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The Predictors of Juvenile Recidivism: Testimonies of Adult Students 18 Years and
Older Exiting From Alternative Education

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The Predictors of Juvenile Recidivism: Testimonies of Adult Students 18 Years and Older Exiting From Alternative Education

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The Predictors of Juvenile Recidivism: Testimonies of Adult Students 18 Years and Older Exiting From Alternative Education

by La Toshia Denise Palmer

Purpose: The purpose of this descriptive, qualitative study was to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education in Northern California. A second purpose was to explore the types of support provided by alternative schools and the perceived importance of the support to avoid recidivism according to adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education.

Methodology: This qualitative, descriptive research design identified and described the stories voluntarily shared by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated young adult students 18 years of age or older from two alternative education programs. The study utilized semistructured interviews, with questions posed in a sequential manner. The qualitative semistructured interviews consisting of 13 standardized questions were administered to 12 participants in person. The results of the qualitative semistructured interviews guided the narrative by prioritizing data and themes. The population for the study included adult students 18 years of age and older who were detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated and either were exiting or would soon be exiting from an alternative education program in Northern California.
Findings: Examination of the interview responses resulted in 42 themes and 158 frequencies related to the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism and types of support perceived as important to avoid recidivism. Seven key findings were identified based on the frequency of references by study participants.

Conclusions: The seven key findings were summarized as four conclusions: (a) This study contributes to the growing body of qualitative research on juvenile recidivism; (b) alternative education is overlooked and underserved; (c) strong collective efforts through community engagement are highly encouraged to prevent youth incarceration and to deter youth from juvenile recidivism; and (d) overlooked and underserved alternative education programs contribute to the social phenomenon of juvenile recidivism; the ayes have it.

Recommendations: Further research is advised in this area by replicating this study within elementary, middle, and high school settings as well as soliciting the perspectives of superintendents, teachers, and probation officers.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION ................................................................. 1
Significant Causes of Juvenile Recidivism .............................................. 3
  Mental Health ............................................................................. 3
  Substance Abuse ....................................................................... 4
Social Connectedness ..................................................................... 5
Demographics .............................................................................. 5
Family Dynamics .......................................................................... 6
Level of Education ........................................................................ 6
Understanding the Life Courses of Emerging Adults............................ 7
Status of Efforts to Reduce Juvenile Recidivism .................................... 7
Progressive Alternative Education Schools ......................................... 8
Theoretical Framework of Learning in Alternative Education Schools ........ 10
Vocational Training ......................................................................... 11
The Unique Service Needs of Alternative Education Students ................. 12
Statement of the Research Problem .................................................. 14
Purpose Statement .......................................................................... 15
Research Questions .......................................................................... 16
Significance of the Problem .............................................................. 16
Definitions ...................................................................................... 18
Reentry plan ................................................................................... 19
Delimitations .................................................................................. 20
Organization of the Study ................................................................... 20

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ....................................... 22
Predictors of Juvenile Recidivism ....................................................... 23
  Mental Health ............................................................................. 23
  Substance Abuse ....................................................................... 25
    Demographics ........................................................................ 25
    Treatment approaches ............................................................. 30
Social Connectedness ..................................................................... 31
Demographics .............................................................................. 32
Family Dynamics .......................................................................... 36
  Divorced and single parents ....................................................... 36
  Incarcerated parents .................................................................. 38
  Family engagement .................................................................... 40
Level of Education .......................................................................... 40
Understanding the Life Course of Emerging Adults ............................... 42
Status Efforts to Reduce Juvenile Recidivism ....................................... 45
  Community Engagement ............................................................. 45
  Reentry Programs ....................................................................... 46
  Public Policy .............................................................................. 48
  Multisystemic Therapy ............................................................... 49
Progressive Alternative Education Programs ......................................... 49
Self-Regulation Theory ..................................................................... 51
Meeting the Unique Needs of Alternative Education Students ................. 53
Participant 10

Research Question 1

Mental health ................................................................. 89
Substance abuse .............................................................. 89
Gender and ethnicity ......................................................... 89
Research Question 2 .......................................................... 90

Participant 8

Research Question 1 .......................................................... 91
Mental health ................................................................. 93
Substance abuse .............................................................. 93
Gender and ethnicity ......................................................... 93
Family dynamics .............................................................. 94
Research Question 2 .......................................................... 94

Participant 7

Research Question 1 .......................................................... 96
Mental health ................................................................. 98
Substance abuse .............................................................. 98
Family dynamics .............................................................. 98
Gender and ethnicity ......................................................... 99
Research Question 2 .......................................................... 100

Participant 6

Research Question 1 .......................................................... 100
Mental health ................................................................. 102
Substance abuse .............................................................. 102
Family dynamics .............................................................. 102
Gender and ethnicity ......................................................... 103
Level of education ........................................................... 104
Research Question 2 .......................................................... 104

Participant 5

Research Question 1 .......................................................... 104
Substance abuse .............................................................. 105
Family dynamics .............................................................. 106
Level of education ........................................................... 107
Research Question 2 .......................................................... 108

Participant 4

Research Question 1 .......................................................... 108
Substance abuse .............................................................. 110
Family dynamics .............................................................. 110
Gender and ethnicity ......................................................... 110
Research Question 2 .......................................................... 111

Participant 9

Research Question 1 .......................................................... 112
Mental health ................................................................. 113
Substance abuse .............................................................. 113
Family dynamics .............................................................. 114
Research Question 2 .......................................................... 114

Participant 10

Research Question 1 .......................................................... 114

Research Question 1 .......................................................... 115
Major Findings

Summary of the Study

Research Question 1

Methodology

Research Questions

Purpose Statement

Participant 12

Research Question 1

Mental health ................................................................. 116
Substance abuse .......................................................... 116
Family dynamics ......................................................... 117
Gender and ethnicity .................................................... 117
Level of education ....................................................... 118
Research Question 2 ...................................................... 119
Participant 11 ............................................................... 120
Research Question 1 ...................................................... 120
Mental health ................................................................. 121
Substance abuse .......................................................... 121
Family dynamics ......................................................... 122
Gender and ethnicity .................................................... 122
Level of education ....................................................... 122
Research Question 2 ...................................................... 123
Participant 12 ............................................................... 123
Research Question 1 ...................................................... 124
Mental health ................................................................. 125
Substance abuse .......................................................... 125
Family dynamics ......................................................... 125
Research Question 2 ...................................................... 126
Data Analysis by Common Themes in Research Questions ...................................................... 126
Research Question 1 ...................................................... 126
Common Theme 1: Drug use contributes to youth incarceration ............................................. 127
Common Theme 2: Family is important in my efforts to not reoffend .................................. 129
Common Theme 3: Mental health services help prevent youth incarceration .......................... 130
Research Question 2 ...................................................... 132
Common Theme 1: Counseling ........................................ 132
Common Theme 2: Obey laws .......................................... 133
Common Theme 3: School support services ............................................................ 136
Common Theme 4: Moral support as I exit ........................................................... 135
Summary ............................................................................. 137

CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ...................................................... 139
Summary of the Study ............................................................................. 139
Purpose Statement ............................................................................. 139
Research Questions .......................................................................... 139
Methodology .................................................................................. 140
Population and Sample ...................................................................... 141
Major Findings .................................................................................. 142
Research Question 1 .......................................................................... 142
Major Finding 1 .................................................................................. 142
Major Finding 2 .................................................................................. 143
Major Finding 3 .................................................................................. 143
Research Question 2 .......................................................................... 144
Major Finding 4 .................................................................................. 144

x
Major Finding 5 ........................................................................................................ 144
Major Finding 6 ........................................................................................................ 145
Major Finding 7 ........................................................................................................ 145
Unexpected Findings .................................................................................................. 146
   Unexpected Finding 1 ............................................................................................. 147
   Unexpected Finding 2 ............................................................................................. 147
Conclusions .................................................................................................................. 148
   Conclusion 1 ........................................................................................................... 148
   Conclusion 2 ........................................................................................................... 149
   Conclusion 3 ........................................................................................................... 150
   Conclusion 4 ........................................................................................................... 150
Implications for Action ............................................................................................... 151
Recommendations for Further Research .................................................................... 155
Concluding Remarks and Reflections ........................................................................ 157
REFERENCES ............................................................................................................ 159
APPENDICES ............................................................................................................. 186
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Prevalence of Mental Health Diagnoses for Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System ........................................... 24
Table 2. Prevalence of Drug Use Among Youth Residential Detainees .................. 28
Table 3. Summary Description of Research Participants ..................................... 77
Table 4. Participant 1: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions ...... 79
Table 5. Participant 2: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions ...... 83
Table 6. Participant 3: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions ...... 88
Table 7. Participant 4: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions ...... 92
Table 8. Participant 5: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions ...... 97
Table 9. Participant 6: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions ..... 101
Table 10. Participant 7: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions .... 105
Table 11. Participant 8: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions .... 109
Table 12. Participant 9: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions .... 113
Table 13. Participant 10: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions .. 115
Table 14. Participant 11: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions .. 121
Table 15. Participant 12: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions .. 124
Table 16. Combined Data Common Themes: Research Question 1 ....................... 127
Table 17. Combined Data Common Themes: Research Question 2 ....................... 132
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Prevalence of drug use among incarcerated youth. ........................................... 27

Figure 2. Zimmerman and Moylan (2009) self-regulation model. .................................. 52
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Historically, over the last 2 decades, the increase of juvenile recidivism rates has been attributed to incarcerating youth as the primary response to committing their first offense, the lack of appropriate assessment tools, and failure to implement sound policies and procedures across systems that provide services to youth in the juvenile justice system (JJS; Ashford & LeCroy, 1990; Cottle, Lee, & Heilbrun, 2001; Putniņš, 2005). Juvenile recidivism is a worldwide epidemic that has deteriorated the lives and future of youth (Aos, Miller, & Drake, 2006; Ashford & LeCroy, 1990; Cottle et al., 2001; Crandall, 2015; Gellis, 2001; Goldkind, 2011; Hall, 2014; Holman & Ziedenburg, 2006; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Putniņš, 2005).

A number of research studies have indicated that whenever a youth has contact with the JJS, the likelihood of juvenile recidivism is based on the fidelity of programs and services with appropriate policies and practices in place, especially in public education (Aos et al., 2006; Holman & Ziedenburg, 2006; Jenson & Howard, 1998). The education and vocational attainment of these youth remain low. Furthermore, within the public education system, there is an unequal distribution of student support services (Aalsma et al., 2015; Lancaster, Balkin, Garcia, & Valarezo, 2011; Ryan, Abrams, & Huang, 2014). The educational outcomes of youth involved with the JJS attest to the lack of leadership skills within their school environment (Crandall, 2015).

Ryan et al. (2014) asserted that the issue of equity plays a huge part in perpetuating the cycle of reoffending if services are not offered to youth equally and systematically across all settings. Consequently, equity has a tremendous impact on the type and effectiveness of services provided to youth involved with the JJS. As a result,
the trajectory of their life outcomes and academic success is far beyond reach, especially among youth of color (Jobs for the Future, 2016).

A plethora of literature asserts that the recidivism rates tend to be higher for young boys of color along with youth with intellectual disabilities, youth who have chronic mental health and behavioral disorders, youth who are victims of child maltreatment, and youth involved in the child welfare system (Aalsma et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2014). The services that are needed to accommodate these youth (functional family therapy, multisystemic therapy, multidimensional treatment foster care, and substance abuse treatment) are supported by empirical research that has proven effective results in order to have an impact on reducing juvenile recidivism; however, the services are scarce (Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Jobs for the Future, 2016).

The state of California is far below standards compared to other U.S. states in terms of linking student support services to academic success and encouraging community partnerships within public education, specifically within alternative education (Jobs for the Future, 2016). With California falling below standards in these areas, the rate of juvenile recidivism is likely to increase (Jobs for the Future, 2016). Strong efforts to improve the conditions of California youth predominantly rest within the practice of implementing effective policies that address the root cause of juvenile recidivism (Jenson & Howard, 1998).

Although the predictors (mental health, substance abuse, social connectedness, demographics, family dynamics, and level of education) of juvenile recidivism have been found across a wide body of quantitative research, little is known from a qualitative
perspective (Anders, 2007; Barnert et al., 2015; Miner-Romanoff, 2016). Such testimonies would attest to the needs of youth in order to end the perpetual cycle of reincarceration.

**Significant Causes of Juvenile Recidivism**

A plethora of research has ascertained that juvenile recidivism is strongly correlated to an array of systemic and unaddressed social problems (Aalsma et al., 2015; Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Denney & Connor, 2016; Goldkind, 2011; Stein et al., 2006). This section discusses the significant causes of juvenile recidivism within the context of mental health, substance abuse, social connectedness, demographics, family dynamics, and level of education. The section concludes with a discussion of relevant literature expounding on the importance of understanding the life courses of emerging adults, status of efforts to reduce juvenile recidivism, progressive alternative education programs, self-regulation theory, and meeting the unique service needs of alternative education students (Aos et al., 2006; Denney & Connor, 2016; Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Puzzanchera & Kang, 2017; Ryan et al., 2014; Safran & Oswald, 2003).

**Mental Health**

The ability to appropriately address the mental health needs of youth involved with the JJS continues to be a systemic problem (Aalsma et al., 2015; Lancaster et al., 2011). Current literature expounds on the need for appropriate mental health screening tools to be utilized upon a youth’s first encounter with being detained in a correctional facility (Aalsma et al., 2015; Ryan et al., 2014).
When youth are incarcerated, a consistent screening and early detection of risk and needs does not frequently occur across most juvenile detention facilities; in addition, the follow-up and tracking does not occur frequently, nor does the follow-up and tracking of recidivism rates after youth have been released from incarceration (Aalsma et al., 2015; Lancaster et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2014). This is a problem given the influx of incarcerated youth with mental health disorders (Aalsma et al., 2015). According to national statistics, 60%-80% of youth who are detained in juvenile facilities have an average of at least one mental health disorder (Aalsma et al., 2015). A method sought to correct this problem is to employ appropriate policies and procedures within juvenile incarceration facilities, after the youth leave, and within alternative education settings (Seigle, Walsh, & Weber, 2014).

While continued efforts are being sought to address the mental health needs of youth involved in the JJS, substance abuse continues to be a subsequent significant risk factor (Ho, Kingree, & Thompson, 2007; Racz et al., 2015; Young, Dembo, & Henderson, 2007). The majority of youth who come into contact with the JJS are most often under the influence at the time of arrest (Puzzanchera & Kang, 2017; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). This illustrates the severe need for effective screening and substance abuse treatment for at-risk youth (Thornberry, Tolnay, Flanagan, & Glynn, 1991).

Substance Abuse

The prevalence of juvenile arrests due to substance abuse remains at an all-time high, and within the past 2 years, 297,800 young adults have been arrested (Puzzanchera & Kang, 2017; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). With alcohol and marijuana being the primary drugs of choice among youth involved in the JJS, many of these youth have
severe diagnoses of substance abuse dependence disorders (Stein et al., 2006). Consequently, these youth end up using these substances prior to committing an illegal offense (Stein et al., 2006). Despite the rate of substance abuse among youth involved in the JJS, researchers have reported that treatment services for these youth are scarce across the United States (Thornberry et al., 1991). The relationship between substance abuse and an individual’s age at first offense has a strong impact on recidivism (Denney & Connor, 2016).

**Social Connectedness**

According to research, youth who have a healthy relationship with significant others, family, or friends or who have obtained employment are less likely to reoffend (Denney & Connor, 2016). The social connections that individuals have are a determining factor in their decision to reoffend or desist from deviant behaviors that are precursors to incarceration (Denney & Connor, 2016). Furthermore, individuals who are connected to their community are more inclined to have better mental health and behavioral outcomes (Folk, Mashek, Tangney, Stuewig, & Moore, 2016). This is primarily attributed to the individuals’ feelings of belonging and self-actualization as they adapt to their community upon being released from jail. According to Folk et al. (2016), the experience of being connected to one’s community after being released from jail is strongly negatively correlated to recidivism.

**Demographics**

An individual’s age at first offense, gender (male), and ethnicity (person of color) are significant demographic features associated with juvenile recidivism (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997; Putniņš, 2005). According to
Katsiyannis and Archwamety (1997), there are records of arrest in certain states that reveal that “minority adolescents comprise a disproportionate number of those incarcerated” (p. 44). This statement alone attests to the school-to-prison pipeline, which refers to the phenomenon where a vast majority of at-risk youth of color are being pushed out of the classroom and forced into the JJS (Kim, Losen, & Hewitt, 2010).

**Family Dynamics**

Youth who are involved in the JJS and who emerge from broken homes, live with single parents, or have parents who are incarcerated are also prone to reoffending (Goldkind, 2011; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Rogowski, 2014). According to Joo and Jo (2015), family is a variable associated with juvenile crime and can either have a positive or negative effect on juvenile crime and recidivism. Soliciting family input and involving families in the decision-making process throughout the course of a youth’s involvement with the JJS has been found to have effective outcomes related to reduced recidivism (Walker, Bishop, Pullmann, & Bauer, 2015).

**Level of Education**

Students enrolled in special education who lack the ability to function within a regular mainstream school setting are overrepresented in the JJS (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997; Tobin & Sprague, 1999). Deficiencies in an individual’s basic skills such as reading and math are heavily linked to recidivism (Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997). According to research, implementing effective education programs for at-risk youth with special education needs is associated with reducing juvenile recidivism (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997; Macomber et al., 2010; Tobin & Sprague, 1999).
Understanding the Life Courses of Emerging Adults

According to Denney and Connor (2016), emerging adulthood begins from the ages of 18 to 25. Individuals within the emerging adult stage go through the following life experiences: (a) identity exploration (developing their sense of being loved and developing their lifelong identity), (b) age of instability (experiencing frequent changes in their life), (c) self-focused stage (no adults but learning how to become one), (d) age of feeling in-between (having difficulty trying to identify who they are), and (e) the age of possibilities (feeling a sense of hope and having high aspirations to change their life). The life experiences in this emerging adult stage have a significant impact on the choices individuals make in life, such as to engage in negative behaviors that are associated with juvenile recidivism (Arnett, 2007; Denney & Connor, 2016).

Status of Efforts to Reduce Juvenile Recidivism

According to research, the following are strategies used in order to reduce juvenile recidivism: (a) improved disciplinary practices, (b) restorative justice practices, (c) youth diversion programs, (d) effective mental health and substance abuse services, (e) employment, (f) comprehensive services that focus on the economic and social needs of youth involved in the JJS, and (g) higher quality education programs in juvenile facilities that focus on remediating substandard skills while allowing students to earn diplomas and develop job skills (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013; Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997; Kim et al., 2010; D. Sullivan & Tifft, 2008).

Improved disciplinary practices that are less punitive, such as positive behavior support (Safran & Oswald, 2003) and restorative justice practices (Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013) that promote community and victim involvement within school settings, lessen the
rate of suspensions and expulsions, which play a part in escalating the school-to-prison pipeline that is associated with juvenile recidivism (Kim et al., 2010). Current literature also asserts that youth diversion programs are most likely to reduce recidivism compared to interventions provided by the juvenile court system (S. A. Wilson, 1996).

With regard to mental health and substance abuse services, using a client-centered approach that involves motivational interviewing rather than conducting these services within a group setting is far more effective at reaching the youth individually in order to address the underlying cause of recidivism (Stein et al., 2006). As for employment, youth who are connected to suitable employment are less likely to recidivate (Denney & Connor, 2016), as are youth who are provided with a holistic framework of services that address their social-emotional and psychical needs (McCarter, 2016).

** Progressive Alternative Education Schools **

The statistics regarding incarcerated youth who are enrolled in alternative education programs in both community and court schools are quite alarming (The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2013; Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Puzzanchera & Kang, 2017; Sabol, West, & Cooper, 2009). Nationally, approximately 27% of incarcerated youth have a severe mental illness, 30% have a history of physical or sexual abuse, 74% have used alcohol, and 84% have used marijuana. Given these statistics, research has suggested the use of an effective model to employ early identification systems within these settings to screen and recognize students in need of mental health treatment (Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Stein et al., 2006; Tobin & Sprague, 1999). According to research, treating substance abuse can lower recidivism; however, there are some settings
that lack an adequate substance abuse screening system (Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Stein et al., 2006; Tobin & Sprague, 1999).

The philosophy of community-based programs for incarcerated and reoffending youth has been an ongoing discussion for decades (Velasquez & Lyle, 1985). However, the success of such programs and its relevance to producing positive outcomes for youth lacks scholarly documentation in current research literature (Velasquez & Lyle, 1985). Community-based alternative education settings and programs that are not traditionally based and that focus on evidence-based therapeutic services, multisystemic therapy, rehabilitation, and culturally competent services have a positive effect on reducing juvenile recidivism and promoting positive youth life outcomes (Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011).

Soliciting student voice in alternative education settings is another emerging topic of discussion in current research (Baroutsis, Mills, McGregor, Riele, & Hayes, 2016). Researchers have argued that providing opportunities for students to speak and be heard along with providing students with the opportunity to provide their input concerning their choice of activities promotes student engagement and creates a democratic community (Baroutsis et al., 2016). This process of participatory dialogue is scheduled to occur during a check-in process at the start of a student’s day where the student is allowed to share his or her readiness for the day’s learning through a sign-up process.

