and hope to be reunited with their families. It emerged that looking after their spiritual beings kept them going daily in correctional facilities.

##### **5.1.4.1 Recommendation**

It is recommended that a high number of spiritual workers should be employed on full-time basis by DCS from different denominations/religious groups to strengthen faith-based interventions to offenders. DCS should not be highly dependent on external service providers for the spiritual care of offenders, for the reason that they are not full time personnel at correctional facilities. Full time availability of spiritual workers will allow them to render comprehensive spiritual care services to offenders. It is therefore recommended that funds should be allocated by the National Department of Correctional Services so that spiritual care vacancies can be created and filled. DCS will therefore be able to ensure that religious interventions are intensive.

#### **5.1.5 To determine the kinds of services that are available to life-serving offenders.**

Through the study, it has been discovered that there are social work programmes, correctional programmes, restorative justice programme, skills and development programmes, formal education programmes, spiritual care programmes, psychological programmes and computer programmes.

The study showed that different skills are acquired by those offenders who enrolled with skills and development programmes; which include different skills like plumbing, computer skills, brick laying, furniture making and welding. It is also depicted by the study that life-serving offenders are hopeful that the acquired skills will be helpful when they reintegrate with the community.

#### **5.1.5.1 Recommendation**

It is recommended that there should be more evidence-based therapeutic programmes that are developed by programme developers of DCS. Life-serving offenders should be prioritised for rehabilitation programmes earlier in their sentences. Professional treatment on admission is advisable because early intervention with therapeutic services is more likely to ensure effective rehabilitation because it could prevent the offenders from engaging in destructive activities common in a correctional environment.

Social workers, psychologists and criminologists of DCS should be allowed to make a contribution to the development of the programmes, as their expertise and knowledge of the offender populations could assist in constructing effective programmes. Offenders who are serving life sentences should be allowed to partake in productive work, take part in programmes which are inclusive of learning, occupational training, religion, counselling, positive use of leisure time and other events that promote self-esteem. Treatment should be multi-disciplinary. With every offender's sentence there should be a life changing programme that has high impact and high intensity.

Furthermore, it is recommended that offenders should be empowered with formal monetary and business skills during the incarceration period. Skills and development programmes should include skills applicable to the current job market. Financial support should be granted by the government to life-serving offenders to open businesses when they reintegrate with the community. Offenders must be given opportunities to engage in meaningful activities. That can be achieved by allowing them to pay back to the community utilising their acquired skills to improve the lives of marginalised communities.

Community-based projects are therefore recommended and such projects can be facilitated by DCS working with other stakeholders like businesses and NGOs. For

example, offenders can renovate or build schools and houses, have school uniform sewing projects make furniture, garden and farming projects, and transfer computer skills to the community. It is also advisable that DCS should make provision for a variety of skills and development programmes for life-serving offenders. Such programmes should be intensive.

#### **5.1.6 To establish what life-serving offenders think could be done to overcome the challenges that they encounter during their incarceration period.**

The study revealed that there is a need for intensive training of correctional officials and the need for sufficient human resource as well as continuous monitoring and evaluation of DCS employees. Offenders who are serving a life sentence would like to be granted the opportunity to bury their love ones and also to be placed in centre's that are nearer to their families. The respondents revealed that they would like to give back to the community by making use of the skills acquired during incarceration or transferring those skills to the community. Moreover, the data indicated that there is a need for more skills and developmental programmes that should be offered to life-serving offenders.

##### **5.1.6.1 Recommendation**

DCS should employ more correctional officials and implement continuous and intensive training of DCS employees using an evidence-based approach. It is also recommended that a strong integrated approach that involves all government departments, communities, religious leaders, sport leaders, cultural leaders, local government, business people, community leaders and youth should be developed.