According to Baroutsis et al. (2016), investing in a student’s belonging prevents exclusion and promotes an environment of student connection and improved relationships with peers and teachers. Current research has found this conclusion to be valid given that
youth who attend alternative schools connect traumatic experiences and relationships with their previous mainstream schools (Baroutsis et al., 2016).

An established program known for reducing the rate of juvenile recidivism is Building Alternatives (Taliento & Pearson, 1994). The Building Alternatives program involved a collaborative effort to help high-risk youth successfully reenter the community. The program involved a combination of support from community-based organizations, literacy volunteers, public schools, and social service agencies to effectively transition youth to sustainable employment after their release from a juvenile detention facility. The outcome of this program provided at-risk youth with higher self-esteem, effective work habits, improved communication skills, and career awareness (Taliento & Pearson, 1994).

**Theoretical Framework of Learning in Alternative Education Schools**

Youth who are involved in the JJS and attend alternative education programs are often impacted by social factors of life that tend to have a negative impact on school attachment, graduation rate, interpersonal skills, peer association, and making appropriate choices (Herndon & Bembenutty, 2014; Ryan et al., 2014; B. J. Zimmerman, 2013). The theoretical framework of self-regulated learning suggests that youth who are experiencing these problems lack the skills necessary to self-regulate. B. J. Zimmerman’s (2008) theory of self-regulated learning asserts that teaching students to take control of their thoughts, beliefs, and behavior has a strong correlation to helping them achieve academic success. Teaching students self-regulation skills and delayed gratification helps those students achieve positive educational outcomes that involve completing an education program and deterrence of deviant behavior in and out of school (Herndon &
Bembenutty, 2014). This framework is useful in alternative education settings when guiding juvenile offenders toward sustainable career pathways (Macomber et al., 2010).

Successful educational programs that lead to career pathways are considered to be a major factor in deterring youth from criminal and antisocial behavior (Black et al., 1996; Bullis & Fredericks, 2002; Bullis, Moran, Benz, Todis, & Johnson, 2002; Macomber et al., 2010). Education linked to employment is the most rewarding factor in recidivism reduction (Coffey & Gemignani, 1994; Macomber et al., 2010). Effective practices in the juvenile education system targeted to reduce juvenile recidivism and deter delinquent youth behavior consist of (a) vocational training, (b) direct instruction, (c) innovative technology, (d) structured and guided lesson plans, (e) peer tutoring, (f) creative learning practices, (g) low student-to-teacher ratio, (h) positive communication between students and teachers, (i) functional literacy, and (j) youth employment opportunities (Macomber et al., 2010).

**Vocational Training**

Preparing youth for future employment according to their interest has been found to be helpful in deterring youth from reoffending (Bradford, 2016; Zoltowski, 2015). According to the U.S. Department of Justice’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), utilizing a comprehensive approach that meets the needs of juvenile offenders through the implementation of vocational training is considered to be a common strategy to divert youth from engaging in criminal behavior (Development Services Group, 2010).

Vocational programs that promote academic success and job readiness skills have been found to be most successful in addition to programs that utilize the following
approaches: (a) career curriculum, (b) summer employment and subsidized pay, (c) seasonal training with placed internships, and (d) long-term residential programs (Brown & Thakur, 2006; Development Services Group, 2010; Greene & Forster, 2003). Support from Congress through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 allows exemplary programs such as Job Corps and YouthBuild to help youth achieve academic success and job readiness skills (Brown & Thakur, 2006; Development Services Group, 2010). Vocational programs of this nature are a genuine example of what needs to occur in this nation in order to help meet the unique needs of students in alternative education (D’Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; Kleiner, Porch, & Farris, 2002; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

The Unique Service Needs of Alternative Education Students

The indicators of recidivism among juvenile offenders have become a topic of interest worthy of exploration. The prevalence of recidivism among juvenile offenders tends to predict unfavorable outcomes for youth that result in (a) advanced criminal activity, (b) negative and impoverished living conditions, (c) poor educational outcomes, (d) unmet physical and mental healthcare needs, (e) substance abuse, and (f) high risk of fatality (Barnert et al., 2015).

A growing body of research has examined several aspects of effective treatment methods in order to address this problem (Aos et al., 2006; Ashford & LeCroy, 1990; Bergseth & Bouffard, 2013; Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Tobin & Sprague, 1999; H. A. Wilson & Hoge, 2013). Furthermore, there is a substantial amount of research that has encouraged the implementation of policy reform and supportive budgets in order to reduce recidivism.
among juvenile offenders (Aos et al., 2006; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Jenson & Howard, 1998).

A plethora of scholarly research has discussed the need for mental health services and reentry programs to be embedded within alternative education settings in order to address the systemic social phenomenon of juvenile recidivism (Horton, 2013; Kleiner et al., 2002; Weist, Ambrose, & Lewis, 2006). According to Horton (2013) and the National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice (NCMHJJ, n.d.), 70% of youth in the JJS exhibit severe mental health disorders. In addition to mental health disorders, another subject worthy of discussion is juvenile arrests.

The prevalence of juvenile arrests for egregious behaviors and substance abuse remains at an all-time high among students within alternative education programs. As a result, 2.4 million young adults have been arrested over the past decade (Puzzanchera & Kang, 2017; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Given these data, researchers have found that alternative education programs can no longer afford to operate according to “cookie cutter” traditional models of academic instruction and pupil support (D’Angelo & Zemanick, 2009; Kleiner et al., 2002). To do so is a disservice and failure to address the unique needs of the population these programs serve (Horton, 2013; Weist et al., 2006). In conclusion, researchers have discovered that implementing effective mental health services and reentry programs with fidelity among alternative education settings meets the unique needs of students and reduces the rate of juvenile recidivism (Horton, 2013; Weist et al., 2006).
Statement of the Research Problem

At-risk youth who are transitioning from the educational system into society are not receiving the support they need in order to prevent them from being reincarcerated (Abrams, 2006; Abrams, Terry, & Franke, 2011). Educational programs that serve youth who are involved with the JJS need to implement effective policy and procedures, effective educational services, and valid instrumentation tools in order to prevent and reduce juvenile recidivism (Aalsma et al., 2015; Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Lancaster et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2014). Alternative education programs that serve at-risk youth in court and community schools have ample opportunities to meet the needs of these youth through appropriate program designs that consist of mental health treatment and rehabilitation services in order to reduce juvenile recidivism (Ryan et al., 2014; Taliento & Pearson, 1994; Velasquez & Lyle, 1985).

Youth who are entering the stage of emerging adulthood (ages 18 to 25) while exiting the public education system and transitioning into society are in need of reliable and trusted support systems from a variety of sources in order to help prevent them from falling into a continuous cycle of reincarceration (Abrams, 2006; Abrams et al., 2011; Denney & Connor, 2016). The state of California initiated a 2017-2018 budget to fund a plan proposed by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to build more prisons in order to house emerging youth between the ages of 18 and 25 (Washburn, 2017). Moving forward with such efforts will be beneficial to these youth if CDCR plans to implement mental health and educational services. On the other hand, should CDCR choose not to implement mental health and educational services, this would be considered a failed system of support that has generated increasing state
budgets to build more prisons for youth in order to address the problem of juvenile crime (Washburn, 2017).

A growing body of research exists regarding the predictors of juvenile recidivism (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Piquero, Jennings, Diamond, & Reingle, 2015). However, few studies have focused on youth’s perceptions of juvenile recidivism as they transition back into society (Abrams, 2006; Anders, 2007; Barnert et al., 2015; Miner-Romanoff, 2016). It is important for the needs of emerging adults to be individually captured in order to address the root cause of juvenile recidivism from their perspective. More information is needed about the predictors of juvenile recidivism according to the testimonies of youth who are transitioning from public education into society in order to reduce the perpetual cycle of reincarceration.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this descriptive, qualitative study was to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education in Northern California. A second purpose was to explore the types of support provided by alternative schools and the perceived importance of the support to avoid recidivism according to adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education.
Research Questions

In order to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education, this research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?

2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?

Significance of the Problem

Juvenile recidivism is a social phenomenon that requires the prompt attention of policymakers, school administrators, social work practitioners, and departments of juvenile justice (Goldkind, 2011; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Jenson & Howard, 1998). This problem is significant because it has a major impact on the U.S. economy, communities, and the life outcomes of young adults (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2012; Goldkind, 2011; Goldson, 2000; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011).

In order to make America great again to improve the economy, there is a need to establish a strong and sustainable workforce consisting of young adults who not only are highly intelligent but also have the physical and mental capacity to become productive citizens of society (Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2012). Public education systems serving
young adults involved with the JJS who are transitioning from alternative education programs require sustainable systems of support. Multisystemic therapy and reentry plans are needed in order to transition this population back into society as self-sufficient and independent adults in order to prevent them from becoming unemployed and homeless (Denney & Connor, 2016; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Rogowski, 2014).

This research explored the predictors of juvenile recidivism from the individual perspectives of young adults who are transitioning from an alternative education program. A growing body of literature asserts that young adults who are involved with the JJS and who are transitioning from public education lack the support services needed in order to prevent them from reoffending (Goldkind, 2011; McCarter, 2016). According to Goldkind (2011), “Evaluations of alternative school programs serving solely a delinquent youth population have not painted a bright picture of the effectiveness of such programs” (p. 236). Therefore, alternative education programs have a level of accountability to uphold when it comes to serving the holistic needs of this population in efforts to help reduce juvenile recidivism.

This study is important to policymakers, school social workers, administrators in public education, juvenile probation officials, and society as a whole as it is expensive fiscally and socially not to have effective programs to decrease recidivism. It is also relevant to economists, educators, and those who plan budgets at the federal, state, and local level. It is important to decipher between budgeting for more programs or fewer programs when determining the best interest of society. Juvenile recidivism is a social problem that requires policies to tackle the underlying socioeconomic factors that are affecting young people (poverty, unemployment, homelessness, substance abuse, and
unaddressed mental health) with an emphasis on rehabilitation and accountability (Jenson & Howard, 1998). Furthermore,

school social workers—with their orientation toward ecological approaches to problem solving, professional training in relationship building, advocacy strategies, and youth development—are ideally suited to supporting young people returning from the justice system to reengage themselves with school, families and communities. (Goldkind, 2011, p. 229)

Administrators in public education and juvenile probation have the potential to prevent juvenile recidivism when united efforts are aligned in order to meet the unique needs of this population (Narendorf, Santa Maria, Ha, Cooper, & Schieszler, 2016). The findings of this study will better guide policymakers, school administrators, social work practitioners, and juvenile probation officials on how to implement and sustain effective policies, evidence-based programs, and best practices in order to help reduce juvenile recidivism as young adults exit from alternative education programs. This research fills a gap in the knowledge base of understanding the predictors of juvenile recidivism according to youth who have personally experienced reincarceration for repeated offenses.

Definitions

Adult students. Adult learners who are 18 years of age and older with a high school diploma or general equivalency diploma (GED; California Department of Education, 2017).

Alternative education. Schools that comprise specialized programs that offer small student-to-teacher ratios, responsiveness to learning, and instructional styles that
meet the diverse learning needs of students within an independent and/or community-based educational setting (California Department of Education, 2017). These educational services typically serve a targeted population of at-risk students outside of the traditional K-12 setting and involve specific comprehensive student support services (Porowski, O’Conner, & Luo, 2014).

**Exiting from alternative education.** Graduating or having graduated from alternative education upon the receipt of a high school diploma or GED.

**Juvenile justice system (JJS).** A structured legal system that is used to address crimes committed by youth between the ages of 10 and 18 (Spannhake, n.d.).

**Multisystemic therapy.** Intensive therapeutic services that offer a family and community-based component and all environmental factors that have a significant impact on a youth involved in the JJS (MST Services, 2017).

**Predictors.** Independent variables that are perceived to have an impact on a social phenomenon.

**Predictors of juvenile recidivism.** Independent variables within the context of substance abuse, social connectedness, demographics, family dynamics, and level of education that are perceived to have an impact on a youth’s reengagement in criminal activity.

**Recidivism.** The act of reengaging in criminal behavior and/or an activity that leads to a repetitive cycle of incarceration.

**Reentry plan.** A structured and comprehensive guideline that entails coordinated services and protocols for individuals transitioning from jail or alternative education schools into the community with the goal of addressing individual needs and systems of
support in efforts to prevent recidivism (King County Department of Community and Human Services, 2011).

**System of support.** A diverse population of professional entities working together in order to provide help and assistance to individuals in need within the context of targeted prevention, intervention, and postvention services.

**Transition.** The process of exiting from alternative education and reentering society.

**Delimitations**

This study had two delimitations. First, the study was limited to adult students 18 years of age and older who were or would soon be in the process of exiting from an alternative education school in Northern California. Second, the study was further delimited to adult students who had specifically been involved with the JJS.

**Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into five chapters, a section of references, and appendices. Chapter I provided an introduction and an overview of the study. The next chapter entails a literature review including self-regulation theory and the life course of emerging adulthood, the theoretical background regarding the predictors of juvenile recidivism, the perpetual cycle of juvenile recidivism, methods to reduce juvenile recidivism, the needs of alternative education students, and progressive alternative education programs. Chapter III features the research design and methodology used to execute the study. Chapter IV reveals study findings related to the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism and the types of support needed for adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education to avoid recidivism. In Chapter V, the dissertation
concludes with a summary, findings, conclusions, discussion of implications, and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The life outcomes of youth who have encountered the juvenile justice system (JJS) and have not obtained the support needed to successfully transition back into society after leaving public education include poverty, poor health, unemployment, and homelessness (Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Knopf-Amelung, 2013). These outcomes have a direct impact on crime and are strongly correlated to juvenile recidivism (Cottle et al., 2001; Jenson & Howard, 1998; McCarter, 2016).

Therefore, research is needed on the direct source of impact in order to tackle the root cause of this social phenomenon. This research is important to groups in the wider community (nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and grassroots organizations that serve at-risk youth along with government entities such as departments of human and social services, juvenile probation, and county behavioral health) due to their level of expertise and capacity to identify the barriers youth are presented with as they transition back into the community from being incarcerated. Such collaborative efforts from the wider community have significantly improved the reentry outcomes of this population (Mathur & Clark, 2014).

Chapter II presents a review of the literature as it pertains to the identification and description of the predictors of juvenile recidivism. The chapter comprises five sections. The first section discusses the study variables, that is, the predictors of juvenile recidivism (mental health, substance abuse, social connectedness, demographics, family dynamics, level of education, and understanding the life course of emerging adults). The second section provides an overview of research pertaining to the status of efforts to
reduce juvenile recidivism. The third section covers progressive alternative education programs, the fourth discusses self-regulation theory, and the fifth addresses meeting the unique needs of alternative education students.

**Predictors of Juvenile Recidivism**

**Mental Health**

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974 was enacted to prevent adolescents from being pushed into the adult criminal justice system (Underwood & Washington, 2016). However, due to the rise of juvenile crime between 1980 and 1990, community safety became a focal point of concern, and thus harsher punishments for youth who came into contact with the JJS took precedence (Underwood & Washington, 2016). As a result, public education began implementing zero-tolerance policies, which in turn perpetuated the cycle of the school-to-prison pipeline (Kim et al., 2010).

From 1985 to 2013, the number of juvenile court cases referred for informal probation decreased as a vast majority of these juvenile court cases were either adjudicated or transferred to the adult criminal court (Heilburn, Lee, & Cottle, 2005; Hockenberry & Puzzanchera, 2015). Studies have shown that youth who come into contact with the JJS exhibit a comorbidity of mental health disorders, and if youth with these disorders are not properly screened, identified, and treated, this can result in repeated offenses (Chassin, 2008; Dias, de Pádua Serafim, & de Barros, 2014; Grisso, 2008; Heilburn et al., 2005).

According to Underwood and Washington (2016), there are 2 million youth with mental health challenges involved in the JJS. Of this population, approximately 50% to
75% meet the criteria for a mental health diagnosis (Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Underwood & Washington, 2016). Compared to the general population of adolescents, youth involved in the JJS have a higher rate of mental health disorders—40% of youth in the general population versus 80% of youth in the JSS have at least one mental health diagnosis (Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Grisso, 2008; Grisso & Barnum, 2000; Underwood & Washington, 2016). The most common type of mental health disorders found within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) that have been identified among youth involved in the JJS are affective disorders, psychotic disorders, anxiety disorders, conduct disorders, and substance use disorders (Abram et al., 2004; Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Grisso & Barnum, 2000; Teplin, Abram, McClelland, Dulcan, & Mericle, 2002). Table 1 presents a synopsis of the prevalence of mental health disorders found among youth involved in the JJS.

Table 1

Prevalence of Mental Health Diagnoses for Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diagnosis</th>
<th>Prevalence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Substance abuse disorder</td>
<td>25%–67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>15%–30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder</td>
<td>13%–30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)</td>
<td>11%–32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bipolar</td>
<td>3%–7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Dias et al. (2014) conducted a study on a group of 898 incarcerated youth at Fundacao Casa, a juvenile detention facility. From this population, 619 primary offenders and 267 recidivists were examined. The purpose of the study was to evaluate
the connection between mental health disorders of primary offenders and recidivism. The results of the study revealed that primary offenders exhibited a comorbidity of mood- and stress-related disorders. Furthermore, the study revealed that psychoactive substance use disorders and adult personality disorders were related to recidivism (Dias et al., 2014).

Grisso (2008) posited that youth with such mental health diagnoses are at risk of being brought to the attention of the juvenile court due to the symptomology of the behaviors associated with the disorders. Furthermore, researchers have identified that the overrepresentation of youth with mental health disorders in the JJS calls for targeted treatment that consists of a continuum of care that occurs across the community and among various government entities (child welfare, probation, public education, and mental health) that have direct contact with youth offenders as substance abuse is the primary precursor to youth incarceration (Grisso, 2008).

Substance Abuse

Demographics. According to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (2002, as cited in Ho et al., 2007), approximately 44% of youth who come into contact with the JJS meet the diagnostic criteria for either a substance use disorder or dependency. Researchers have discovered that the demographics (gender, age, and ethnicity) of youth substance abusers and the type of drug use significantly impact the trajectory of recidivism (Garner, 2016; Ho et al., 2007; McCuish, 2017; Racz et al., 2015; Young et al., 2007). According to McCuish (2017), understanding a youth’s substance-use profile (age, gender, ethnicity, and being a non-drug-user, hallucinogen user, or street-drug user) and associated risk factors (alcohol use before 12, drug use before 12, kicked out of
home, left home, attending school, living in foster care, physical abuse, sexual abuse, positive self-identity, alcohol problem with biological parent, and/or drug problem with biological parent) has the potential to improve current practices and treatment strategies.

McCuish (2017) conducted a study examining the drug-use profiles of adjudicated male \((n = 98)\) and female \((n = 378)\) youth. A latent class analysis model was used to identify the substance-use profiles. A multivariate and multinominal regression analysis was used to compare the substance-use profiles to associated risk factors. The findings of the study revealed that the prevalence of street-drug use (cocaine, crack cocaine, and heroin) among females was two times higher than the use among males, as females fare particularly badly when involved in gang and street lifestyles. The study also revealed that youth identified as early drug users (alcohol or drug use before the age of 12) with an unstable living environment (kicked out of the home or voluntarily left their home to reside elsewhere) showed increased hallucinogen and street-drug use. Given the results of this study, individualized treatment plans and multisystemic therapeutic interventions were highly recommended in efforts to help rehabilitate youth (McCuish, 2017). The recommendations of this study are consistent with other research that recommended the use of multisystemic therapy and individualized treatment when working with youth and families who are involved in the JJS (Racz et al., 2015).

According to the Arrestee Drug Abuse Monitoring Program, 42% to 55% of juvenile males and 26% to 65% of juvenile females who were arrested in 2003 tested positive for drugs and alcohol at the time of incarceration (Young et al., 2007). Nationwide, there has been a tremendous increase in drug use among youth who are
involved in the JJS compared to youth in the general population (Center for Health and Justice, 2011). Figure 1 highlights the prevalence of drug use among incarcerated youth.

![Lifetime Use of Selected Substances Among Youth in Custody vs. Youth in the General Population, 2003](image)

**Source:**

**Notes:**
1 The Survey of Youth in Residential Placement (SYRP), designed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, gathers data anonymously from youth in juvenile justice system custody and draws from a nationally representative sample in state and local facilities.


Youth who come into contact with the JJS upon their first offense and who have reoffended are reported to have used either alcohol or an illicit substance (Ho et al., 2007; Racz et al., 2015; Young et al., 2007). Teplin et al. (2002) conducted a study on juvenile detainees in Cook County and found alcohol and marijuana abuse to be the most common type of substance use disorders among juvenile detainees.

Dembo et al. (2007) conducted a study on 203 youth in residential programs within the states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Delaware. The results of their study revealed that a high percentage of the youth reported having engaged in substance use 1 year prior to incarceration. Table 2 is an overview of the results reported from this study.
Table 2

Prevalence of Drug Use Among Youth Residential Detainees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drug use</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opiates</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinogens</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inhalants</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedatives (nonmedical)</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulants</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition to the type of drugs used by youth who come into contact with the JJS, a youth’s gender, ethnicity, and age are also contributing factors to the social phenomenon of substance use disorders among juvenile offenders (Chassin, 2008; Gardner, 2011; Ho et al., 2007; Racz et al., 2015; Rivaux, Springer, Bohman, Wagner, & Gil, 2006). According to Chassin (2008), the most common type of substance use disorder among males and females in juvenile detention is marijuana use disorder. Females were reported to have a higher risk of a comorbid disorder compared to males (Chassin, 2008). Chassin also stated that non-Hispanic Caucasians had a higher rate of substance abuse disorder compared to African Americans.

Ching-hua Ho and associates (2007) conducted a study on a national sample of delinquent youth and nondelinquent youth ages 12 to 17 ($N = 5,469$). Of the youth in the sample, 75% were Caucasian and 25% were non-Caucasian. The purpose of the study was to examine the difference in substance-use problems among juvenile offenders. The
results of the study revealed that alcohol and marijuana abuse were common among older, delinquent youth with high risk-taking tendencies (“got a real kick out of doing things that are a little dangerous” or “liked to test themselves by doing something a little risky” [Ho et al., 2007, p. 751]). Marijuana abuse was most frequently found among those with a lower socioeconomic status. The study also revealed that gender and ethnicity differences in alcohol abuse were homogeneous for delinquent and nondelinquent youth. Age differences in alcohol and marijuana problems were smaller among delinquents than nondelinquents. Given these findings, the study recommended more concentrated efforts to foster effective preventative measures and treatment interventions that are specifically geared toward younger delinquents as the onset of substance abuse was noted to occur at an early age prior to incarceration (Ho et al., 2007).

According to Racz et al. (2015), early onset and frequent drug use are risk factors that are precursors to later polysubstance use (using multiple substances at a single time) and substance use disorders. There is also a growing body of literature examining the correlation of substance use and behavior problems, as difficulties with youth being able to control their behavior have resulted in increased polysubstance use (Dembo et al., 1997; Teplin et al., 2003; Sher, 1991, all as cited in Racz et al., 2015). Thus, “serious juvenile offenders represent a population at high risk for polysubstance use and problems associated with this drug use, including recidivism and repeated incarcerations (Dembo, Pacheco, Schmeidler, Fisher, & Cooper, 1997; Tripodi & Bender, 2011)” (Racz et al., 2015, p. 206).
Racz et al. (2015) conducted an exploratory study on 373 minority male offenders (28.1% African American and 53.1% Latino) for serious crimes (robbery, aggravated assault, battery, and attempted murder). The purpose of the study was to assess the risk factors of aggression and polysubstance use. The results of the study revealed that there was less polysubstance use among African American male offenders and that Latino male offenders with an early onset of drug use were at greater risk for polysubstance use. These findings suggested the need for culturally sensitive interventions with a multifaceted treatment approach in order to address the significant needs of incarcerated Latino youth (Racz et al., 2015).

**Treatment approaches.** Substance abuse among youth at the national level has come to the forefront of current research that expounds on the importance of implementing effective substance abuse treatment programs aimed at meeting the youth’s specific needs as they matriculate through various silos of the JJS (Chassin, 2008; Gardner, 2011; Racz et al., 2015; Rivaux et al., 2006; Young et al., 2007).

Rivaux et al. (2006) examined the impact of risk factors on treatment outcomes among youth offenders ($N = 278$) at the Travis County, Texas Juvenile Offender Substance Abuse Treatment Services (JOSATS) Network. In the population studied, 48 youth were female and 230 were male; 146 were Latino, 74 were African American, and 56 were Caucasian. The results of the study revealed that age, the duration of treatment, and history of substance abuse impacted the success of treatment. Older adolescents were less likely to have successful treatment outcomes given the early onset of drug use. Extensive time in treatment without the involvement of family, specifically among Latino and African American youth, impacted the success of treatment. Furthermore, longer
histories of substance abuse among African American youth also impacted the trajectory of successful treatment outcomes (Rivaux et al., 2006). Such findings suggest the need for targeted interventions that focus on the cultural needs and the identified protective factors of every youth (Gardner, 2011; Racz et al., 2015).

Gardner (2011) asserted that many educators and professionals who are involved with serving incarcerated youth tend to overlook the importance of an individual’s faith and belief system as a protective factor to utilize throughout the course of treatment. Gardner postulated that incorporating an individual’s faith and belief system in curricular and program interventions decreases the likelihood of school failure, substance abuse, negative life outcomes, and recidivism. Gardner further expounded that faith provides the opportunity for youth involved in the JJS to build meaningful connections and relationships.

**Social Connectedness**

Without connection and relationships—built on trust and faith in one another—education and work with and on behalf of youth can be dispiriting both for young people and for those charged with their care or education. (Gardner, 2011, p. 40)

Voisin et al. (2005) conducted a study on teacher connectedness and health-related outcomes among detained adolescents. The study used a sample of 550 adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 (270 males and 280 females), who were detained in juvenile detention centers across the state of Georgia. In this sample population, the majority of the participants were Caucasian, were between the ages of 14 and 15, and lived solely with their mother. After examining the relationship between teacher connectedness and adolescent behavior outcomes (prosocial behavior, problem
behaviors, drug use, and sexual behavior), the results of the study revealed that adolescents with low teacher connectedness were most likely to use marijuana and amphetamines, and engage in sexual behaviors while under the influence, just 2 months prior to being detained (Voisin et al., 2005).

The findings of Voisin et al.’s (2005) study suggested that youth’s view of cultivating healthy relationships with teachers has a significant impact on their behaviors. Recommendations of this study included implementing strategies to promote and improve student-teacher connectedness within the school environment in efforts to deter students from engaging in risky behaviors that have the propensity to create a pathway toward incarceration (Ferrante, 2013; Gavazzi, Yarcheck, & Lim, 2005; Voisin et al., 2005).

**Demographics**

Youth who engage in risk-taking behaviors (running away, violating curfew, chronic absenteeism, and substance use) are most often brought before the juvenile court for status offenses (conduct that would not be considered a crime if it were committed by an adult, such as underage drinking, breaking curfew, and missing school; Ferrante, 2013; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Gavazzi et al., 2005). There is great debate as to how to handle cases of juvenile status offenses given that the bulk of these offenses originate from noncriminal behavior (Freiburger & Burke, 2011). Literature also reveals that there has been an ongoing practice of issuing harsher punishments for female status offenders versus male status offenders as a higher number of girls are being referred to the courts for behavioral issues rather than criminal offenses (Baffour, 2006; Ferrante, 2013; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Gavazzi et al., 2005; Stein et al., 2015).
Gender has an impact on the risk factors and the individualized needs of youth who are involved in the JJS (Baffour, 2006; Ferrante, 2013; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Gavazzi et al., 2005; Stein et al., 2015). Furthermore, researchers have postulated that ethnicity continues to be the topic of a circular conversation within the context of overrepresentation and disproportionality (Gavazzi et al., 2005).

Gavazzi et al. (2005) conducted a study on the ethnicity, gender, and global risk indicators (peer relationships, substance abuse, traumatic events, mental health issues, psychopathy, health-related risks, leisure activities, accountability, and prior offenses) in the lives of status offenders coming to the attention of the juvenile court. The purpose of the study was to determine if the risks and needs of status offenders were related to ethnicity and gender. The researchers studied a total of 103 youth who were involved in a program designed as an alternative to detention. Of the total population of youth studied, 63 were female and 40 were male, and all were between the ages of 10 and 14. The ethnicities of the sample population were African American (63%), Caucasian (30%), Hispanic (4%), and other (3%). These youth completed a Global Risk Assessment Device (GRAD). A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and a chi-square analysis were used to compare GRAD scores in order to determine the level of risk, factors related to gender and ethnicity pertaining to status offenses, and the outcome data of program completion (Gavazzi et al., 2005).

The results of Gavazzi et al.’s (2005) study revealed that females had a greater level of risk compared to males. These risks were primarily attributed to family, negative peer association, exposure to trauma, and child maltreatment. With regard to ethnicity, non-Hispanic youth had the greatest risk level due to having a history of drug use. An
overrepresentation of African American youth was present in this study, which the researchers found to be a consistent dilemma across the U.S. justice system. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested implementing specific programs designed to meet the needs of African American youth and consideration by practitioners of the importance of gender and ethnicity during the course of assessment and referring youth to treatment programs (Gavazzi et al., 2005).

Similar findings were identified by Stein et al. (2015), who postulated that gender, race, and ethnicity are important elements to consider when developing systems of response to incarcerated females involved in the JJS. According to research, a limited number of studies have been conducted on females detained in the JJS, and few studies have identified appropriate needs assessments for this population (Chesney-Lind, 2001; Lederman, Dakof, Larrea, & Li, 2004; Stein et al., 2015).

Stein et al. (2015) conducted an archival study on gender, ethnicity, and race of incarcerated and detained youth. The purpose of the study was to examine the risk-needs-responsivity (RNR) model among 657 detained youth of various racial and ethnic backgrounds (32.0% Hispanic, 24.2% African American, 48.5% Caucasian, and 11.0% other). The RNR model screens for three specific criteria to assist in the development of a plan of rehabilitation for detained youth. These criteria are risk levels; criminogenic needs (antisocial peers, thinking and behavior, substance abuse, family, school, and leisure activity); and responsiveness to offender motivation, mental health status, current circumstances, demographics, and strengths at the time of designing an intervention (Stein et al., 2015).
The youth examined in Stein et al.’s (2015) study were detained at a state juvenile correctional facility in the northeast United States and were between the ages of 13 and 19. Of the youth in this sample population, 86.6% were identified as boys. The significant results of this study revealed that recidivism was affected by age at the time of first offense, clinical diagnosis, parental substance abuse, and child maltreatment. Girls were found to be older than boys at the time of their first incarceration. A trend was found in clinical diagnosis in that girls appeared to have more posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms than boys, possibly because of past trauma and adverse childhood experiences. This was significantly evident among non-Caucasian females. More Caucasian females reported that their fathers abused substances compared to non-Caucasian females. With regard to child maltreatment, Caucasian females reported to have more history of abuse than non-Caucasian females. The findings of this study suggest the need for responsivity programming according to the individual level of risk presented among female youth offenders as this is associated with the developmental trajectories of offending (Ferrante, 2013; Kempf-Leonard & Johansson, 2005; Stein et al., 2015).

There are many theoretical explanations of offending trajectories within the context of gender and ethnicity (Chesney-Lind, 2001; Ferrante, 2013; Piquero et al., 2015). Most researchers have argued that ethnic differences from an ecological perspective made in reference to family structure and environmental places of habitation, economic hardships, lack of employment, and lack of quality education are consistent with developmental theories of reoffending. These theories postulate that because of a youth’s ecological context and family structure, the probability of living in such
conditions contributes to the perpetual cycle of recidivism (Chesney-Lind, 2001; Ferrante, 2013; Piquero et al., 2015).

**Family Dynamics**

Research on family structure and delinquency has been around for decades (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Putniņš, 1984; Shaw & McKay, 1932). Several studies have concluded that a dysfunctional family structure is a risk factor for juvenile delinquency (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Fleener, 1999; Garfinkel, 2010; Monahan, 1957; Putniņš, 1984; Rodriguez, Smith, & Zatz, 2009). In essence, a majority of research has revealed that children of divorced parents, from single-parent homes, and who have incarcerated relatives are at a higher risk of coming into contact with the JJS than children who live in stable family units (DeGarmo & Forgatch, 2005; Miller, 1984; Ryan & Yang, 2005; Stieler & Germelmann, 2016).

Despite family dysfunction and instability within a youth’s household, Hirschi’s 1969 social bond theory argued that children who are closely bonded to parents with more ethical and moral values are less likely to engage in delinquent behavior (Demuth & Brown, 2004). This is consistent with progressive research, which has found that youth who are engaged with parental support during the course of their involvement with the JJS are most likely to have better outcomes and desist from future reoffending (Garfinkel, 2010; Walker et al., 2015).

**Divorced and single parents.** DeGarmo and Forgatch (2005) conducted a quantitative, descriptive study on the development of delinquency within divorced families. The purpose of the study was to conduct an evaluation on the coercion theory early onset models of delinquency (parenting practices as reported by mothers, deviant
peers as reported by their sons, and delinquency as reported by teachers). The Oregon Divorce Study–II tool was administered to a total of 238 separated single mothers (average age of 38) with sons (average age of 7.8) who lived in the Pacific Northwest. Only mothers were provided with an intervention that consisted of 14 parent group meetings that focused on effective parenting practices (positive involvement, skill encouragement, problem solving, appropriate discipline, and monitoring) and divorce issues for women. The mothers’ ethnicity was not reported; however, the ethnic breakdown of their sons was as follows: 86% Caucasian, 1% African American, 2% Latino, 2% Native American, and 9% from another racial/ethnic category (DeGarmo & Forgatch, 2005).

The results of DeGarmo and Forgatch’s (2005) study revealed that changes in parenting practices and deviant peer affiliations contributed to the onset of delinquency based on the age of the child, the duration of separation for the mother, socioeconomic status, and maternal antisocial qualities. These findings suggest the implementation of such parenting practices impacts deviant peer association and has the propensity to prevent the onset of early delinquency for children of divorced parents (DeGarmo & Forgatch, 2005). These research results are consistent with the findings of other research that the deviant behavior exhibited in early adolescents from a change in family structure leads to a course of delinquency.

According to Demuth and Brown (2004), the change in family structure is shifting from divorce to a higher rate of nonmarital childbearing, cohabitation, and step-families. They also questioned if the “broken home” perspective is due to the absence of a parent or if it has more to do with the gender of the single parent, as single-parent families are a
diversified class within itself (single-father families, single-mother families; Demuth & Brown, 2004). Most researchers have concluded that children growing up without the presence of their father experience poorer socioeconomic, educational, and life outcomes (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Downey, Ainsworth, James, & Dufur, 1998; McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).

Nevertheless, after conducting research on family structure, family processes, and adolescent delinquency and the significance of parental absence versus parental gender, Demuth and Brown (2004) discovered that adolescents who lacked parental absence and who came from a single-parent household were more delinquent than youth who resided in a two-parent family household. It was also discovered that parental gender did not play a significant role in juvenile delinquency. The findings of this study suggested that parental connectedness (close psychological and emotional bonds) in combination with parental involvement, effective supervision, and oversight among single-parent families prevents adolescent delinquent behaviors (Demuth & Brown, 2004).

**Incarcerated parents.** Emerging research on the effects of parental incarceration is continuing to evolve in the 21st century (Rodriguez et al., 2009). Rodriguez et al. (2009) conducted a mixed-methods study to examine how paternal and maternal incarceration affects juvenile court officials’ responses to troubled youth. The researchers used a sample of 325 youth from the Maricopa County Juvenile On-Line Tracking System database and conducted semistructured interviews with 14 probation officers. The dependent variable, court outcome (juvenile detention facility or out-of-home placement), was compared to the following independent variables: sex of youth, family living arrangements (coparenting, single parent, extended family, foster care, or
friends), family dysfunction, parental prior history of incarceration, race and ethnicity (Caucasian, Hispanic/Latino, or African American), person offense, age, and prior referrals (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

The results of the study by Rodriguez et al. (2009) revealed that family dysfunction contributed to the court’s decision to place a youth in either an out-of-home placement or a juvenile detention facility. Furthermore, African American youth were more likely to be placed out of the home due to family dysfunction compared to Caucasian youth. Similarly, youth in the foster care system were also more likely to be placed in an out-of-home placement than youth who were living in a two-parent household. With regard to paternal incarceration, juveniles with an incarcerated father were more likely to receive an out-of-home placement than youth without a father. As for maternal incarceration, there was no significant impact on the court’s decision to place a youth. Most important, the researchers commented that the majority of decisions made by the court to place youth in either an out-of-home placement or a juvenile detention facility due to parental incarceration and family dysfunction were more often ordered to African American youth than to Caucasian and Latino/a youth (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

Murray and Farrington (2006) stated, “It is possible that there is official bias against children of prisoners, making them more likely than their peers to be prosecuted or convicted for their crime” (p. 729). World-renowned scholars have also concluded that parental incarceration creates a social stigma for youth along with the ramifications of bullying and teasing, thus increasing antisocial behavior and mental health problems, which are identified as early precursors to juvenile delinquency (Boswell & Wedge,
As these early socioemotional precursors to juvenile delinquency evolve into juvenile incarceration, family involvement has become the new paradigm shift in deterring youth from reoffending.

**Family engagement.** According to research, family involvement in the decision-making process of employing treatment services for youth who are involved in the JJS has demonstrated positive results in preventing recidivism in addition to producing effective treatment outcomes (Garfinkel, 2010; Walker et al., 2015). Juvenile justice policies and mandates for government accountability call for cost-effective family-based interventions to help reduce juvenile recidivism as they recognize the validity of current research that has revealed how adolescent brain development, trauma, socioemotional functioning, and ecological factors have an impact on adolescent behavior (Garfinkel, 2010; Grisso, 2008; Walker et al., 2015). As national studies on parent involvement in the JJS continue to emerge (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [OJJDP], n.d., 2013), the literature reveals that incarcerated youth who are emotionally supported by parents are more engaged in treatment, have better treatment and rehabilitation plans, and experience lower rates of recidivism (Garfinkel, 2010; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Walker et al., 2015).

**Level of Education**

Education-related factors such as truancy, poor academic achievement, grade retention, suspensions, and discipline referrals are linked to juvenile delinquency (Archwamety & Katsiyannis, 2000; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997; Katsiyannis, Thompson, Barrett, & Kingree, 2013). For decades, it has been reported that youth with
intellectual disabilities who function far below grade level are overrepresented in the JJS and are more likely to reoffend (Booker & Mitchell, 2011; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997; Simpson, Swanson, & Kunkel, 1992). Researchers have noted that these education-related factors are systemic as they continue to be present for offenders in the adult criminal justice system (Katsiyannis et al., 2013).

Furthermore, early research revealed that there is an interconnectedness between educational outcomes, delinquency, and recidivism (Archwamety & Katsiyannis, 2000; Beebe & Mueller, 1993; Leone, Meisel, & Drakeford, 2002). This research is consistent with historical data from the U.S. Department of Education (Fromboluti, 1994) and researchers who reported that delinquency and recidivism are highly associated with the aforementioned risk factors such as risky behaviors, abuse, alcohol use, and low academic achievement (Archwamety & Katsiyannis, 2000; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997; Katsiyannis et al., 2013; Seigle et al., 2014).

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is an education law enacted by the federal government. The purpose of this law is to federally fund and assist states with providing educational opportunities to students in special education (Segal, 2011). According to the National Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Neglected or Delinquent Children and Youth (Segal, 2011), over 6 million students in public education receive special educational services through which states are required to offer a free and appropriate education (FAPE; the most appropriate environment and services that will meet a student’s special needs in the least restrictive environment that enables the most interaction with nondisabled peers).
Low academic achievement and intellectual disabilities among juvenile offenders have become an alarming trend that researchers have yet to find solutions to (Archwamety & Katsiyannis, 2000; Beebe & Mueller, 1993; Simpson et al., 1992). Approximately 33.4% of youth who are detained have a learning disability, and according to relevant research, learning disabilities are strongly correlated to school failure (dropping out of school, which leads to delinquency), behavior dispositions (having a cognitive deficit, lack of impulse control, missing social cues, poor insight to current situation and/or problem, and lack of self-regulation skills, which lead to frequent encounters with law enforcement), and a lack of strategies (poor interpersonal skills and social skills, which leads to negative encounters with law enforcement; Seigle et al., 2014).

These findings are consistent with those of Simpson et al. (1992), who noted that the prevalence of learning disabilities among youth in the JJS was between 32% and 36% and that efforts made to rectify this problem have been unsuccessful. As researchers continue to demonstrate the linkage between recidivism and educational outcomes (Archwamety & Katsiyannis, 2000; Beebe & Mueller, 1993; Seigle et al., 2014; Simpson et al., 1992), schools are being encouraged to implement early intervention and prevention models from a universal/systematic approach in efforts to improve student behavior for at-risk youth along with providing incarcerated youth with a higher quality education (Katsiyannis et al., 2013).

**Understanding the Life Course of Emerging Adults**

Emerging adulthood theory was introduced by Jeffery Jensen Arnett in 2000 (Arnett, 2016). The theory proposes that there are five domains that American adults
between the ages of 18 and 25 would experience in life dependent on their culture, socioeconomic status, and social class: (a) identity explorations, (b) instability, (c) self-focus, (d) feeling in-between, and (e) possibilities/optimism (Arnett, 2004). These domains encompass the feelings and views emerging adults have about their emotional lives, school and work, love, sex, and marriage (Arnett, 2016). In turn, these perceptions have an impact on the choices and decisions emerging adults make in life (Denney & Connor, 2016). Researchers have begun to discover the correlation between risk factors (substance abuse, mental health challenges, and criminal behavior), reentry success, and recidivism of emerging adults in the JJS (Clingempeel & Henggeler, 2003; Davis, Sheidow, & McCart, 2015; Inderbitzin, 2009; Maynard, Salas-Wright, & Vaughn, 2015).