Offenders should become involved in community-based projects and the community should be more involved in the rehabilitation of offenders. The community should share resources that they have or avail those resources that they do have to the offenders. DCS could run farms for food production and offenders could produce food for themselves. DCS can share the production to the under privileged community members. DCS should be self-sustainable in this regard. The offenders can teach the skills that they have obtained to the community members. For an example an offender who is highly skilled with a computer can teach community members who are computer illiterate. Offenders

who are qualified teachers can facilitate learning skills especially with subjects like mathematics and science. The community can offer skills to the offenders free of charge. For example a highly skilled retired community member can share the skills and knowledge to offenders so that they may be employable when they re-integrate with the community.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The two key aspects of this chapter are the objectives of the study and the recommendations of the researcher are presented here. The conclusion is that offenders who are serving life incarceration experience daunting challenges which include difficulty in adjusting in a correctional environment as well as acceptance of life incarceration.

During the early stages of incarceration offenders experience emotional instability and are exposed to the culture that exists in the correctional environment which they find it difficult to resist, due to a need for safety. There is a deficiency of primary intervention to address the diverse types of risks that are confronted by life-serving offenders. Assessment should be based on a multi-disciplinary offender assessment system to comprehensively address the needs of life-sentenced inmates. The research has shown conclusively that incarceration does not only impact the offender negatively but it also has negative effects on the family.

Best research evidence of programs that will meet the calibre of offenders that are being served should be conducted continuously. Programs should be evidence-based and should also be frequently assessed to certify that they are executed in the similar method as the modelled program. Alternative therapy should be added to therapeutic intervention to life-serving offenders. Intervention should be rigorous in its design, development, implementation and evaluation.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### **MASTERS IN PROBATION AND CORRECTIONAL PRACTISE** **Exploring the Experiences and Implications of Life-serving Offenders** **(Unstructured Interview Guide)**

#### **PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

1. Gender (Male/female)
2. Age range (18-24) (25-34)(35-44) (45-54) (55 and above)
3. Occupation prior to incarceration
4. Marital status
5. Number of children
6. Highest qualification

#### **1. Information in relation to your current imprisonment**

1.1. How old were you when the life sentence was imposed on you?

1.1. Can you share with me about the criminal offence that you are convicted for?

1.2. Are you the first criminal offender? Y/N

If no, can you tell me about your previous convictions and the time you spent serving for previous offence/offences?

1.3. What is the length of time that you have already spent in a Correctional facility for the current conviction?

#### **2. Adaptation and adjustment of serving life imprisonment**

2.1. Can you tell me about your experience of your first day of your sentence?

2.2. What keeps you going on a daily basis in a Correctional facility?

2.3. Are you adjusting well inside the Centre? Y/N

If yes, how much time did it take for you to adjust to incarceration? And what assisted you to adjust?

If no, can you share with me about the challenges that you encounter that hinder you from adjusting in a Correctional facility.

2.4. Please describe to me the type of feeling that you have with regard to your sentence.

2. 5. Can you tell me if you have accepted your conviction? Y/N

If yes, can you explain how you accepted your conviction?

If no, can you explain why you did not accept your conviction?

2.6. Can you tell me about the contribution that Correctional Officers have towards life-serving inmates in terms of adapting in a Correctional facility?

2.7. What cultures did you find in prison?

- Did you manage to adjust to prison culture?

If so, how did you manage to adjust?

If not, what are the challenges?

### **3. Daily challenges of serving life imprisonment**

3.1. Can you share with me about your typical day in prison?

3.2. What is your experience of prison environment?

3. 3. How many cellmates do you have?

3.3.1. Do you think that the number of cellmates that you have is appropriate for the cell that you are sharing, Y/N

If yes, why do you think so?

In your view, what is the appropriate number of offenders that should be accommodated in a cell?

3.4. How is your relationship with your cell mates and what contributes to the status of your relationship?

3.5. Since your incarceration, have you ever been in conflict with another offender/assaulted by another offender or an officer?

If yes, did you suffer any serious injury or health problems because of the assault?

If so, did you receive any medical care?

3.6. Tell me if you have ever felt that your life is in danger?

If yes, in what ways?