Maynard et al. (2015) conducted a study on high school dropouts in emerging adulthood. The purpose of the study was to examine the risk factors of substance abuse, mental health, and criminal behavior among dropouts ($N = 19,312$) identified as emerging adults between the ages of 18 and 25. Data were derived from the 2010 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. A regression analysis was used to compare risk factors with respect to participants’ demographic profiles (age, gender, ethnicity, income, employment status, and geographical location). The Fagerstrom Test of Nicotine Dependence (FTND), Nicotine Dependence Syndrome Scale (NDSS), Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), and the WHODAS-II were used to screen for substance abuse and mental health disorders (Maynard et al., 2015).

The results of this study by Maynard et al. (2015) revealed that unemployed minority males of a lower socioeconomic status are most likely to drop out of high school. Although substance abuse was noted to be prominent among emerging adults,
the study revealed that dropouts were less likely to use alcohol. Notably, however, dropouts were more likely to attempt suicide. Furthermore, there was a strong association between criminal behavior and dropping out as these dropouts were found to be arrested for things such as possession of a controlled substance, assault, and larceny. These findings suggest the importance of collaborative effort and alliance between public education, public health, and the criminal justice system to join forces in order to incorporate effective prevention, intervention, and risk-minimizing methods to address the behavioral health conditions that evolve during emerging adulthood (Maynard et al., 2015).

Over 100,000 emerging adults leave juvenile correctional facilities annually (Davis et al., 2015; Snyder, 2004). Serious mental health conditions arise during emerging adulthood (Abram et al., 2004; Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Grisso & Barnum, 2000; Teplin et al., 2002), and Davis et al. (2015) argued that the efficacy of recidivism reduction and the continuum of quality mental health care for emerging adults in the JJS are lacking. As emerging adults in the JJS transition back into the community, many have strong aspirations to change their lives but are not provided with the support and resources to do so (Arnett, 2000, 2004; Inderbitzin, 2009; Maruna, 2001; Petersilia, 2001; Snyder, 2004; M. L. Sullivan, 2004). It has been suggested that ecological and multidimensional treatment approaches, such as multisystemic therapy, that simultaneously target the lives of emerging adults who are involved in the JJS may have demonstrated positive effects on deterring emerging adults from reoffending (Clingempeel & Henggeler, 2003; Davis et al., 2015).
Status Efforts to Reduce Juvenile Recidivism

Community Engagement

Communities, both locally and globally, are experiencing an influx of homeless young adults who have had multiple encounters with the JJS (Ferguson et al., 2011; Fielding & Forchuk, 2013; Knopf-Amelung, 2013). These encounters with the JJS are often due to the risky behaviors of theft and sex trafficking (Cole & Sprang, 2015; Narendorf et al., 2016). This creates a concern for communities to take drastic measures of fostering partnerships with public education in order to help prevent young adults from becoming either perpetrators or victims of crime (Narendorf et al., 2016). Without the help of the communities, the life outcomes of young adults are set to decline.

It is envisioned that groups within the wider community along with policymakers, social work practitioners, school administrators, and juvenile probation officials would utilize the findings of this research in order to accomplish the following three objectives: (a) help develop new evidence-based interventions and strategies that are targeted to prevent and reduce juvenile recidivism as young adults transition from public education and reenter society; (b) improve social work practice from a macro perspective when working with various community organizations and government entities for the purpose of bridging the gap between the community and engaging youth involved in the JJS; and (c) develop effective training programs for clinical practitioners, professional educators, and juvenile probation officials who work directly with young adults who are exiting from alternative education settings (Goldkind, 2011; Goldson, 2000; Gonsoulin & Read, 2011; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Klietz, 2007; Mathur & Clark, 2014; Sinclair, Christenson, Lehr, & Anderson, 2003).
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2017), youth unemployment increased by 10.1% from January 2016 to January 2017. As young people continue to be unemployed until their early 20s, this poses a serious risk of repeated crime (Goldson, 2000; Jobs for the Future, 2016). Knopf-Amelung (2013) asserted that 20% to 30% of young adults who are homeless have a history of repeated arrest. This relates to the predictors of juvenile recidivism such as substance abuse and mental health (Cottle et al., 2001; Denney & Connor, 2016; Stein et al., 2006). The prevalence of substance abuse, unaddressed mental health issues, and repeated incarceration among youth involved in the JJS contributes to a national and local crisis of homelessness (Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008; Knopf-Amelung, 2013).

**Reentry Programs**

The average recidivism rate of juvenile offenders across the United States is approximately 55% 12 months after being released from a juvenile detention center (Clark & Unruh, 2010; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006; Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009). Recidivism at this rate is costing U.S. taxpayers up to $52 billion on an annual basis (Bradford, 2016; Clark & Unruh, 2010; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). According to the Justice Policy Institute, the cost of incarceration for youth within the state of California is $208,330 per year, $102,742 for 6 months, $51,371 for 3 months, and just over $570 per day (Petteruti, Schindler, & Ziedenberg, 2014). Current research has revealed that reentry programs that focus on specific interventions as specified according to the individualized needs of juvenile offenders have been found to be successful in reducing reoccurrences with the JJS (Bradford, 2016; Bullis & Cheney, 1999; Clark & Unruh, 2010; Griller Clark, Mathur, & Helding, 2011; Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009).
According to Bradford (2016), who conducted a qualitative study on the voices of incarcerated inmates who shared their reentry experiences, reentry programs that focus on the following five themes would be beneficial to reducing taxpayers’ expenses in addition to reducing recidivism rates among juvenile offenders: (a) establishing positive and supportive relationships, (b) fostering self-awareness and determination, (c) teaching avoidance of negative influences and situations, (d) improving educational outcomes, and (e) helping youth find employment. Other reentry programs such as Project SUPPORT (Bullis & Cheney, 1999), Project RISE (Griller Clark & Mathur, 2010; Griller Clark et al., 2011; Mathur & Griller Clark, 2013), Project STAY OUT (Unruh, Povenmire-Kirk, & Yamamoto, 2009), and Partnering with Love and Limits (PLL; Sells, Sullivan, & DeVore, 2012) are examples of models within the JJS that involve effective transitional services aimed to reduce juvenile recidivism.

Baltodano, Platt, and Roberts (2005) noted that minimal research exists pertaining to the correlation between transitional services and youth recidivism. However, several researchers have concluded that effective transitional services within the JJS are more likely to improve reentry efforts and to deter youth from reoffending when a comprehensive delivery service model is employed with the following components at the onset of a youth’s arrival to a correctional facility: (a) addressing the unique needs, attributes, and barriers and promoting self-determination skills; (b) assisting with enhancing employment opportunities; (c) promoting social skills training; (d) creating pathways to education; (e) developing rigorous wraparound service coordination; (f) assisting with housing; and (g) facilitating access to mental health and substance abuse services within the youth’s community (Baltodano et al., 2005; Griller Clark & Mathur,
2010; Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009). Transitional services provided at this capacity are more likely to produce positive results through the implementation of a transitional specialist and a tracking system to monitor the youth’s progress several months after being released from a juvenile detention facility (Abrams, 2006; Baltodano et al., 2005; Griller Clark & Mathur, 2010; Griller Clark et al., 2011). The approaches discussed in this section to reduce juvenile recidivism call for policy reform (Aos et al., 2006; Griller Clark et al., 2011; Nellis & Hooks Wayman, 2009).

Public Policy

There is a national urgency to address the cost and deteriorating life outcomes of youth involved in the JJS through public policy (Aos et al., 2006; Ashford & LeCroy, 1990; Cottle et al., 2001; Crandall, 2015; Gellis, 2001; Goldkind, 2011; Hall, 2014; Holman & Ziedenburg, 2006; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Putniņš, 2005). Sells et al. (2012) noted that 66% of juvenile detainees have a rearrest rate of 33% within a few years of being released. Findings from current research suggest orchestrating effective measures to deter youth from recidivism by implementing the following strategies: establishing effective prevention and intervention services across various systems, employing screening tools to evaluate the risk, safety, and needs of youth involved in the JJS, and concurrently planning for their reentry back into the community upon the initial detention within a correctional facility (Abrams, 2006; Aos et al., 2006; Bradford, 2016; Freudenberg et al., 2010). Researchers have postulated that employing such methods alleviates the cost of juvenile incarceration, rehabilitates and improves the well-being of youth involved in the JJS, and reduces the likelihood of future recidivism.
(Baltodano et al., 2005; Griller Clark & Mathur, 2010; Griller Clark et al., 2011; Mathur & Griller Clark, 2013; Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009).

Multisystemic Therapy

In 2015, approximately 71,923 youth were arrested in the state of California; 29.7% received charges for a felony, 58.2% received charges for a misdemeanor, and 12.1% received charges for a status offense (California Department of Justice, 2015). Goldkind (2011), Gonsoulin and Read (2011), Sinclair et al. (2003), and Klietz (2007) asserted that evidence-based practices aimed to promote multisystemic therapy along with the facilitation of community engagement by social workers and cross-training programs are effective in reducing juvenile recidivism. Without these systems in place, communities will continue to deteriorate due to the devastating effects of youth crime (California Department of Justice, 2015; Greenberg & Rosenheck, 2008). Furthermore, such efforts are cost effective, promote crime reduction, and are beneficial to improving the economy (Gonsoulin & Read, 2011; Klietz, 2007; Sinclair et al., 2003).

Progressive Alternative Education Programs

According to the National Center for Education Statistics, there are approximately 10,300 public alternative education schools in the United States that serve 645,500 students (Carver & Lewis, 2010). These alternative education schools within the United States are encouraged to provide pupil services within the following modalities: (a) regular attendance instruction, (b) counseling, (c) social skills and support, (d) career education, (e) behavioral services, and (f) other services (Carver & Lewis, 2010). Compared to other states in the country, California is the only one noted to provide only one service in alternative education: social skills and support (Porowski et al., 2014).
Although California established social skills curriculums in alternative education schools and juvenile facilities, along with support to improve student motivation, promote self-directed learning, and establish collaborative learning, research has revealed the need for more progressive efforts (Foley & Pang, 2006; Porowski et al., 2014; Zolkoski, Bullock, & Gable, 2016).

Maillet (2017) established a model for alternative education programs to adapt based on the following six elements: (a) active and creative instruction, (b) service learning opportunities, (c) accelerated student learning, (d) student relationship building, (e) individualized instruction, and (f) the utilization of college and community members. Implications from research have asserted the need for alternative education programs to implement program models that promote successful student outcomes within the contexts of education, employment readiness, community engagement, parental involvement, and skills to collaborate effectively with the community (Foley & Pang, 2006). Such factors are prone to be associated with resilience for students who are exiting from alternative education programs (Zolkoski et al., 2016).

Zolkoski et al. (2016) contended that there is a lack of studies on the resiliency among youth who have graduated from an alternative education program. After conducting a qualitative study on the factors associated with student resilience and obtaining the perspectives of graduates of alternative education programs, Zolkoski et al. discovered three protective factors that deterred youth from reengaging in negative behaviors and helped improve their life outcomes as they entered into adulthood. The protective factors identified were (a) compassionate teachers, (b) a supportive and positive learning environment, and (c) small class sizes (Zolkoski et al., 2016). As the
practice of promoting resiliency in alternative education emerges (Zolkoski et al., 2016), historical literature notes the importance of providing opportunities to teach self-regulation skills to students in educational settings (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014; Toering, Elferink-Gemser, Jonker, van Heuvelen, & Visscher, 2012; Ward & Gannon, 2006).

**Self-Regulation Theory**

Self-regulation involves the process of exercising self-control over one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Forkner, 2010). Zimmerman’s model of self-regulation consists of three phases: (a) performance phase, (b) self-reflection phase, and (c) forethought phase (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014; see Figure 2). Self-regulation is a term that is used interchangeably with self-control (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Forkner, 2010; Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014; S. M. Zimmerman, Phelps, & Lerner, 2008). Researchers have concluded that a lack of self-regulation and a lack of self-control are descriptive characteristics of juvenile delinquency (Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Forkner, 2010).

Cleary, Callan, and Zimmerman (2012) claimed that self-regulation applied in educational learning environments supports students with gaining control over their thought process, behavior, social setting, and ambition to improve their learning outcomes. Similarly, S. M. Zimmerman et al. (2008) found that self-regulation has a significant impact on positive youth development (PYD). PYD accentuates that youth and adolescents have strong innate attributes, have the potential to be successful, and may achieve healthy development when all three phases of the self-regulation theory are applied. Furthermore, youth and adolescents who acquire PYD have the skills and
capability to desist from risky behaviors, decrease mental health challenges, and reduce delinquent behavior (S. M. Zimmerman et al., 2008).

Forkner (2010) conducted a study on the impact of self-control and social connection on recidivism and depicted that a lack of self-control is a contributing factor to criminal behavior and has an impact on recidivism. Aforementioned literature highlighted the alarming number of youth involved in the JJS with severe mental health diagnoses and the need to provide multifaceted approaches of effective pupil services within alternative education settings beyond the context of social skills trainings in efforts to prevent youth from having burgeoning contact with the JJS (Abram et al., 2004; Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Grisso & Barnum, 2000; Porowski et al., 2014; Teplin et al., 2002).
Meeting the Unique Needs of Alternative Education Students

According to Porowski et al. (2014), meeting the needs of students in alternative education is completely dependent on how states define alternative education. In 1998, approximately 20 states had established a definition of alternative education. By 2002, 48 states had enacted alternative education legislation while 34 states reported having a formal definition (Aron, 2003; Aron & Zweig, 2003; Katsiyannis & Williams, 1998; Lehr, Tan, & Ysseldyke, 2008; Sable, Plotts, & Mitchell, 2010). Aron (2003) noted that a standard definition of alternative education is nonexistent due to the lucidity of common policies and legislation, the various program types and environments, and the demographic population of at-risk youth who are served in alternative education settings.

The most common perspective of alternative education is found in current literature within the context of four program domains: (a) service type, (b) location of operation, (c) structure, and (d) what is being offered (Aron & Zweig, 2003). At the federal level, alternative education is defined as

a public elementary/secondary school that addresses needs of students that typically cannot be met in a regular school, provides nontraditional education, serves as an adjunct to a regular school, or falls outside the categories of regular, special, or vocational education. (Sable et al., 2010, p. C-1)

For the past decade, alternative education has been serving a large number of students involved in the JJS (Foley & Pang, 2006). Alternative education has been portrayed to play an important role in transforming and meeting the unique educational needs of this student population (Foley & Pang, 2006; Horton, 2013; Weist et al., 2006). There are generally three types of alternative education schools: Type I is...
choice with a programmatic theme for content, Type II is “last-chance schools” that focus on behavior modification, and Type III is schools with a rehabilitative or remediation emphasis.

From the 1990s until the 21st century, researchers postulated that the focal point of meeting the unique needs of alternative education students rests on having a program structure with reduced student-to-teacher ratios, individualized academic instruction, and supportive environments (Coffey & Gemignani, 1994; Macomber et al., 2010). Given that the demographics (foster youth; homeless youth; teen parents; undocumented and unaccompanied youth; youth who are truant; expelled youth; and youth with emotional, physical, behavioral, and intellectual disabilities) of the student population have changed, 21st-century alternative education programs that meet the unique needs of students have emphasized the importance of implementing evidence-based practices within the context of reentry programs in addition to mental health and substance abuse services (Aalsma et al., 2015; Coffey & Gemignani, 1994; Lancaster et al., 2011; Macomber et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2014; Taliento & Pearson, 1994; Velasquez & Lyle, 1985). As such, current research has illustrated that this type of program design promotes resiliency, addresses the associated risk and protective factors that are related to juvenile recidivism, and meets the unique needs of students who are exiting from an alternative education program (Ferrante, 2013; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Gavazzi et al., 2005; Porowski et al., 2014; Zolkoski et al., 2016).

**Summary**

After reviewing the literature, it is evident that the prevalence of risk factors associated with delinquent behavior is strongly associated with juvenile recidivism. The
heavy presence of mental health and substance abuse is becoming unbearable, and juvenile detention facilities are faced with the daunting challenge of serving the unique needs of this population (Garner, 2016; Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Grisso, 2008; Grisso & Barnum, 2000; Ho et al., 2007; McCuish, 2017; Racz et al., 2015; Underwood & Washington, 2016; Young et al., 2007). According to Heilburn et al. (2005),

The link between mental health difficulties and youthful offending is important in considering treatment response, as there is growing evidence that mental health difficulties are linked directly and indirectly to later offending behavior and delinquency. (p. 3)

With regard to substance abuse, Carter (2012) stated,

Substance abuse often increases recidivism and reflects a deeper involvement in the juvenile justice system. . . . Substance-abusing children in the juvenile justice system usually exhibit a multitude of psychosocial and clinical problems. These various problems can make youthful offenders a challenging subset to treat. Many of these children come from economically disadvantaged homes. Moreover, it is common for these children to struggle with a co-occurring psychiatric disorder. Though treating youthful offenders for substance abuse can be challenging, the return on society’s investment is worth the effort. (para. 1, 8)

The literature also discussed how the risk factors within the context of demographics and family structures are often associated with recidivism and the prolonged overrepresentation of African American youth, female youth, and youth with intellectual disabilities in the JJS.
Barnert et al. (2015) interviewed 20 youth detained in a detention facility in Los Angeles, California. The results of the interviews revealed that youth indicated that the chaotic and dangerous experiences within their homes, neighborhoods, and schools failed to meet their needs, and therefore, the youth found it easier to be out on the streets, which eventually led them to a path of incarceration. Furthermore, youth reported a connection between school and jail. Some found this path to be easier. From the perspective of youth involved in the JJS,

Probation’s not making it easier because now we have more pressure. You don’t have a C or above, that’s a violation. You miss school, violation; late to school, violation; not listening, violation. Anything you do, you come back. From here, you can only graduate. I mean, from here Juvenile Hall, then county jail [for adults], and you end up making your way to the Big House [state or federal prison]. You could break that cycle . . . but most people would rather take the easy route: messing up. Being a hard worker and living a good life is a hard life. (Barnert et al., 2015, p. 1368)

In light of this perspective, youth also reported that they need to have three essential things in order to keep them from falling into the path toward reincarceration: (a) love, (b) attention, and (c) discipline and control (Barnert et al., 2015). This is relatively similar to at-risk youth needing to be emotionally and socially connected to their parent(s), mentor, and community (Barnert et al., 2015; Voisin et al., 2005).

The literature also revealed that social connectedness, the process of emerging adulthood, and self-regulation are important elements to consider when working with youth prior to implementing either preventative or intervention methods (Arnett, 2004;
Baumeister & Vohs, 2004; Cleary et al., 2012; Denney & Connor, 2016). These factors are also conducive to deterring youth from reoffending (Ferrante, 2013; Gavazzi et al., 2005; Voisin et al., 2005).

The review of the literature highlighted research that supported the need for multifaceted approaches to meeting the systemic needs of youth involved in the JJS while at the same time employing evidence-based practices such as multisystemic therapy, reentry programs with an emphasis on transition planning, and community engagement in order to deter youth from repetitive incarceration. Researchers have asserted the need for policy reform and the importance of assessing the safety, needs, and risk of youth as soon as they come into contact with the juvenile court to ensure that services for this population are individualized according to the needs of the youth (Abrams, 2006; Aos et al., 2006; Bradford, 2016; Freudenberg et al., 2010). According to research, these efforts are most likely to occur through collaboration among legislators, community leaders, and public education (Aos et al., 2006; Ashford & LeCroy, 1990; Cottle et al., 2001; Crandall, 2015; Gellis, 2001; Goldkind, 2011; Hall, 2014; Holman & Ziedenburg, 2006; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Putniņš, 2005).

In conclusion, the literature provided an overview of alternative education and the type of programs used to meet the needs of youth involved in the JJS. Researchers have concluded that meeting the unique needs of these students aids in improving their well-being and prevents future recidivism as they exit from an alternative education program (Ferrante, 2013; Freiburger & Burke, 2011; Gavazzi et al., 2005; Porowski et al., 2014; Zolkoski et al., 2016).
**Synthesis Matrix**

A synthesis matrix (Appendix A) was formulated based on the review of the literature to create a semistructured, open-ended interview. The matrix provided a robust overview of the similarity of research studied according to the authors referenced.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This chapter provides an overview of the methods and processes utilized to identify and describe the predictors of juvenile recidivism. The chapter begins with a restatement of the purpose and research questions prior to discussing the appropriateness of the research design. The chapter includes a description of the population, which consisted of young adults 18 years old and older who either were exiting or would soon be exiting from an alternative education program. Processes employed to develop the data collection instrument and ensure validity and reliability are referenced. Data collection and participant protection measures are presented followed by data analysis procedures. Finally, the limitations of the study are discussed followed by a chapter summary.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this descriptive, qualitative study was to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education in Northern California. A second purpose was to explore the types of support provided by alternative schools and the perceived importance of the support to avoid recidivism according to adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education.
Research Questions

In order to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education, this research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?

2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?

Research Design

After considering multiple methods, one emerged as most appropriate for this study: a qualitative, descriptive, grounded, and exploratory study. The researcher used a qualitative, descriptive method to identify and describe the stories voluntarily shared by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated young adult students 18 years of age or older from two alternative education programs. These stories were recorded by the researcher, transcribed, and coded into themes and messages (Bailey, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). Furthermore, the researcher employed a grounded theory approach that was related to the social phenomenon studied (Bailey, 2004; Patton, 2015).
The grounded theory approach was appropriate for the study given that the disciplinary root of the social phenomenon (i.e., the predictors of juvenile recidivism) derives from social sciences (Patton, 2015). According to Patton (2015), grounded theory development is the hallmark of research using qualitative methods in order to justify the phenomenon being studied. Patton added, “grounded theory focuses on the process of generating theory rather than a particular theoretical content” (p. 125). Grounded theory was used to generate a framework for developing a coding procedure to help implement structure in the data analysis process of this research (Patton, 2015).

When looking at the meaning of the central problem of the predictors of juvenile recidivism, categories were developed through the use of axial coding to create a storyline through the voices of young adults who were exiting from an alternative education program (Bailey, 2004; Patton, 2015).

The rationale for the use of grounded theory is that the researcher conducted fieldwork observations and in-person interviews in order to describe and identify the reason for the social phenomenon, that is, the predictors of juvenile recidivism. The voices of these young adults served to create a narrative and detailed story about their identities, the environments they came from, and how these factors related to their identified needs in order to transition back into their community.

**Population**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a population as the total group of individuals, objects, or events with similar characteristics to which the results of the research can be generalized. For this study, the target population was approximately 62,005 students enrolled in alternative education programs in approximately 261 schools.
within the state of California who had been detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated (California Department of Education, 2016). The sample that is selected from a population is known as the sampling frame (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This study’s sampling frame consisted of adult students 18 years of age and older who were detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated and either were exiting or would soon be exiting from an alternative education program in Northern California.

**Sample**

This study used nonprobability purposive sampling of selected school districts with alternative education programs within the state of California in order to garner information-rich cases for an in-depth analysis of the social phenomenon without having to generalize every case (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), when random selection of study participants does not occur, researchers use nonprobability sampling. This study used purposive sampling, a form of nonprobability sampling, to select participants who met predetermined criteria (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) claimed that the number of participants needed in order to reach saturation for a qualitative study is often around 12 to 15. Therefore, the researcher selected 12 participants for the study. The researcher contacted the site principals of selected schools to recommend students who met the criteria. The 12 participants were selected from two different Northern California school districts (four participants from Oakland Unified School District and eight from Nevada County Office of Education, Nevada City) in Alameda and Nevada City Counties that offer alternative
education programs for students 18 years old and older who have been involved with the juvenile justice system (JJS).

The sampling frame for this study included 12 students 18 years of age and older who had been involved in the JJS and attended alternative education programs in two different Northern California school districts. While there were no criteria for the selection of the districts, the criteria for students to participate in this study were as follows:

- At the time of the study, each participant was or had recently been a student in an alternative education program.
- At the time of the study, each participant was or had previously been involved with the JJS (having been detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated).
- At the time of the study, each participant was graduating or had recently graduated from an alternative education program.

**Instrumentation**

The instrumentation for this qualitative study consisted of semistructured, open-ended interviews with each participant. According to Patton (2015), the conceptual framework for open-ended interview questions consists of the following elements:

(a) experience/behaviors, (b) opinions and values, (c) feelings and emotions,
(d) knowledge, (e) sensory input, and (f) background and demographics. Interviews were appropriate for this study given the research design and the goal of generating data that would either answer or illuminate the research questions (Patton, 2015).

Qualitative research is exploratory and involves asking research questions beginning with *what* or *how* (ChrisFlipp, 2014). These questions provide structure to the
interview questions. Rubin (2012) claimed that semistructured interviews consist of main questions, follow-up questions, and probing questions in order to gain a better understanding of the information conveyed by the interviewees as they answer the interview questions.

The researcher used an expert panel to help establish the validity for the interview questions. Three experts who had earned a doctoral degree and had experience in qualitative research along with designing interview questions were used to validate the instrument questions. In addition, one expert from this panel possessed education and expertise in the JJS.

Validity

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), validity is the degree of congruence between the explanations of phenomena and the realities of the world. In efforts to ensure validity within this study, the researcher tested for descriptive validity and interpretive validity. According to Maxwell (1992), descriptive validity refers to the factual accuracy of the data. In order to ensure the factual accuracy of the data, the researcher checked the students’ transcripts, verification of student enrollment, and copies of diplomas as available to ensure that students were 18 years of age and older and that they either were exiting or would soon be exiting from an alternative education program.

In essence, interpretive validity is the match between the meaning attributed to participants’ behaviors and the actual participants’ perspective (Maxwell, 1992). The method used to achieve interpretive validity consisted of using words and phrases of the students studied and evaluating the efficacy of the study based on their perspective.
The researcher conducted semistructured, in-person interviews consisting of open-ended questions with 12 participants. Other strategies that the researcher used in order to ensure validity included (a) conducting prolonged and persistent field work to initiate data analysis and determine a match between findings and the participants’ reality, (b) using participant language and verbatim accounts to obtain literal and detailed descriptions of people and situations, and (c) mechanically recording data through the use of a tape recorder to ensure the accuracy of each participant’s statement (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

**Instrument Reliability**

Triangulation was used to establish internal reliability of the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). This approach allowed the researcher to cross-validate common themes and patterns across different sources and situations (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The researcher field tested the instrument and received feedback from a qualified observer to prevent any bias. The observer had a doctoral degree from an accredited university and experience with interview data collection. The observer provided feedback based on the observation regarding the type of interaction displayed by the researcher that could have the potential to influence the interviewees’ responses. Given the expert’s educational background as a doctoral graduate and professional experience in conducting interviews, the feedback was used to revise the interview protocol and the interview questions as needed in order to complement the study (Patrick et al., 2011).
Data Collection

Approval from the Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) was required in order to ensure this study met all required ethical standards. Creswell and Plano (2011) stated, “Permission needs to be sought from multiple individuals and levels in organizations, such as individuals in charge of sites, from people providing the data and from campus-based institutional review boards (IRBs) to collect data from individuals and sites” (p. 175). The BUIRB is made up of faculty members who are experts in the field of qualitative research and review research proposals for the protection of human subjects. All participants were given an informed consent form to complete prior to the start of the research (Appendix B).

For the purpose of this study, the data collection method consisted of face-to-face, semistructured, 30-minute individual interviews with adult students 18 years of age and older who either were exiting or would soon be exiting from an alternative education program. Observations were recorded in a log after each interview. Important artifacts were collected, filed, and stored in an electronic format as supporting documentation for the study. An audio recorder was used to record the interview with each participant. The audio recorder, observation logs, and research artifacts were stored in a locked file cabinet in order to protect the privacy and confidentiality of the participants. Furthermore, the researcher obtained written informed consent and approval from each participant prior to conducting each interview (see Appendix B). The researcher explained the purpose, that the research posed no harm and minimal risk to participants, and that participation was voluntary (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interviews took place at the students’ designated school sites in a confidential environment.
Approval from the IRB and leaders of each school district was obtained prior to conducting interviews with participants.

The researcher used Microsoft Excel, a qualitative assessment tool, to code and analyze the data. Upon the collection of data, axial and selective coding was also employed. After the data were coded, a thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the themes and frequencies in order to make sense of the data. This consisted of highlighting key quotes, coding the quotes, and sorting the quotes into themes (Patton, 2002). The aforementioned types of data were appropriate for the study given the precise descriptions of the data analysis techniques that were implemented within the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

**Protecting Participants**

A researcher’s topic of interest may invoke innate personal bias if the intent of the research is not thoroughly examined (Mehra, 2002). Mehra (2002) asserted that “what we believe in determines what we want to study” (p. 8). Personal biases can derive from an individual’s value and belief system in addition to his or her socioeconomic status, age, race, ethnicity, and gender. If these factors are not reflected on, unprecedented criticism can occur. Therefore, the researcher examined the topic of interest and meditated on the following questions adapted from Mehra (2002) in order to be objective and avoid personal bias: (a) Is the topic of study really research? (b) What kind of knowledge will the research generate? (c) Will the findings of the research be generalizable to the population of study? Asking these questions helped the researcher avoid harboring innate assumptions, beliefs, or feelings as she moved forward with conducting the research.
As a precautionary approach, the researcher looked for personal opinions, emotions, and reactions that could potentially harm the outcome of the study. This required the researcher to become more aware of biases through self-discovery (Mehra, 2002). Through self-discovery, the researcher had the opportunity to search her internal nature in order to deal with any subjective and personal bias in an honest and ethical manner (Mehra, 2002).

Other safeguards that aided in preventing research bias consisted of (a) recording detailed field notes, (b) keeping a subjective journal, and (c) keeping the emic and etic voices separate (Mehra, 2002). First, using detailed field notes allowed the researcher to present unadulterated data. Presenting tainted data composed of implicit, subjective, and personal bias poses an ethical dilemma. Second, keeping a subjective journal helped the researcher track her emotions, interpretations, and perspectives in order to avoid unwarranted judgment and criticism of participants within the study. Third, keeping the emic and etic voices separate ensured a balanced perspective while interpreting data (Mehra, 2002).

In conclusion, these strategies combined are ethically sound and prevented the researcher from subjectively interpreting the participants’ results. It was the researcher’s motivation to be ethically responsible to publish and conduct scholarly written research free of implicit, subjective, and personal bias. Unaddressed personal biases in research pose an ethical dilemma and influence the outcome of the study because the findings do not illustrate an accurate account of data interpretation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Mehra, 2002).
Data Analysis

Microsoft Excel for qualitative research was used for data analysis. The first research question asked, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?” Clustering and categorizing data, examining concepts and themes, and defining relationships between and among concepts were techniques used to describe and identify the perceived importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015).

The second research question asked, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?” Again, clustering and categorizing data, examining concepts and themes, and defining relationships between and among concepts were techniques used to describe and identify the perceived importance of support needed to avoid recidivism (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015).

All of the data collected were transcribed into Microsoft Word. Data coding was primarily facilitated by the researcher and validated by another research expert from the dissertation committee in order to ensure the coherence of coding judgment and to establish intercoder reliability (Bailey, 2004; Patton, 2015).

Interrater Reliability

An interrater reliability process was used to help establish the validity for the development of the themes and patterns through the analysis by the researcher. In
designing the data collection, the individual interviews consisted of open-ended questions and observations through the means of audio recording participants within their current setting (Patton, 2015). The responses obtained from each participant were organized into common themes and codes. According to Patton (2015), interrater reliability in qualitative research allows multiple individuals to analyze the same data to “discuss what they see in the data, share insight, and consider what emerges from their different perspectives” (p. 667). The interrater reliability coding process was supported by utilizing an individual who successfully completed a doctoral qualitative study and who developed his/her own codes after completing an independent review of the collected data.

The interrater reliability coding process was supported by utilizing an individual who successfully completed a doctoral qualitative study and had experience with analyzing interview transcripts and coding through the use of Microsoft Excel. In order to independently analyze and code data to establish more consistency in the findings, the researcher used interrater reliability (Armstrong, Gosling, Weinman, & Marteau, 1997; Morse, 1997; Patton, 2015). The independent analyses of samples of the data were compared and discussed among the researcher and the expert panel in order to make adjustments to increase the reliability of the analysis. A peer researcher analyzed 10% of the coding from this study and the description of the study’s themes in order to increase the research reliability (Patton, 2015). The final themes that emerged from the data analysis are presented in Chapter IV.
Limitations

There were four limitations found within this study:

1. The researcher used semistructured interviews filtered through the interviewees. This made it difficult to determine if the interviewees had the same perspective as the researcher related to the questions (Bailey, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015).

2. There is a possibility that interviewees gave untruthful answers, and reliance on the assumption that all interviewees told the truth is unpredictable (Bailey, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015).

3. An overrepresentation of a specific ethnicity of participants had the potential to create bias, and the sample may not have been a true representation of a diversified population for generalization.

4. Due to convenience sampling this study was limited to African American and Hispanic participants.

Summary

Chapter III discussed the population and sample in consideration of the study’s research design, purpose, and research questions. Formulation of the data collection instrument, processes, and participant protection measures were reviewed. Furthermore, the data analysis method and study limitations were presented. The following chapters examine the results of this study in addition to its implications and recommendations.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the responses of 12 students from alternative education programs located in Northern California (Oakland and Nevada City). The researcher facilitated semistructured interviews for which a qualitative interview protocol was used in efforts to obtain the perceptions of the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived importance of the support to avoid recidivism according to adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education. The following sections provide an overview of the study’s purpose, research questions, and research methods in conjunction with the data collection procedures. The study’s population, sample, and demographic data are also discussed, followed by a presentation of the collected data from each interviewee by research question in which themes and patterns addressing the research questions are discussed. The conclusion of this chapter summarizes the presentation of the themes and patterns from the 12 study participants.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this descriptive, qualitative study was to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education in Northern California. A second purpose was to explore the types of support provided by alternative schools and the perceived importance of the support to
avoid recidivism according to adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education.

**Research Questions**

In order to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education, this research was guided by the following questions:

1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?

2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?

**Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher facilitated semistructured interviews utilizing a qualitative, descriptive method to identify and describe the stories voluntarily shared by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated young adult students 18 years of age or older from two alternative education programs. These stories were recorded by the researcher, transcribed, and coded into themes and messages (Bailey, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015).
Qualitative Interviews

Alternative education students 18 years of age and older from Northern California were invited to participate in this research study through the recruitment of their school principals and administrators. Agreement from 12 participants was obtained to participate in a semistructured qualitative interview to develop a thorough understanding of their perspectives of the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education and the perceived importance of the types of support needed to avoid recidivism.

The researcher developed and implemented a qualitative interview protocol for all data collection efforts. The interview protocol consisted of 13 primary questions tailored around two research questions in efforts to specifically address the areas of the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix C contains the full researcher-generated qualitative interview protocol including the two research questions and the 13 primary questions (see Appendix D).

Study participants were recruited via e-mail. The recruitment e-mail consisted of a brief introduction of the researcher, the research study, and the purpose of the study. The solicitation also contained a study participation flyer. A sample study participation flyer is contained in Appendix E. Following receipt of an e-mail from each student stating interest in study participation, the researcher scheduled interviews with the participating students.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face at the students’ school sites. At the time of each interview, prior to commencement of the qualitative interview protocol, the
student was provided with a copy of the qualitative research informed consent form (Appendix B), the Brandman University Participant’s Bill of Rights (Appendix F), and semistructured qualitative interview protocol questions (Appendices C and D). Upon completion of the informed consent form by the researcher and study participant, the semistructured qualitative interview commenced.

A Samsung smartphone audio-recording device was used to record each of the semistructured qualitative interviews. Upon completion of each semistructured qualitative interview, the audio recording from the primary recorder was transcribed by the researcher. The researcher sent the transcriptions to the participants via e-mail in order to allow them to review the thoughts and ideas the researcher captured for accuracy.

**Coding of Study Data**

Upon the confirmation of accuracy of the transcriptions, each interview participant was assigned a participant number (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2, . . . Participant 12), and then the de-identified interview transcripts were uploaded into Excel for subsequent coding of themes and patterns. Axial and selective coding was also employed to analyze the data. After the data were coded, a thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the themes and frequencies in order to make sense of the data. This consisted of highlighting key quotes, coding the quotes, and sorting the quotes into themes (Patton, 2002). Data coding was primarily facilitated by the researcher and validated by another research expert from the dissertation committee in order to ensure the coherence of coding judgment and to establish intercoder reliability (Bailey, 2004; Patton, 2015).
To ensure interrater reliability, each transcript was coded by a secondary researcher with qualitative data experience and an earned doctoral degree. The independent analyses of samples of the data were compared and discussed among the researcher and the expert panel in order to make adjustments to increase the reliability of the analysis. A peer researcher analyzed 10% of the coding from this study and the description of the study’s themes in order to increase the research reliability (Patton, 2015).

**Population**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) defined a population as the total group of individuals, objects, or events with similar characteristics to which the results of the research can be generalized. For this study, the target population was approximately 62,005 students enrolled in alternative education programs in approximately 261 schools within the state of California who had been detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated (California Department of Education, 2016).

**Sample**

This study used nonprobability purposive sampling of two selected school districts with alternative education programs within the state of California in order to garner information-rich cases for an in-depth analysis of the social phenomenon without having to generalize every case (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). The sampling frame for this study included 12 students 18 years of age and older who had been involved in the juvenile justice system (JJS) and attended alternative education programs in two different Northern California school districts.
Demographic Data

A description of the participant demographics is presented in Table 3. Seven of the 12 alternative education students who participated in this study were male, and five were female. Two male alternative education students identified as African American, five female alternative education students identified as Mexican, and five male alternative education students identified as Mexican. With reference to age, eight students were 18 years old, with the remaining four students reporting to be 19, 20, 21, and 22 years old.

Table 3

*Summary Description of Research Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant no.</th>
<th>School district</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nevada City</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nevada City</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Nevada City</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nevada City</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Nevada City</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nevada City</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nevada City</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nevada City</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Presentation and Analysis of Data

The following sections provide the Microsoft Excel data analysis results from the 12 semistructured qualitative interviews. The data analysis of the responses received from all 12 participants in reference to the research questions is presented in this section.
The quotes from each participant are verbatim. The results of the data analysis begin with Participant 1.

**Participant 1**

Participant 1 was a 20-year-old male alternative education student from Oakland, California, who identified his ethnicity as African American. Table 4 provides a summary of Participant 1’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

**Research Question 1.** The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”

Participant 1 stated that a program providing kids with something to do after high school can help prevent youth from reoffending. Participant 1 identified the necessity for schools to implement programs in efforts to address juvenile recidivism. Participant 1 identified his perception as the following:

I think maybe if schools was to provide a program for kids to do something after high school or either, just in general, like, to keep in touch with the kids.

The analysis of Participant 1’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.
Table 4

Participant 1: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?</td>
<td>• Extracurricular activities can prevent me from reoffending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mental health services are not helpful and cannot help prevent youth incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drug use has a mild effect and contributes to youth incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My family was depressed during and after my incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family and friends are important in my efforts of not to reoffend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My family background deters me from youth incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Yes, personal decisions to drop out of school affect a student’s level of education that can contribute to youth incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?</td>
<td>• Personal support from the school through counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School support with building relationships with school staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers by actively listening to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through positive and effective communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Education on substance abuse and weapon laws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Substance abuse. Participant 1 identified the use of “hard drugs” as a perceived predictor of juvenile incarceration. This finding is similar to the finding from McCuish (2017), who revealed that street drugs such as crack, crack cocaine, and heroin are commonly detected among youth involved in the JJS upon their first encounter with law enforcement and at the time of incarceration. Participant 1 stated,

I don’t think like weed can help contribute, but I think that other drugs like Xanax and Percocet and what they call cough syrup, and all that. I think that help
contributes ’cause I seen it firsthand. Like Xans [Xanax] can make somebody want to fight or wanna go hit a lick [rob somebody].

**Family dynamics.** Participant 1 stated that family and friends are important to his efforts not to reoffend. Participant 1 stated that being a young father reminds him of his responsibility to be there for his daughter rather than engage in an act that can cause him to become incarcerated. Participant 1 described his own experiences of having a child and witnessing a friend’s incarceration that have deterred him from reoffending. Participant 1 stated,

Well right now, I recently just had a little kid. I had a daughter. . . . So, that’s keeping me from doing anything stupid to the point where I just don’t wanna go outside and go hit [rob somebody]. Oh, uh, I think a lot of people have contributed ’cause, uh um, I live with somebody right now; [participant’s friend] went to jail, on like—I don’t wanna say his business, that’s why—but he went to jail because of interactions with another female. And so, I know what she’s going through, and I know what her family has been through. And how his little brother reacted to it and both his little brother and little sister, and they was scared from it just to see their older brother going to jail. Looking at that would want to make me want to change my life.

**Level of education.** Participant 1 reflected on the feedback he received from his “OGs” about the importance of staying in school. Participant 1 equated the importance of an individual’s level of education to dropping out of high school and the impact it has on youth incarceration. Participant 1 stated,
Well, I know a lot of OGs, they went here. Actually, a lot of my friends went here. So, I know firsthand how they act and how they move and how they tell me that, “I wish I can go back and get my diploma.”

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 1 identified with a trusted individual at his school who is a counselor. Participant 1 stated that alternative education schools need 100 individuals with the same characteristics as this identified counselor. Participant 1 also stated that if the alternative education school had more individuals like the identified counselor, this would prevent a lot of kids from going to jail. Furthermore, Participant 1 identified the theme of social connectedness between teachers, school staff, and students as a perceived support for alternative school students that he considered to be important in order to avoid recidivism.