3.7. What are the living conditions in a Correctional facility?

7. In your opinion what are the major challenges?

3.8. What are the needs of life-serving offenders that are not met?

3.9. What would you say when comparing life outside and life in prison?

#### **4. Coping strategies**

4.1. Can you share with me about what keeps you going on a day to day basis while serving a life imprisonment?

4.2. Do you belong to any group?

If yes, what kind of the group and its name?

Can you share with me, how does this group assist you to cope with your incarceration?

4.3. Are you taking any intoxicating substances? Y/N

If yes, what kinds of substances that you take and can you describe the impact they have on you in terms of coping with your incarceration?

4.4. Can you share with me about anything that assists you to cope with your incarceration, whether it originates from inside or outside the centre?

4.5. What is your greatest personal fear?

4.6. What is your greatest personal hope?

4.7. In your view, what do you think can be done to assist life-sentenced offenders to cope with incarceration?

#### **5. The psychological impact of long term imprisonment**

5.1. Have you ever been diagnosed of a psychological problem/illness by a professional?

If yes, what was the diagnosis?

5.2. Can you share with me, if you have received any assistance from the Centre in dealing with your diagnosis?

- What kind of assistance did you get?
- Was it helpful?

If yes, in what ways?

5.3. Can you describe the symptoms that you experienced?

5.4. Tell me, how did you deal with the symptoms that you experienced?

5.5. Have you ever thought about harming yourself / or have you ever harmed yourself?

If yes, how did you plan to harm yourself / how did you harm yourself?

5.6. Do you think that there is a relationship between being imprisoned and psychological wellbeing?

If yes, in what ways?

## **6. The social impact of long term imprisonment**

6.1. Would you say that you are connected to the outside community?

If so, can you describe how?

If not, can you share the reasons?

6.2. Can you tell me about your support system from outside?

- Who is supporting you and what kind of support do you get?
- If you do not get the support from outside, what do you think is the problem?

6.3. Prior to your incarceration period, did you have friends? Y/N

If yes, are you still friends and how is the quality of your relationship?

6.4. Can you tell me about your support structure from inside?

- Who is supporting you and what kind of support do you get?
- If you do not get the support from inside, what do you think is the problem?

6.5. Who are the people that you rely on for emotional support?

6.6. Can you share with me if you feel that you are still a vital member of society?

If not, can you share with me about your reasons?

6.7. Do you have friends at the Centre? Y/N

If yes, what is the common interest in your friendship?

6.8. Did you make any lasting friendships inside?

If yes, what has assisted you to achieve that?

If no, what do you are the reasons?

6.9. Are you having a sense of belonging inside?

If so, explain what kind?

6.10. How do you spend your leisure time inside?

6.11. What kind of activities that you are engaged with?

6.12. What kind of recreational activities that is available at the correctional centre?

6.13. In your view, how do they assist offenders?

6.14. What do you think can be done by the Department of Correctional Services to improve/assist offenders with their social wellbeing?

6.15. What role do you think life-sentenced inmates could play in the society?

7. Impact of imprisonment on family members

7.1 Can you describe your relationship with your family?

7.2. Does your family support you during your incarceration period? Y/N

If yes, what kind of support do they give you?

If no, what do you think are reasons?

7.3 Tell me about your relationship with your children.

- Do you see them? Y/N

If yes, how often do you see them?

If no, what do you think are the reasons?

7.4. How do you think that your incarceration affected your relationship with?

- Your children?
- Your partner/mother of your children/child?
- Your extended family?

7.5. Does the mother of your children/ child encourage you to be involved in your children's lives/child's life? If so, how does she encourage you?

7.6. Do you feel connected to your children? Y/N

If yes, in what ways?

If no, why do you feel like that?

7.7. Can you tell me, how do you show love to your children?

7.8. Prior to your incarceration period, did you have any financial contribution towards your family? Y/N

If yes, were you the primary source of income? Y/N

If yes, how is your family surviving financially, at present?

7.9. What impact does your incarceration have towards finances of your family?

7.10. What impact does your incarceration have towards your family in general?

7.11. What are your recommendations with regard to strengthening of family ties between life-serving offenders and their families?