Voisin et al.’s (2005) study suggested that youth’s view of cultivating healthy relationships with teachers has a significant impact on their behaviors. Participant 1 discussed his experience of how a teacher’s attitude and behavior toward students have an impact on the teacher’s ability to connect with students in efforts to provide them with moral support that is needed to help prevent youth incarceration. Participant 1 stated,

So, I feel as if the teachers should [try] to work on their attitudes instead of keep trying to change the kids. ’Cause that’s not cool. ’Cause a lot of these kids, they don’t even go home. They just go to a street. ’Cause I know for a fact, I’m
homeless damn near right now with a child, and I’m trying to take care of the mother of my child and my child. And I don’t have time to hear your attitude because you’re having a bad day. Just do your job. You know, I ain’t got time to hear that sometimes. So, I feel as if the teachers can work on their attitudes and what they got going on, then the students can do better probably. ’Cause we got some badass students, some students that just can’t help it. I feel as [though] the teachers should work on their attitudes. I’m gonna refer back to [student’s counselor]. They should act like [student’s counselor]. They should at least try to talk to the student. Like pull the student aside and ask the student, “What’s going on?” None of them teachers do that. They just have an issue with the student. But you’re not understanding like, and a lot [of] teachers don’t know here that I have a baby and that I’m damn near homeless, and I don’t got nowhere to go.

Participant 2

Participant 2 was an 18-year-old male alternative education student from Oakland, California, who identified his ethnicity as Mexican, deviating from the ethnic terminology, Hispanic, used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 5 provides a summary of Participant 2’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.
Participant 2: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | • Avoiding negativity can prevent me from reoffending  
• Mental health services are helpful and can help prevent youth incarceration  
• Drug use has a severe effect and contributes to youth incarceration  
• Anger between me and my family occurred during and after incarceration  
• Family and friends are important in my efforts of not to reoffend  
• Perceived gang affiliation in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration  
• Family drug use contributes to youth incarceration  
• Yes, mental health challenges affect a student’s level of education that can contribute to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | • Personal support from the school through counseling  
• Not applicable  
• College placement from school staff, administrators, and policymakers  
• Not applicable  
• Education on the Miranda rights |

**Research Question 1.** The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”

Participant 2 stated that refraining from wearing gang colors could prevent him from reoffending upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 2 identified the necessity to avoid negative situations such as associating with gangs as a perceived important indicator. Participant 2 identified his perception as the following:
Well, first of all, I should stop wearing a lot of red. ’Cause where I live in my area, its red, and obviously that would get me into trouble.

The analysis of Participant 2’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.

**Mental health.** Participant 2 identified mental health challenges as a contributing factor to youth incarceration and emphasized the need for mental health services in efforts to prevent juvenile recidivism. This finding is similar to the finding from Dias et al. (2014) that substance use disorders and adult personality disorders contribute to recidivism. Furthermore, Participant 2 stated,

Yea, I like go every day for counseling, because my brain is messed up since I was a little kid. You know how it is here, my brain is mentally [obscenity]. That’s why, like, I have to take depression pills, like I have depression too, but I just don’t show it because if you show it. . . . It’s not like, yea. It has actually helped me, because back then when I used to be depressed and mad—obviously depression is anger as well—back then, I used to do stupid [obscenity]. I used to do stuff that I should have been dead already or been in jail already. But I realized I woke my [obscenity] up and realized, “What the [obscenity] am I doing?” It’s definitely keeping me from making the decision to reoffend.

**Substance abuse.** Participant 2 identified the use of “hard drugs” as a perceived predictor of juvenile incarceration. As previously stated, this finding is similar to the finding from McCuish (2017) that street drugs such as crack, crack cocaine, and heroin
are commonly detected among youth involved in the JJS upon their first encounter with law enforcement and at the time of incarceration. Participant 2 stated,

I have some friends that would do like cocaine and heroin and then like 2 days later, “Oops, he’s in jail.” Well no [obscenity]! Doing heroin and that stupid [obscenity] and [obscenity] coke and stuff like that, and I don’t hang around those people like that anymore. ’Cause, like, they start acting retarded.

**Family dynamics.** Participant 2 stated that family and friends are important to his efforts not to reoffend. Participant 2 also perceived family drug use to have an impact on youth incarceration. Participant 2 described his experiences of witnessing parents of a friend who used drugs in front of their children. Participant 2 stated,

Yep, ’cause I have like a lot of friends, and I go to their houses, and I’ll see like their mom smoking while the little son is right next to them, smoking weed right there and all that stuff, and then going to their room and having big packs of sacks of weed and stuff like that and the parents right there.

**Gender and ethnicity.** Participant 2 stated that Mexican males have to join a gang in order to get protection in jail. Participant 2 associated his gender, ethnicity, and environment with the tendency to associate with gangs, and he noted that most individuals of his gender and ethnicity within his environment are in gangs and eventually go to jail. Participant 2 stated,

I don’t know about African Americans. But for Mexicans, that’s how it is. Go to jail, actually you have to gang bang. And then there’s the Sorenio, there’s the Borbas, there’s the Mesatrese, you know, all the gang bangers right there. And then there’s the others.
**Level of education.** Participant 2 shared his personal struggle of dealing with current and past trauma, along with a story of an individual incarcerated with mental health challenges, whose behavior as a result of his/her mental health got the individual incarcerated. Participant 2 associated mental health and behavior challenges with an individual’s level of education, which he perceived as having an impact on youth incarceration. This is consistent with the finding from Seigle et al. (2014) that learning disabilities among youth are strongly correlated to behavior dispositions that can lead to frequent encounters with law enforcement. Furthermore, Participant 2 stated,

Like I said, I’ve seen my own partners get shot in front of me, five of my partners get shot in front of me, killed in front of me. Obviously, that [obscenity] up your brain. I’m seeing some of my partners get stabbed to death in front of me. I had one of my friends sacrifice himself for me. Uhh! I don’t want to talk about that right now. But like for instance though, that’s why I say I’m mentally [obscenity], and that’s why my dumb ass takes Xanax, to numb the pain away and to forget about that. Of course, I’m not the only one; there’s other people that maybe have worser than what I’ve seen, so that makes their brain mentally [obscenity], and then that’s when they start doing more drugs. And maybe more people who seen more worse start to do heavier drugs. ’Cause I’ve seen it, I’ve witnessed it. I started this when I was—when I was 8, 9, 10 years old. I grew up too fast, and I kind of regret it too.

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult
students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?"

Participant 2 identified his music as his personal support. Participant 2 was a music artist and stated that music is his therapy. Participant 2 also identified the need for schools to provide counseling in order to avoid reincarceration. Participant 2 further identified the need for school staff, administrators, and policymakers to provide college placement assistance to support students as they exit from alternative education. Furthermore, Participant 2 identified the social-institutional rule of utilizing one’s Miranda rights to avoid recidivism.

Participant 3

Participant 3 was a 19-year-old male alternative education student from Oakland, California, who identified his ethnicity as African American. Table 6 provides a summary of Participant 3’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

Research Question 1. The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”
Table 6
Participant 3: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?</td>
<td>• Extracurricular activities can keep me from reoffending&lt;br&gt;• Mental health services are helpful to prevent youth incarceration&lt;br&gt;• Drug use has a mild effect and contributes to youth incarceration&lt;br&gt;• My family was disappointed during and after my incarceration&lt;br&gt;• Family and friends are important in my efforts to not reoffend&lt;br&gt;• Racial profiling in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration&lt;br&gt;• Not applicable&lt;br&gt;• I don’t think a student’s level of education contributes to youth incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?</td>
<td>• Personal support from the school through counseling&lt;br&gt;• School support through counseling&lt;br&gt;• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers by letting students know their options after they graduate&lt;br&gt;• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through guidance&lt;br&gt;• Implementing positive police community-relations laws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant 3 stated that staying busy and participating in activities such as sports can help prevent him from reoffending. Participant 3 identified the necessity for alternative education schools to implement extracurricular activities to help prevent juvenile recidivism. Participant 3 identified his perception as the following:

Um, I believe staying busy with extra activities such as school, um, sports if you could. Just something to keep us active and not out and about to keep us out of trouble.
The analysis of Participant 3’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.

**Mental health.** Participant 3 identified mental health services as being beneficial to prevent youth incarceration. Participant 3 referred to his personal experience of receiving mental health services to address his challenges with controlling his anger. Participant 3 stated,

> Um, I believe so. I believe youth have a lot of anger problems, and we have nowhere to release our stress on. Um, if we had an adult we can talk to about our problems, when we run into other people of authority, we won’t have such a hard time talking to them because we are used to it. So, I think services might help.

**Substance abuse.** Participant 3 identified drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. This finding is consistent with the current prevalence of drug use among youth who are involved in the JJS (Center for Health and Justice, 2011). Participant 3 identified drugs as having a mild impact on youth incarceration. Participant 3 stated,

> Um, I believe certain types of drugs can contribute to youth incarceration, um because drugs can be addicting, and I think once something is addicting, it just takes over you as a person. I feel like you become what you do.

**Gender and ethnicity.** Participant 3 identified racial profiling as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 3 stated that people of color are perceived as a threat by police officers. This finding is consistent with the finding from Gavazzi et al.
(2005) that the problem of overrepresentation and disproportionality in the JJS continues to be related to ethnicity. Participant 3 stated,

Like I said previously, I believe some police officers don’t know who’s a threat and who’s not, and some just look at all colored people as a threat because they don’t know if we are or not, so they have to assume for the worse and hope for the best.

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 3 identified personal support and school support in the form of counseling as a perceived type of support that is important in order to avoid recidivism. Participant 3 stated that moral support within the context of letting students know what their options are, along with receiving guidance from school staff, administrators, and policymakers, can support students and keep them from reoffending after they exit an alternative education program.

Furthermore, Participant 3 discussed the importance of fostering positive community relationships with law enforcement. Participant 3 identified improving police community relations as another type of support that is important in order to avoid recidivism. Participant 3 stated,

Maybe we have to learn how to interact with people. A lot of people focus on doing their job the right way; they forget about the people who they are working for. You know, the people that they are protecting and serving. Vice versa, we
tend to think about police officers being these Black murderers and, you know, all this other stuff when they actually here, and some of [them] really care about protecting us. So, I feel like if we can get a way where we can get police officers to learn how to talk to people and people learn how to talk to police officers, the community would be way better. I think not much communication actually happens between the police and the community. They just, like, there. We know they are there, but that’s all that happens; they are not part of us. If you ask any student at this school, the police are not a part of our community; they are just in there. I swear, I don’t feel like the police are a part of our community.

Participant 4

Participant 4 was an 18-year-old alternative education student from Oakland, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 7 provides a summary of Participant 4’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

Research Question 1. The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”
Participant 4: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | • Employment can keep me from reoffending  
• Mental health services are helpful and can help prevent youth incarceration  
• Drug use has a severe impact on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration  
• My family was depressed during and after my incarceration  
• Family is important in my efforts not to reoffend  
• Perceived gang affiliation in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration  
• Family gang involvement has a significant impact on youth incarceration  
• I don’t think a student’s level of education contributes to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | • Personal support from the school with employment services  
• Services from school staff, administrators, and policymakers by providing transitional assistance  
• Services from school staff, administrators, and policymakers by providing employment opportunities  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through student check-ins  
• Education on substance abuse and weapon laws |

Participant 4 stated that getting involved in vocational training such as construction and obtaining employment can help prevent him from reoffending upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 4 identified unemployment as a perceived important predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 4 identified his perception as the following:

Most likely, I’m a start doing construction, do something with that. And do a side business with doing security work and stuff like that. . . . I was arrested in
Oakland towards downtown and stuff like that. What can keep me from going back to jail again is just basically having a job and keeping me busy.

The analysis of Participant 4’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.

**Mental health.** Participant 4 identified mental health as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 4 described mental health services as being beneficial to preventing juvenile recidivism. Participant 4 stated,

"Yea, it can help like for those who don’t feel like they don’t have anyone to talk to, you know."

**Substance abuse.** Participant 4 identified the use of “higher drugs” as a perceived predictor of juvenile incarceration. This finding is also similar to the finding from McCuish (2017) that street drugs such as crack, crack cocaine, and heroin are commonly detected among youth involved in the JJS upon their first encounter with law enforcement and at the time of incarceration. Participant 4 stated,

"I feel like if you use higher drugs, I did hear certain cases when people don’t act like themselves, and they do other things and stuff like that . . . probably like cocaine, crystal, and stuff like that. Kind of like they get sick, like for heroin, they might have to go rob someone to get they fix, stuff like that."

**Gender and ethnicity.** Participant 4 identified gender and ethnicity as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 4 postulated that in society, people of color are often targeted by law enforcement. Participant 4 stated,
Yea, I feel like the Black and Brown are the main ones, like, police are like, feel threatened by it. 'Cause I feel like if we’re to like join up like how we do, they feel threatened by it. My mom always told me the worst thing that the government wants to happen is to see someone from the hood or someone that is not really expected to be greater to get a education or just be something in life.

**Family dynamics.** Participant 4 stated that family and friends are important to his efforts not to reoffend. Participant 4 also shared his family’s experience of being depressed both during and after his incarceration. Participant 4 said,

It was kind of hard, to be honest, like when visitation came around, like I’ll see them through the glass and wondered like, “Man.” But there were times they would cry and I wouldn’t cry, and just like, it just felt hard for them to see me like that.

Participant 4 identified family gang involvement as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism that also has a significant impact on youth incarceration. Participant 4 stated,

But I’m not gonna sit here and lie and say I joined my gang because I didn’t have a dad in my life, you feel me. I met my dad when I was 15. But what made me join that is 'cause all my family, like that background like you said, like when it comes to background like that, that’s what you’re around, and that’s what you adapt to. So, like you become accustomed to like be a part of them in a way and like that.

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult
students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 4 perceived employment services as an important type of personal support in order to avoid recidivism. Participant 4 stated that he was focused on graduating from alternative education and moving up and acknowledged that school staff, administrators, and policymakers can support students with employment training and job opportunities to avoid juvenile recidivism. Participant 4 stated,

Well, I believe for kids like foster kids and for kids that’s been in the system that it’s harder to find jobs, they should find them like little branches to help them get jobs, something to keep them busy so that they don’t get attracted back to the streets to do what they do. What some of us may not admit, we’re sometimes scared of doing something we are not used to. You know, like I remember when I went to my first job interview, I’m like, “This is weird; I ain’t never had to interview to do anything,” you feel me? The streets, they accept you as you are. But you gotta change yourself up once you go to a interview and things like that. But yea, stuff like that, help me with a job and just stay occupied.

Participant 4 identified the need for providing moral support to students through basic check-ins. Participant 4 commented,

I feel like, just some kids like they go through depression, so just check in on them and try to make them laugh. Like the counselor, he makes everyone laugh, you know, ’cause you never know if they going through it.
Participant 4 also identified the need to follow gun laws and the conditions of his probation in order to avoid recidivism after he exits from alternative education. Participant 4 stated,

The gun law they got right now. So, they told me too, I found out that my case fell under a misdemeanor so that after my 3 years, they can clear it up, and then once I’m 21, after the 3 years and if the laws haven’t changed, I can still have a handgun under my name. But I’m good; I’m not playing with that. I think what law would scare me not to go back is, right now I’m in 3-year court probation. So, like say if I get caught with another gun, they say I’m a do automatically over a year violation of probation. So, say I get caught with another gun, they say I can be looking like anywhere 1 year to 3 years just for one gun. But what keeps me in line is that I don’t want to be in there for like three birthdays, you feel me? I don’t want [to] be in there for like, for that long; it’s just like a waste of time.

**Participant 5**

Participant 5 was a 21-year-old female alternative education student from Nevada City, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 8 provides a summary of Participant 5’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.
Participant 5: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | • Morals and values can keep me from reoffending after I exit from alternative education  
• Mental health services are helpful to prevent youth incarceration  
• Drug use has a moderate effect on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration  
• Anger between me and my family occurred during and after incarceration  
• Family and friends are very important in my efforts of not to reoffend  
• Perceived gang affiliation in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration  
• Family gang involvement has a significant impact on youth incarceration  
• I don’t think a student’s level of education contributes to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | • Personal support from family  
• School support through counseling  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through verbal recognition  
• Not applicable  
• Education on substance abuse and weapon laws |

**Research Question 1.** The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”

Participant 5 stated that holding on to morals and values that she has been taught, such as respect, could keep her from reoffending upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 5 commented,
Being positive when you leave and keeping those things that they teach here, ’cause they do teach you values, they do teach you respect, they teach you things like that. I think that if you could just keep those things with you, then that would be a good way to just exit the program.

The analysis of Participant 5’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.

**Mental health.** Participant 5 identified the need for counseling services in alternative education. Participant 5 perceived mental health as an important predictor of juvenile recidivism that could be addressed to help with preventing youth incarceration. Participant 5 stated, “I think counseling should be made more open, and I think counseling should be pushed a little bit more on some kids.”

**Substance abuse.** Participant 5 identified drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism and emphasized its impact on youth incarceration. Participant 5 shared her personal experience with drug use and its impact on youth incarceration. Participant 5 stated,

Uh, I believe it does. I have done my fair share of drug abuse. I’m still a recovering drug addict. I’m clean though for 2 years now. The access around here too, it is crazy.

**Family dynamics.** Participant 5 stated that family and friends are important to her efforts not to reoffend. Participant 5 described her experience of growing up in a family with a history of drug use and gang involvement, and she was eventually adopted by
foster parents who supported her with her recovery and provided a healthy standard of living. Participant 5 stated,

As a young child, I’ve noticed that as a child, and you see your older siblings in gangs and things like that, they are like looking up to them. To you as a child, you think it’s cool to be like their family. As far as my family, I don’t live with my family. Growing up with a family that were drug addicts and going in and out of jail, they really didn’t have no meaning for any furthering their life. So, education wasn’t instilled in me as a child. My brother raised me, and he wasn’t going to school himself, so why is he gonna tell us to? So, it came down to, when I moved in with my adoptive parents, they set all these rules for me. I didn’t know what a curfew was. I didn’t know what the word meant. I was just like, “What are you talking about?” They showed me a healthy lifestyle, a healthy relationship even, like they showed me what life should be like and how you can enjoy life without substance abuse and without all the in and out of jail. My mom taught me very well, like, “You have a good head on your shoulder, so don’t waste it.” I did drugs for 2 years, and one day, it came to me one day: “I was never meant to do this.”

**Gender and ethnicity.** Participant 5 identified gender and ethnicity as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism within the context of gang affiliation. Participant 5 stated that based on their specific gender and ethnicity, individuals are generally placed within specific locations of a jail during their time of incarceration. Participant 5 stated,

Yes, one of my friends, he’s Mexican, and when they arrested him, they sent him in the general population. But when you’re White and don’t have gang-related
tattoos, they will put you with the gang members. If you’re Black, they will put you with the Black people.

Like that’s how it works. The gangs run it, and they don’t want to put you with people who want to kill you.

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 5 identified personal support from family, counseling services, and moral support as the types of support she perceived would be important to avoid recidivism. Participant 5 stated that verbal recognition and checking in on students are important in addition to obeying all laws to avoid recidivism. Participant 5 stated,

Rules for me really set your foundation, like where you start at and where you’re gonna end at. . . . The rules are there to protect you and to protect everyone else that is around. Just listen to the police officer and cooperate.

**Participant 6**

Participant 6 was an 18-year-old male alternative education student from Nevada City, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 9 provides a summary of Participant 6’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2,
and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

Table 9

Participant 6: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | • Personal support can prevent me from reoffending  
• Mental health services are helpful and can help prevent youth incarceration  
• Drug use has a severe effect on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration  
• My family was disappointed during and after my incarceration  
• Family and friends are very important in my efforts of not to reoffend  
• Differential treatment in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration  
• History of family incarceration has a significant impact on youth incarceration  
• Yes, mental health challenges affect a student’s level of education that can contribute to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | • Motivation through counseling  
• School support through motivational counseling  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through check-ins  
• Implementation of shorter school breaks by school staff, administrators, and policymakers  
• Comply with probation requirements |

**Research Question 1.** The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”
Participant 6 stated that personal support could help him not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 6 described his need for personal support from probation officers. Participant 6 stated,

Um, I probably will need more support. 'Cause I feel like, well not just me—I hear from a lot of probationers that there’s no support, like there is but not as much. Like probation like, like some probation officers are more lenient, and some are just like, as soon as you mess up, that’s it. I feel like they should just be like, instead of locking someone up, they should just give them programs or something.

The analysis of Participant 6’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.

**Mental health.** Participant 6 identified mental health as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 6 acknowledged that mental health services such as counseling are beneficial to help prevent juvenile recidivism. Participant 6 shared his own experience with counseling services and stated, “I do counseling right now. So yea, it’s helping me stay out of trouble.”

**Substance abuse.** Participant 6 identified drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile incarceration. Participant 6 stated that drug use “makes it worse” and that “there are some people who are old and are still on juvenile probation. Like they’re 21, but they are still on juvenile probation.”

**Family dynamics.** Participant 6 stated that both during and after his incarceration, his family was disappointed, and he noted that family and friends are important to his
efforts not to reoffend. Participant 6 identified the need to have family and friends in order to support him mentally. Participant 6 stated,

If they are there to mentally support me, I think I’ll be fine. That goes for everyone. If they have that support, they should be good. If they know there is someone there to help them. ’Cause I know some people that have no support at all, and they just go out in the streets.

Participant 6 also identified family history of incarceration as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 6 described how his family’s history of incarceration is continually being brought to his attention by probation officers. Participant 6 stated,

I know the probation officers here, they’re always asking how are my uncles that are locked up. I’m just like, “How do you know about that?” Yea, ’cause they go deep into it. When I first got into trouble, it showed my stepdad’s and my parents’ [records]. My mom’s is cleared, but they showed my stepdad’s—everything that he has done.

**Gender and ethnicity.** Participant 6 identified differential treatment based on ethnicity as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 6 shared his experience of witnessing an individual of a different ethnicity receive a less harsh punishment for an offense than would have been given to another individual of a different ethnicity. Participant 6 stated,

I don’t think that gender matters, but ethnicity sometimes. ’Cause I’ve seen like how the judge treats other people. I’m not trying to be mean or something, but like White people come in, and they’ll have the same charges as someone else, and they will get out in a week on probation.
Level of education. Participant 6 identified mental health challenges in reference to an individual’s level of education as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 6 described his perspective of witnessing students with special education services who are incarcerated in facilities. Participant 6 stated,

I’ve seen some special educations in there. One of the kids, we call it a 5150, he’s like crazy in his head. He comes out by himself, and he’s not allowed to be alone ’cause if he sees anyone, he’ll pretty much attack him. He even attacks the staff. And that can contribute to youth incarceration because of his education; he’s not, like, there.

Research Question 2. The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 6 identified motivation, moral support from schools, counseling, and implementing shorter school breaks (i.e., spring break, etc.) as the types of support he perceived would be important to avoid recidivism. Participant 6 stated that verbal recognition and checking in on students are important, and in addition, complying with probation requirements would help students avoid recidivism.

Participant 7

Participant 7 was an 18-year-old female alternative education student from Nevada City, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 10 provides a summary of Participant 7’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important
predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

Table 10

*Participant 7: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | • Extracurricular activities can keep me from reoffending after I exit from alternative education  
• Unable to determine if mental health services are helpful or not helpful  
• Drug use has a moderate effect on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration  
• My family was supportive during and after my incarceration  
• Family and friends are very important in my efforts of not to reoffend  
• Racial profiling in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration  
• Family drug use contributes to youth incarceration  
• Yes, mental health challenges affect a student’s level of education that can contribute to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | • Personal support from family  
• School support through counseling  
• Financial support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers  
• There is nothing that school staff, administrators, and policymakers can do  
• Education on substance abuse and weapon laws |

**Research Question 1.** The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”
Participant 7 stated that having more outlets can help prevent youth from reoffending. Participant 7 identified the necessity for school extracurricular activities in efforts to help prevent students from reoffending upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 7 identified her perception as the following:

Probably more outlets or more, I don’t want to say programs, but in my community, Salinas, specially, there’s not a lot of outlets you can go to—reaching out, something that can help you, either if it’s a problem or a mistake, something that can help you after you exit, not just throw you out and be like, “Okay, you’re done.” I mean you feel good about it, yea, but some people struggle with drug abuse and anger issues and stuff like that, and that’s why they do what they do. I feel like if you were to have an outlet that would help you like that, that would help you from reoffending.

The analysis of Participant 7’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.

**Substance abuse.** Participant 7 identified drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 7 commented that drug use is a contributing factor to youth incarceration and made reference to youth who are on formal probation due to drug use. Participant 7 stated,

Yea . . . drug use does contribute to everybody ’cause there are a lot of kids that are on formal probation, and you do, do drugs, you can be incarcerated for being dirty. So, drugs do have a great effect.
Family dynamics. Participant 7 stated that family and friends are important to her efforts to not reoffend and that her family and friends were very supportive of her both during and after her incarceration. Participant 7 identified family drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism and noted that it contributes to youth incarceration. Participant 7 stated,

It does have a really, really big effect. Like if you were to take a family that their parents have no drug abuse past or anything like that, their children are more likely to succeed as to where if you took a family or a mother that was on the street or in Chinatown or did have drug abuse are more prone to let their child do drugs as well. So, I feel like having a family that is already in it, it’s kinda hard to remove yourself from that situation because that’s what you were already born into it.

Level of education. Participant 7 provided her perspective on the impact of one’s level of education and mental health. Participant 7 associated mental health challenges with special education and perceived mental health challenges as a predictor of juvenile recidivism and a contributing factor to youth incarceration. Participant 7 stated,

Well, in special education, yes, of course, because their mentality is not the same as if they were not in special education, so maybe they don’t know what’s right and what’s wrong. They’re just going by what they see, say if they have friends that do drugs, and they’re gonna be like, “Okay, that’s fine.” Like especially like going back, uh, the family background—if you see your parents doing that, you’re gonna be like, “I can do it because I see my parents doing it, and that’s fine.”
**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 7 identified family support, counseling, and financial support as the types of support she perceived would be important to avoid recidivism. Participant 7 also provided her perspective on laws that could help her not reoffend after exiting from alternative education. Participant 7 stated, “Some laws could be anything—that you could not drink and drive or you could not smoke marijuana or distribute it—just anything. Laws are pretty basic. If you follow them, you don’t get reincarcerated.”

**Participant 8**

Participant 8 was an 18-year-old male alternative education student from Nevada City, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 11 provides a summary of Participant 8’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

**Research Question 1.** The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”
Participant 8: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?</td>
<td>• Focusing on my goals can keep me from reoffending after I exit from alternative education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Unable to determine if mental health services are helpful or not helpful</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Drug use has a severe effect on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• My family was disappointed during my incarceration and supportive after my incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family is important in my efforts of not to reoffend while friends are not important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Racial profiling and perceived gang affiliation in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Family gang involvement has a significant impact on youth incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• I don’t think a student's level of education contributes to youth incarceration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?</td>
<td>• Personal support from the school through counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• School support with services for housing assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• College placement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through positive communication with students and active listening with students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Education on substance abuse and weapon laws</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participant 8 stated that in efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education, “I would further my education and focus more on schooling so that I can get a better career started and like stay away from the negative stuff in the streets.” Participant 8 identified his goals as an important factor to keep him from reoffending. The analysis of Participant 8’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.
**Substance abuse.** Participant 8 identified the use of “dangerous drugs” as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism and contributing factor to youth incarceration. Participant 8 provided examples of the potential effects of dangerous drugs on individuals who use them. Participant 8 stated,

Some drugs make you go a little crazy, make you act wild, and it could lead to dangerous acts and stuff like that, like going to parties, getting into fights, getting drunk, like high-speed chases. And when you’re on drugs, you don’t care to do whatever.

**Family dynamics.** Participant 8 stated that family is important to his efforts to not reoffend while friends are not. Participant 8 stated, “Friends come and go, so you can’t depend on them when you need a place to stay, and family will always provide you with something.” Participant 8 also stated that his family was disappointed during his incarceration but supportive upon his release from jail. Furthermore, Participant 8 identified family gang involvement as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 8 stated,

Umm, well if your family is already a known gang member, then you might want to follow in their footsteps and start living how they lived. But sometimes you might want to do different things, but I don’t know; you do what you see.

**Gender and ethnicity.** Participant 8 identified racial profiling as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 8 described his perception of how local law enforcement interacts with people of color within his community. Participant 8 stated,

I believe police like to judge a book by the cover, like whether you are Mexican, Latino, or African American. Like they automatically think that Mexicans are
Nortenio or Sorenio and that Blacks are either Crips or a Blood. I don’t feel comfortable around cops all the time. I don’t give them a reason so that they just do nothing. I believe a lot of people just judge a book by the cover.

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 8 identified personal support through counseling, school services consisting of housing assistance and college placement, and moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers as the types of support perceived to be important to avoid recidivism. Participant 8 stated,

Right now, I live right over here in the youth campus. So, they helping me out by keeping me out of the street, and they’re helping me learn how to be independent, so that’s really helping me out over here, and for only $50 a month, that’s really good. They can help us get into a college, like help us research it and stuff like that. Like give us their opinions on how to start our life after we leave.

Participant 8 also identified the importance of understanding the law and how legal charges can have an impact on an individual’s acceptance into college and future employment opportunities. Participant 8 stated,

Since I was a minor, my charges got wiped. But if you have felonies on your record, like, or charges, like colleges won’t like really accept you. Like they look at all that, and jobs too, they look at all that.
Participant 9 was an 18-year-old female alternative education student from Nevada City, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 12 provides a summary of Participant 9’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

Research Question 1. The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”

Participant 9 stated that what prevents her from reoffending is her daughter. Participant 9 identified being a parent and having family support as important in her efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 9 stated, “Um, well what keeps me from doing anything bad is my daughter. I’m here for her, and it’s about her now.” The analysis of Participant 9’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.
Table 12  

Participant 9: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | • My family can keep me from reoffending after I exit from alternative education  
• Mental health services are helpful and can help prevent youth incarceration  
• Drug use has a severe effect on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration  
• My family was angry during my incarceration and supportive after my incarceration  
• Family and friends are very important in my efforts of not to reoffend  
• Gender and/or ethnicity doesn’t matter when it comes to youth incarceration  
• History of family incarceration has a significant impact on youth incarceration  
• Yes, personal decisions to drop out of school affect a student’s level of education that can contribute to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | • Personal support from family  
• Services from school staff, administrators, and policymakers by providing employment assistance  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers by being there for students  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers by being there for students  
• Not sure  

*Mental health.* Participant 9 stated that mental health services can help prevent youth incarceration. Participant 9 stated, “Yea, for some people. I just don’t think it would be right for me, or certain people don’t like opening up to people, and it could be a good thing.”

*Substance abuse.* Participant 9 perceived drug use as a contributing factor to youth incarceration. Participant 9 described the impact drug use has on individuals’ behavior when they are under the influence. Participant 9 stated, “Yea, it does because it
makes you do things you normally wouldn’t do, and it just makes you feel different and makes people do bad things. So, it does.”

**Family dynamics.** Participant 9 stated that family and friends are important to her efforts to not reoffend. Participant 9 stated that during her time of incarceration, her family was angry with her, but they were supportive upon her release from jail. Participant 9 provided her perspective on how family background contributes to youth incarceration. Participant 9 stated, “Like if a family background is bad, maybe one of their parents or something is locked up, and they’re not really educated or something like that,” this could contribute to youth incarceration.

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 9 identified personal support from family, school services consisting of employment assistance, and moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers as the perceived types of support needed to avoid recidivism as adult students 18 years of age or older exit from alternative education. In reference to these suggestions, Participant 9 stated, “Just show like you are there for them, you know.”

**Participant 10**

Participant 10 was a 22-year-old female alternative education student from Nevada City, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 13 provides a summary of Participant 10’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important
predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

Table 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | • Focusing on my goals can keep me from reoffending after I exit from alternative education  
• Mental health services are helpful and can help prevent youth incarceration  
• Drug use has a moderate effect on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration  
• My family was disappointed during my incarceration and supportive after my incarceration  
• Family is important in my efforts of not to reoffend while friends are not important  
• Racial profiling and perceived gang affiliation in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration  
• Family upbringing has a significant impact on youth incarceration  
• Yes, personal decisions to drop out of school affect a student’s level of education that can contribute to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | • School support through counseling  
• Providing a positive school environment  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through guidance/preparation for the future  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through positive and effective communication  
• Education on substance abuse and weapon laws |

**Research Question 1.** The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18
years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”

Participant 10 stated that “the vision that I would have for myself and the things that I want to do” is what could keep her from reoffending upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 10 identified “vision” as a driving factor contributing to her avoidance of recidivism. Participant 10 stated, “I’m 22 years old; I’m not a kid anymore, and just a vision, my goals, and seeing me where I want to be would keep me away from that.” The analysis of Participant 10’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.

*Mental health.* Participant 10 identified mental health services as beneficial to preventing youth incarceration. Participant 10 described her personal experience and perspective on how mental health services can help individuals avoid recidivism.

Participant 10 stated,

> Umm, I’ve had them in the past, and I do think that they’re very helpful for giving you structure and guidance. Sometimes we think that we don’t need those things. It’s always a good reminder to kind of remind you of the things that are important and, you know, so I think they are helpful.

*Substance abuse.* Participant 10 identified drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile incarceration. Participant 10 provided her insight on the effects of drug use and how it can lead to youth incarceration. Participant 10 stated,

> Definitely, I do definitely think that it does because it gives you a total different influence of how you see things, pretty much like your morals in a way, like it
changes your whole perspective of things. Yea, because a lot of time when people are under the influence, they just don’t care.

**Family dynamics.** Participant 10 stated that family is important to her efforts to not reoffend but that friends are not important to these efforts. Participant 10 stated that her family was there for her and cared about her future while her friends did not. Participant 10 stated,

My family comes from a place where their future matters to them. The friends that I had back then, they didn’t have a positive impact because we were all young, and obviously I would hang out with people who were already just as bad as me since we would do bad stuff together, so yea. When I had my daughter, everything completely changed. I changed my friends, but back then, I didn’t have that support system within my friends to impact difference.

Participant 10 provided her perspective on how family background can have an impact on youth incarceration. Participant 10 stated,

I feel like it does have a tremendous impact because obviously if you come from a troubled background or if your home is troubled, you’re gonna learn from those examples. But sometimes it really doesn’t even matter; it all depends on that person or the young adult, of what their interests are or who they decide to hang out with.

**Gender and ethnicity.** Participant 10 identified racial profiling and perceived gang affiliation as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 10 provided an example of her experience with this issue according to what she has witnessed within her community. Participant 10 stated,
Umm, I do think that gender affects differently, especially in this community, because guys get involved in like gangs a lot, and they get incarcerated for those things even at a young age if they are trouble to society. I feel like it’s important to make an impact sooner in order to be able to maybe change some minds. I do see there’s a difference, and with girls I mean, we do bad things as well, but they’re not anything like being involved in gangs. Ethnicity, umm, I do think that cops might see it that way. I do feel like a lot of people feel that Mexicans and Hispanics are targeted, but mainly that’s what we have in this community. They might feel targeted, but we are the majority of the people.

**Level of education.** Participant 10 identified that level of education contributes to youth incarceration when an individual is in a place of contemplating whether to remain in school or drop out. This finding is consistent with emerging adulthood theory (Arnett, 2016; Denney & Connor, 2016), which indicates that as young adults go through the five domains of life (identity explorations, instability, self-focus, feeling in-between, and possibilities/optimism), these domains encompass the feelings and views emerging adults have about their emotional lives, school and work, love, sex, and marriage (Arnett, 2016) and can be a contributing factor to whether these young adults make a decision to deter from actions and behaviors that can lead to reincarceration or instead make the decision to reoffend (Arnett, 2016; Denney & Connor, 2016). Participant 10 shared her perspective on this subject matter:

If you weren’t really focused in school, you’re focused on other things, and once you do try to get focused back into school, ’cause obviously school is important in many ways, you just kinda feel like you don’t wanna deal with it ’cause you’re so
far behind. So, you just rather pick up old habits rather than just picking up school.

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 10 stated that counseling, a positive school environment, and moral support within the context of both guidance and effective communication from school staff, administrators, and policymakers are the perceived types of support adult students need and are important in order to avoid recidivism. Participant 10 stated,

I feel like with more presentation that they have and all these opportunities, and they can show people what’s actually reachable. I feel like with those opportunities, you can spark up an idea and, you know, you can use that; it’s useful.

Participant 10 also identified the perceived importance of obeying all laws (including substance abuse and gun laws) in order to prevent recidivism. Participant 10 stated that she encourages people to follow the law through her testimony. Participant 10 stated,

I mean, nobody wants to get incarcerated when time is really valuable; you don’t have a lot of it to get the things that you want to get done. Just trying to obey laws and to prevent all, any of that. Taking your time away because time’s precious, and you don’t want to have to be getting into probation, things that can
continue to get you back in there. You just want to avoid it—avoid, avoid, avoid—so that you can become a good citizen.

**Participant 11**

Participant 11 was an 18-year-old female alternative education student from Nevada City, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 14 provides a summary of Participant 11’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.

**Research Question 1.** The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”

Participant 11 stated that by staying home and away from social media, she can avoid reoffending upon exiting from alternative education. The analysis of Participant 11’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.
Table 14

Participant 11: Themes and Patterns Associated With Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | • Avoiding negative situations can prevent me from reoffending after exiting from alternative education  
• Mental health services are helpful and can help prevent youth incarceration  
• Drug use has a moderate effect on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration  
• My family was angry during my incarceration  
• Family is important in my efforts of not to reoffend while friends are not important  
• Perceived gang affiliation in reference to gender and ethnicity contributes to youth incarceration  
• History of family incarceration has a significant impact on youth incarceration  
• Yes, personal decisions to drop out of school affect a student’s level of education that can contribute to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | • Personal support from family  
• School support with building relationships with school staff  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through positive communication with students  
• Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers by being aware of a student’s needs  
• Comply with probation requirements |

Mental health. Participant 11 identified mental health services as being helpful in preventing youth incarceration. Participant 11 provided an example of her personal experience with participating in mental health services. Participant 11 stated, “Yea, that would help, taking classes, because I did used to take that. It always helps talking to somebody about your problems and stuff.”

Substance abuse. Participant 11 identified drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participant 11 shared her perspective regarding the severe effects
drugs have on altering an individual’s behavior, which can lead to youth incarceration. Participant 11 stated,

Yea, because when you do drugs, it makes you think differently and act differently because I’ve seen it. Those actions can cause harmful things, and you could go to juvenile hall and be there for a long time.

**Family dynamics.** Participant 11 stated that family is important to her efforts to not reoffend but that her friends are not. Participant 11 stated, “Friends don’t really matter for me. Friends can turn on you and do a lot of things.” Participant 11 stated that her family was angry during her time of incarceration. Participant 11 identified a family history of incarceration as having an impact on youth incarceration. Participant 11 stated that this is “because when they’re raised different, they’re gonna be the same way ’cause they grow up around that, and they’re gonna be the same way as their family.”

**Gender and ethnicity.** Participant 11 identified perceived gang affiliation as a contributing factor to youth incarceration. Participant 11 implied that the way people dress can cause others to believe that they are in gangs. Participant 11 stated, “Yes, because there are people that dress different, and they might think that they’re in a gang or something.”

**Level of education.** Participant 11 stated that “dropping out of school is bad. If you’re not getting your education, you’re not getting your diploma and stuff like that.” Participant 11 provided this response in reference to her perception of how level of education can contribute to youth incarceration when individuals make a decision to either drop out or stay in school. As previously stated, this finding is consistent with the cycle of emerging adulthood theory (Arnett, 2016; Denney & Connor, 2016).
Research Question 2. The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 11 identified personal support from family, building relationships between students and teachers, and moral support within both contexts of positive communication with students and being aware of students’ needs as the perceived types of needs of students to avoid recidivism as they exit from alternative education. The need for building relationships between students and teachers and the need for moral support are consistent with the findings of Voisin et al. (2005) in reference to the importance of social connectedness. Participant 11 also identified compliance with probation requirements as a type of need in order to avoid recidivism upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 11 stated, “Probation rules keep you from being incarcerated again. To me, it helped me.”

Participant 12

Participant 12 was an 18-year-old male alternative education student from Nevada City, California, who identified as Mexican rather than Hispanic, the ethnic term used by the California Department of Education (2018). Table 15 provides a summary of Participant 12’s responses in themes and patterns addressing the perceived important predictors of juvenile recidivism and the perceived support needed in efforts to avoid recidivism. Appendix G contains all themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2, and Appendix H includes a matrix of common themes generated from Research Questions 1 and 2.
Research Question 1. The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?”

Participant 12 stated that going to school and working could prevent him from reoffending upon exiting from alternative education. Participant 12 identified the need to stay busy in efforts to take up any free time that could potentially create an opportunity for him to engage in any activity that could get him incarcerated. Based on Participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research question</th>
<th>Themes in response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education? | - Focusing on my goals can keep me from reoffending after I exit from alternative education  
- Mental health services are helpful and can help prevent youth incarceration  
- Drug use has a moderate effect on behavior, the choices individuals make, and contributes to youth incarceration  
- My family was depressed during and after my incarceration  
- Family and friends are very important in my efforts of not to reoffend  
- Gender and/or ethnicity doesn’t matter when it comes to youth incarceration  
- History of family incarceration has a significant impact on youth incarceration  
- I don’t think a student’s level of education contributes to youth incarceration |
| 2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism? | - Personal support from the school with providing activities  
- School support with counseling services for students  
- Moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers through encouragement and motivation  
- Employment opportunities for students provided by school staff, administrators, and policymakers  
- Not sure |
12’s perception, this response was coded as the theme of goals. The analysis of Participant 12’s semistructured qualitative interview data by the researcher identified several themes represented as the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism as identified within the literature review.

**Mental health.** Participant 12 stated that mental health services are helpful in preventing youth incarceration. Participant 12 shared his personal encounter with mental health services and how it helped him. Participant 12 stated, “So, I think that when I was working with my counselor, I was working on how to control my anger, and it really helped me, and I haven’t blacked out in over a year.”

**Substance abuse.** Participant 12 identified drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile incarceration. Participant 12 shared his experience of drug use and how his drug use caused him to become incarcerated. Participant 12 stated,

Yea, I feel like once you’re set on probation for whatever reason—well, the reason why I got locked up most of the time was because I was doing drugs. They charged me with disturbance of the peace and trespassing.