7.12. In your opinion, what do you think can be done for families of life-serving offenders?

## **8. Kind of services available for life-sentenced offenders**

8.1. What are the different services that are being offered to life-serving inmates?

8.2. Have you ever been involved in any rehabilitation program during your incarceration?

If yes, what rehabilitation programs have you have attended?

If not, can you share with me the reasons?

8.3. In your view, do you think rehabilitation programs are necessary for life-serving inmates?

If yes, can you tell me why they are necessary?

If not, why do you think they are unnecessary?

8.4. Did you find those programs helpful in helping you to change your life/cope with imprisonment?

If yes, in what ways did they help you?

8.5. In your view, what other programs do you think can be offered to life-serving offenders and elaborate why?

## **9. Perceived impact of the programs**

9.1. Do you think that these programs are addressing your needs as a life-serving offender?

If yes, in what ways

If no, what do you think are the challenges?

9.2 Would you say that the programmes are effective in implementing its goals?

If yes, in what ways?

If not, what do you think are the challenges?

9.3. What do you feel that you have gained from the programs that you have attended?

- Tell me what you would have liked to have gained, but did not?
- Can you share with me about what you think can be improved with the programs that are offered to life-serving offenders?

9.4. What kind of skills did you acquire during your incarceration period?

9.5. Do you think that the skills acquired during incarceration will be helpful when you reintegrate with the community?

If yes, in what ways?

If no, what do you think the challenges are?

9.6. What are your recommendations with regard to rehabilitation of life-sentenced offenders?

**10. The policies and legislations that inform the treatment of life-serving offenders?**

10.1. What awareness do you have with regard to the policies of the Department of Correctional Services?

10.2. How are the policies of Correctional Services addressing/ protecting the needs of life-serving offenders?

10.3. What are the gaps in the existing policies with regard to meeting the needs of life-serving offenders?

10.4. What are the problems you encountered in terms of the treatment by officials during your detention period? Can you share your experiences?

10.5. What is your view about implementation of Policies by DCS employees?

**11. Their overall recommendations with regard to addressing the challenges that are encountered by life-serving inmates?**

11.1. What do you think can be done to overcome the problems you have mentioned?

## Appendix 2



### CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH (By interview, focus group, experiment...)

I.....  
being over the age of 18 years hereby consent to participate as requested in the research study for the research project on Exploratory study on the Experiences and Implications of Incarceration on Life-serving Inmates in Voorburg.

1. I have read the information provided.
2. Details of procedures and any risks have been explained to my satisfaction.
3. I agree to audio/video recording of my information and participation.
4. I am aware that I should retain a copy of the Information Sheet and Consent Form for future reference.
5. I understand that:
  - I may not directly benefit from taking part in this research.
  - I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and am free to decline to answer particular questions.
  - While the information gained in this study will be published as explained, I will not be identified, and individual information will remain confidential.
  - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect on any treatment or service that is being provided to me.
  - Whether I participate or not, or withdraw after participating, will have no effect in my sentence.
  - I may ask that the recording/observation be stopped at any time, and that I may withdraw at any time from the session or the research without disadvantage.
6. I agree/do not agree\* to the tape/transcript\* being made available to other researchers who are not members of this research team, but who are judged by

the research team to be doing related research, on condition that my identity is not revealed. \* *delete as appropriate*

- 7. I have had the opportunity to discuss taking part in this research with a family member or friend.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

I certify that I have explained the study to the volunteer and consider that she/he understands what is involved and freely consents to participation.

Researcher's name.....

Researcher's signature.....Date.....

*NB: Two signed copies should be obtained. The copy retained by the researcher may then be used for authorisation of Items 8 and 9, as appropriate.*

- 8. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read a transcript of my participation and agree to its use by the researcher as explained.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

- 9. I, the participant whose signature appears below, have read the researchers report and agree to the publication of my information as reported.

Participant's signature.....Date.....

## Appendix 3



## correctional services

Department:  
Correctional Services  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X136, PRETORIA, 0001 Poyntons Building, C/D WF Nkomo and Sephele De Bruyn Street, PRETORIA  
Tel (012) 307 2770

**Ms N Gwebu**  
**4 Poppler Avenue**  
**Westbank**  
**Malmesbury**  
**7300**

Dear Ms Gwebu

**RE: APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES ON: "DOING LIFE: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF INCARCERATION ON THE LIFE SERVING INMATES"**

It is with pleasure to inform you that your request to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services on the above topic has been approved.

Your attention is drawn to the following:

- This ethical approval is valid from **16 April 2019 to 14 April 2021**.
- The relevant Regional and Area Commissioners where the research will be conducted will be informed of your proposed research project.
- Your internal guide will be **Ms G Pienaar: Regional Head Development and Care, Western Cape**.
- You are requested to contact her at telephone number (021) 550 6000 before the commencement of your research.
- It is your responsibility to make arrangements for your interviewing times.
- Your identity document/passport and this approval letter should be in your possession when visiting the correctional centres.
- You are required to use the terminology used in the White Paper on Corrections in South Africa (February 2005) e.g. "Offenders" not "Prisoners" and "Correctional Centres" not "Prisons".
- You are not allowed to use photographic or video equipment during your visits, however the audio recorder is allowed.
- You are required to submit your final report to the Department for approval by the Commissioner of Correctional Services before publication (including presentation at workshops, conferences, seminars, etc) of the report.
- Should you have any enquiries regarding this process, please contact the DCS REC Administration for assistance at telephone number (012) 307 2770.

Thank you for your application and interest to conduct research in the Department of Correctional Services.

Yours faithfully

**ND SIHLEZANA**  
**DC: POLICY COORDINATION & RESEARCH**  
**DATE: 15/04/2019**

Version 2: 2019/07/05



## FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

## DECLARATION FORM - MASTERS DEGREE CANDIDATES

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Word count	33799	No. of pages	119

## DECLARATION:

- I am presenting this dissertation in FULL/PARTIAL fulfilment of the requirements for my degree.
- I know the meaning of plagiarism and declare that all of the work in the dissertation, save for that which is properly acknowledged, is my own.
- I hereby grant the University of Cape Town free licence to reproduce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents in any manner whatsoever of the above dissertation.

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## 1 IMPORTANT NOTES

- Candidates for graduation in April and December should submit their dissertation 5 months prior to the graduation ceremony to allow time for the examination process to run its course. While the examination process is carefully managed, the University does not undertake to reach a decision on the award of the degree by any specific date.
- Please note that where a candidate intends to submit for examination, an intention to submit form should have been uploaded to PeopleSoft 6 weeks before submitting the dissertation for examination. Where this has not been done on time, there may be delays in nominating examiners, which will delay the examination process as a whole.
- Candidates who are required to revise and re-submit for re-examination are required to register during the revision phase. Fees will be calculated according to the date of the notification of the "revise and re-submit" result and the date of re-submission. (The faculty will advise the Fees Office of the final result.)
- Candidates are asked to note that the University will not permit degree/diploma qualifiers to graduate if they have any outstanding fees, fines, interest or dues. Please ensure that these are settled at least 2 months in advance of your graduation ceremony.

## 2 FUNDING AND FEES:

Candidates submitting have 2 options with regard to fees and funding if in 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent year of registration for dissertation/minor dissertation. Please indicate your preference by placing a tick in the appropriate box:

2.1 Not applicable as	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First year of registration for dissertation/minor dissertation. No rebate applies (see Fees Rule 8.1)</li> <li>Handing-in after last date for fee rebate (see deadline dates Fees rule 8.2)</li> </ul>	
2.2 If registered for the 2nd or subsequent year in which the dissertation is being completed you can claim a fee rebate and discontinue funding (if applicable) through the PGFO. Please note that physical and library access will be cancelled. If you stay on in the department and receive payment through the payroll, such payment is taxable.	
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