**Family dynamics.** Participant 12 stated that family is important to his efforts to not reoffend but that his friends are not important. Participant 12 stated that his family was sad during the time of his incarceration and was happy to see him home upon his release. Participant 12 described his experience of his family being in and out of jail. Participant 12 identified family history of incarceration as a perceived contributing factor to youth incarceration. Participant 12 stated, “Like my dad, he’s been in and out of jail. So, I thought that it was kinda normal, and my brothers all been on probation. If they’ve been on probation, why can’t I?”
Research Question 2. The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?”

Participant 12 identified personal support through counseling, positive school environments, and moral support within both contexts of guidance and effective communication from school staff, teachers, administrators, and policymakers as the types of support students need and those perceived as important to avoid recidivism as they exit from alternative education. Participant 12 shared his experience of how a teacher supported him by helping him get into the military. Participant 12 stated,

Umm, especially [teacher], she really motivates me. She pushes me to do things like go to the Air Force. I took the test, and I got a really high score on the test, and I’m going to the Air Force.

Data Analysis by Common Themes in Research Questions

After aggregating all 12 of the participant responses, an analysis was conducted by the researcher to determine the most common themes within the combined semistructured interview data. The following sections present the common themes, by research question, as determined by the researcher’s analysis of the semistructured interview data in totality.

Research Question 1. The first research question was, “How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?” The combined
participant responses were coded and analyzed in Microsoft Excel to identify any common themes relative to Research Question 1. Table 16 identifies the common themes within the combined data related to Research Question 1.

Table 16

*Combined Data Common Themes: Research Question 1*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common theme</th>
<th>No. of source responses</th>
<th>Frequency of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drug use contributes to youth incarceration</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family is important in my efforts to not reoffend</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health services help prevent youth incarceration</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Common Theme 1: Drug use contributes to youth incarceration.* Twelve of the 12 study participants, 100%, revealed that substance abuse continues to be a significant risk factor contributing to juvenile recidivism (Ho et al., 2007; Racz et al., 2015; Young et al., 2007). The common theme of drug use being perceived as a contributing factor to youth incarceration was individualized in consideration of the participants’ perspectives in their interview responses. Participants responded via a diverse array of descriptors embodied by individualized consideration.

Four participants made a distinction between certain types of drugs that can contribute to youth incarceration while providing their responses. Participant 1 stated, “I don’t think like weed can help contribute, but I think that other drugs like Xanax and Percocet and what they call cough syrup, and all that.” Participant 2 explained, “I have some friends that would do like cocaine and heroin and then like 2 days later, ‘Oops, he’s in jail.’” Participant 3 commented, “Um, I believe certain types of drugs can contribute to youth incarceration,” and as previously stated, Participant 4 reported,
Um, maybe it depends on what type of drugs you use. Probably like cocaine, crystal, and stuff like that. Kind of like they get sick, like for heroin, they might have to go rob someone to get they fix, stuff like that.

Several participants described drugs as having an effect on an individual’s behavior. Participant 8 stated, “Uh, I believe it does ’cause some drugs make you go a little crazy, make you act wild, and it could lead to dangerous acts and stuff like that.” Participant 9 stated, “It does because it makes you do things you normally wouldn’t do, and it just makes you feel different and makes people do bad things,” and Participant 10 reported, “It gives you a total different influence of how you see things, pretty much like your morals in a way, like it changes your whole perspective of things.” Participant 11 stated, “When you do drugs, it makes you think differently and act differently because I’ve seen it. Those actions can cause harmful things, and you could go to juvenile hall and be there for a long time.”

Two participants reported having personal experience with using drugs that contributed to their incarceration. Participant 5 stated, “I have done my fair share of drug abuse,” and Participant 12 stated, “The reason why I got locked up most of time was because I was doing drugs.” Two other participants described situations where drug use caused others to remain on probation. Participant 6 stated, “Drug use, yea, it like makes it worse. There are some people who are old and are still on juvenile probation. Like they’re 21, but they are still on juvenile probation.” Finally, Participant 7 stated, “Drug use does contribute to everybody ’cause there are a lot of kids that are on formal probation.”
**Common Theme 2: Family is important in my efforts to not reoffend.** Twelve of the 12 study participants, 100%, stated that family is important in their efforts to not reoffend. This is consistent with findings from Garfinkel (2010) and Walker et al. (2015) that youth who are engaged with parental support during the course of their involvement with the JJS are most likely to have better outcomes and desist from future reoffending.

A majority of participants stated that family served as a deterrence from reoffending given their family’s support along with some of the participants’ personal responsibility of being a parent.

Four participants stated that their family’s support prevented them from reoffending. Participant 2 stated, “Yea, my dad and my mom, they always be telling me, ‘Don’t do that, stay in the house, and don’t do this and that.’ Like I think no parent wants their kid to be in jail.” Participant 3 stated, “Family is on my mind all the time. I want better for my family. As long as I know that I have someone to support me when I act a certain way, then I’ll be fine.” Participant 4 stated, “For like someone who had a big thing in my life, like to help me push harder, is my grandma.” Participant 5 stated, “When I moved in with my adoptive parents, they set all these rules for me. . . . They showed me a healthy lifestyle, a healthy relationship even, like they showed me what life should be like and how you can enjoy life without substance abuse and without all the in and out of jail.

Participant 6 stated, “Family and friends are important . . . because if they are there to mentally support me, I think I’ll be fine.” Participant 7 stated, “Family and friends are a big part of it because they do have a lot of support for you.” Participant 8 stated,
I think it’s important to keep in touch with your family. You don’t want to be like alone. Friends come and go, so you can’t depend on them when you need a place to stay, and family will always provide you with something.

Participant 9 commented, “It’s really important.” Participant 11 stated,

My family is important; friends don’t really matter for me . . . because I care for them, and I love them; they’re there for you when you need them. Not like friends. Friends can turn on you and do a lot of things.

Participant 1 stated, “Well right now, I recently had a little kid. I had a daughter. . . . So, that’s keeping me from doing anything stupid to the point where I just don’t wanna go outside and go hit [rob somebody].” Participant 12 stated, “Very important . . . I didn’t want to see my mom cry. . . . I just feel like everything I do is for myself and my family.”

Two participants described how important family is to their efforts to not reoffend due to being parents. Participant 1 stated, “Well right now, I recently had a little kid. I had a daughter. . . . So, that’s keeping me from doing anything stupid to the point where I just don’t wanna go outside and go hit [rob somebody].” Participant 10 stated,

My family comes from a place where their future matters to them. The friends that I had back then, they didn’t have a positive impact because we were all young, and obviously I would hang out with people who were already just as bad as me since we would do bad stuff together, so yea. When I had my daughter, everything completely changed.

**Common Theme 3: Mental health services help prevent youth incarceration.**

Nine of the 12 study participants, 75%, referenced the need for mental health service programs to be embedded within alternative education settings in order to address the
systemic social phenomenon of juvenile recidivism (Horton, 2013; Kleiner et al., 2002; Weist et al., 2006). The study participants defined mental health services as counseling, and they quantified mental health services through various descriptors: personal experience, structure and guidance, the importance of meeting the needs of the consumer, and as a means of providing a therapeutic outlet.

Four participants described mental health services as being beneficial to prevent youth incarceration based on their personal experience. Participant 2 stated, “I like go every day for counseling, because my brain is messed up since I was a little kid.” Participant 6 stated, “Oh, I do counseling right now. So yea, it’s helping me stay out of trouble.” Participant 11 stated, “Yea, that would help, taking classes, because I did used to take that. It always helps talking to somebody about your problems and stuff.” Participant 12 stated, “So, I think that when I was working with my counselor, I was working on how to control my anger, and it really helped me.”

Two participants described mental health services as being important to meet the needs of the consumer. Participant 9 described, “Certain people don’t like opening up,” and Participant 5 stated, “I think counseling should be made more open, and I think counseling should be pushed a little bit more on some kids.”

Two participants identified mental health services as a means of providing a therapeutic outlet, and one participant identified mental health services as a source of structure and guidance. Participant 3 stated, “I believe youth have a lot of anger problems, and we have nowhere to release our stress on.” Participant 4 stated, “Yea, it can help like for those who don’t feel like they don’t have anyone to talk to, you know.”
Participant 10 stated, “I do think that they’re very helpful for giving you structure and guidance.”

**Research Question 2.** The second research question was, “What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?” The combined participant responses were coded and analyzed in Microsoft Excel to identify any common themes relative to Research Question 2. Table 17 identifies the common themes within the combined data related to Research Question 2.

Table 17

*Combined Data Common Themes: Research Question 2*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common theme</th>
<th>No. of source responses</th>
<th>Frequency of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obey laws</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral support as I exit</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School support services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Common Theme 1: Counseling.** Eleven of the 12 study participants, 92%, identified counseling as a perceived important type of support needed in order to avoid recidivism. These participants referenced counseling within the following contexts: motivation, personal support, and guidance. Participant 1 stated,

Personal support—I feel as if we need like 100 [of student’s counselor]. ’Cause, [student’s counselor is] a real guy; that’s a real man right there. And he likes kids, and you can tell he likes kids, and if we had like more people like Fernando, it would help a lot of kids not go to jail.
Participant 2 stated, “Oh, well I do music. That’s one of my therapies. Therapy is my music. I do music. I have a little professional mini studio in my house, and I go to a studio too. I call it my therapy.” Participant 3 stated, “Maybe I can talk to adults more. I think I have a problem talking to adults that are aggressive off top.” Participant 3 identified counseling in a separate response to Research Question 2 and stated, “I think it’s the same thing. Everybody has personal problems in their life, and I have to realize that and not to take everything personal. Yea, that’s mostly it.”

Participant 5 stated, “So, I think that a lot of the time when the teacher comes and reminds me and checks on me, to me, that’s nice for someone to come by and remind you like, ‘Hey, are you okay?’ Checking in.” Participant 6 stated, “Motivation. I need that motivation.” Participant 7 stated, “It wouldn’t hurt to add more counselors and more people to talk to.” Participant 8 stated, “Just knowing that there’s always going to be [someone] there for me.” Participant 10 stated, “But maybe for a younger person that doesn’t have children, maybe like having somebody speak to them about all the opportunities.”

Participant 11 stated that school staff, administrators, and policymakers can support adult students as they exit from alternative education “just by talking to them.” Participant 12 stated, “[Teacher], she really motivates me. She pushes me to do things like go to the Air Force. I took the test, and I got a really high score on the test, and I’m going to the Air Force.”

**Common Theme 2: Obey laws.** Ten of the 12 study participants, 83%, referred to the importance of obeying various laws and societal rules (e.g., substance abuse laws, Miranda rights, civil laws, gun control laws, and probation requirements) in order to
avoid reincarceration. Participant 1 expounded on his perspective in regard to legislation regarding medical marijuana use for students with disabilities and how it could have an impact on preventing recidivism. Participant 1 stated,

I feel as if a kid with ADHD [attention deficit hyperactivity disorder], if he smokes before he comes to school, it’s going to be better for him. ’Cause that kid with ADHD, he can’t focus in class, and you keep on kicking him out of class, and then he ends up not graduating and then hitting a lick [robbing someone] because he was never in class to learn anything.

Participant 2 stated,

If they keep asking me questions, I’m a stay quiet until I wait for my lawyer. I’m a stay quiet, and they keep asking me questions for 3 to 4 hours, I’ll be sitting there for 4 hours just like this: “So, when my lawyer coming?” You know, like Fifth Amendment and the Miranda rights.

Participant 3 stated,

Maybe some social laws. Maybe we have to learn how to interact with people. . . . So, I feel like if we can get a way where we can get police officers to learn how to talk to people and people learn how to talk to police officers, the community would be way better.

Participant 4 stated that “the gun law they got right now” could help him not reoffend given his experience of incarceration and being charged with a misdemeanor. Participant 5 stated, “The rules are there to protect you and to protect everyone else that is around. Just listen to the police officer and cooperate.” Participant 6 stated, “Any laws are a violation. So, if you get cited by the police, that’s a violation against your probation.”
Participant 7 stated, “Some laws could be anything—that you could not drink and drive or you could not smoke marijuana or distribute it—just anything. Laws are pretty basic. If you follow them, you don’t get reincarcerated.” Participant 8 stated, “But if you have felonies on your record, like, or charges, like colleges won’t like really accept you. Like they look at all that, and jobs too, they look at all that.” Participant 9 stated, “Just trying to obey laws and to prevent all, any of that,” and Participant 10 stated, “Probation rules keep you from being incarcerated again.”

Common Theme 3: Moral support as I exit. Eight of the 12 participants, 67%, identified moral support as they exit from alternative education programs as a perceived type of need in efforts to avoid recidivism. The participants described moral support as they exit these programs within the following contexts: active listening, verbal recognition, check-ins, and talking to students. Participant 1 stated, “Maybe if I had just had a ear, somebody to listen to. Sometimes I just want to be heard.” Participant 3 stated, “If you could lead me in the right direction. Um, I know there’s not a lot they can do when they leave the school, but they can let me know what’s available for me.”

Participant 5 stated, “I think honestly just hearing from everyone these past few weeks about how proud they are of us.” Participant 6 stated, “Umm, I would say like monthly check-ups. That would be cool. Like ask like, ‘How you doing? Where you at?’ You know?” Participant 9 stated, “Umm, just be there. Like if I have a question or a problem, I can come back and ask them.” Participant 10 stated, “They speak to us about our future and what things hold for us in the future, and not only that but how to handle like adult life.” Participant 11 stated, “Well, if they see them, if they notice that
they need anything, they should just talk to them,” and Participant 12 stated that one teacher “pushes me to do things like go to the Air Force.”

**Common Theme 4: School support services.** Six of the 12 participants, 50%, identified school support services within the context of employment, housing, transitional services, college placement, and financial support as perceived important types of support needed in order to avoid recidivism. This finding is consistent with the finding from Carver and Lewis (2010) that alternative education schools within the United States are encouraged to provide pupil services within the following modalities: (a) regular attendance instruction, (b) counseling, (c) social skills and support, (d) career education, (e) behavioral services, and (f) other services.

Participant 2 made reference to his efforts to obtain help from his school to go to college. Participant 2 stated, “After this, I will go to DVC [Diablo Valley College]. After I graduate, I will go to college at DVC. I will start immediately, hopefully, after I graduate.” Participant 4 identified employment services twice and the need for transitional services. Participant 4 stated,

They should find them like little branches to help them get jobs, something to keep them busy so that they don’t get attracted back to the streets to do what they do. . . . I feel that as soon as I start working, it’s gonna keep me preoccupied, so that’s gonna take up my time to keep me from doing anything else. I mean I feel like everything I do here is cool, like I’m just focused on graduating and moving up.

In reference to the identified perceived type of need within the context of financial support, Participant 7 stated,
There was this girl who was in construction, and she had told her story about her life and why she was in alternative education, and actually a donor had heard her story, and she actually paid for her college supplies and got her a new MacBook. Participant 8 identified the need for student support services twice in his statement within the context of housing and college placement. Participant 8 stated,

They can help us get into a college, like help us research it and stuff like that, and right now, I live right over here in the youth campus. So, they helping me out by keeping me out of the street, and they’re helping me learn how to be independent, so that’s really helping me out over here, and for only $50 a month, that’s really good.

Participant 9 stated, “Like, they help you try to find jobs, they give you experience, and they’re more interactive with the students like this, you know,” and Participant 12 stated, “Giving them a job, like in culinary, it helps them go to school, and it gives them scholarships for the culinary. Placing them in a program that prepares them for a job.”

Summary

This chapter provided a brief overview of the study’s purpose statement, research questions, research methods, data collection procedures, target population, study sample, and participants’ demographics. Each participant’s responses to the two research questions were analyzed and presented by the researcher.

In response to Research Question 1, all 12 study participants identified the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism within the context of substance abuse consistent with the findings of McCuish (2017); family dynamics consistent with the
findings of Garfinkel (2010) and Walker et al. (2015); level of education consistent with the findings of Seigle et al. (2014); mental health consistent with the findings of Horton (2013), Kleiner et al. (2002), and Weist et al. (2006); and gender and ethnicity consistent with the findings of Gavazzi et al. (2005). In response to Research Question 2, a majority of the participants identified the perceived important types of support needed in order to avoid recidivism upon exiting from alternative education as counseling, obeying laws, student support services, and moral support as they exit, and these findings are consistent with those of Carver and Lewis (2010).

The analysis of the semistructured qualitative interview data revealed common themes and patterns for each of the study’s research questions. For Research Question 1, a total of three common themes and patterns were discovered by the researcher:

- drug use contributes to youth incarceration,
- mental health services help prevent youth incarceration, and
- family is important to efforts to not reoffend.

A total of four common themes and patterns were discovered for Research Question 2:

- counseling,
- obey laws,
- moral support as “I” exit, and
- student support services.

The following chapter, Chapter V, discusses the study’s research findings in greater depth and presents final conclusions and recommendations for future studies.
CHAPTER V: SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapter V provides a summary of the study, including the purpose, research questions, methodology, population, and sample. Key findings and conclusions are presented in the chapter based on the research questions. Furthermore, Chapter V outlines implications for further action and recommendations for further research related to this topic. The chapter ends with the researcher’s personal reflections and final comments.

Summary of the Study

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this descriptive, qualitative study was to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education in Northern California. A second purpose was to explore the types of support provided by alternative schools and the perceived importance of the support to avoid recidivism according to adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education.

Research Questions

In order to identify and describe the importance of the predictors of and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education, this research was guided by the following questions:
1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?

2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?

Methodology

The researcher conducted semistructured interviews utilizing a qualitative, descriptive method to identify and describe the stories voluntarily shared by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated young adult students 18 years of age or older from two alternative education programs located in Northern California. These stories were recorded by the researcher, transcribed, and coded into themes and messages (Bailey, 2004; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). Participants in this research study were obtained through the recruitment of their school principals and administrators via e-mail. The recruitment e-mail consisted of a brief introduction of the researcher, the research study, and the purpose of the study. The solicitation also contained a study participation flyer.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face at the students’ school sites. At the time of each interview, prior to commencement of the qualitative interview protocol, the student was provided with a copy of the qualitative research informed consent form, the Brandman University Participant Bill of Rights, and semistructured qualitative interview
protocol questions. Upon completion of the informed consent form by the researcher and study participant, the semistructured qualitative interview commenced.

A Samsung smartphone audio-recording device was used to record each of the semistructured qualitative interviews. Upon completion of each semistructured qualitative interview, the audio recording from the primary recorder was transcribed by the researcher. The researcher sent the transcriptions to the participants via e-mail in order to allow them to review the thoughts and ideas the researcher captured for accuracy.

**Population and Sample**

The population for this study consisted of adult students from alternative education programs within the state of California. The target population was adult students 18 years of age and older who either were exiting or would soon be exiting from an alternative education program in the counties of Alameda and Nevada City in Northern California. The researcher identified two districts, one from Alameda County and one from Nevada City.

This study used nonprobability purposive sampling of two selected school districts with alternative education programs within the state of California in order to garner information-rich cases for an in-depth analysis of the social phenomenon without having to generalize every case (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2015). The sampling frame for this study included 12 students 18 years of age and older who had been involved in the juvenile justice system (JJS) and attended alternative education programs in two different Northern California school districts. The participants were
identified by their school principal or designated administrator. Each participant was contacted by the researcher to participate in an interview.

**Major Findings**

The research questions for this study examined the perceptions of adult students 18 years of age and older, who either were exiting or would soon be exiting from an alternative education program, regarding the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education and the types of support that would be important to avoid recidivism. The major findings of this study are organized by the research questions.

**Research Question 1**

*How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?*

**Major Finding 1.** An important finding was that a great number of participants (nine) identified mental health services as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participants acknowledged the need to sustain and obtain mental health services for students within alternative education settings. Participants provided personal testimonies of the benefits of having access to mental health services at their school sites and how these mental health services had served as a deterrence to students’ reoffending. This finding is associated with a growing body of scholarly research that discusses the need for mental health services and reentry programs to be embedded within alternative
education settings in order to address the systemic social phenomenon of juvenile recidivism (Horton, 2013; Kleiner et al., 2002; Weist et al., 2006).

**Major Finding 2.** A second important finding was that every study participant identified drug use as a perceived predictor of juvenile recidivism. Participants described their personal encounters with drug use, specific types of drug use, how drug use has an impact on behavior, and the consequences of drug use resulting in incarceration and reincarceration. This finding is consistent with the literature indicating that the demographics (gender, age, and ethnicity) of youth substance abusers and the type of drug use significantly impact the trajectory of recidivism (Garner, 2016; Ho et al., 2007; McCuish, 2017; Racz et al., 2015; Young et al., 2007).

**Major Finding 3.** A third important finding was also discovered among the responses of all study participants. Every participant identified the presence of family support as an important protective factor in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education. One participant mentioned that his family was involved in gangs. This finding reveals how families involved in gangs could have an impact on the effect of family support by either influencing high-risk behavior that can lead to youth incarceration and juvenile recidivism or deterring youth from engaging in such activities. Nevertheless, this finding is a testament to the significant effects of the absence of family support, a contributing factor to juvenile recidivism. This finding is consistent with the literature that discusses the importance of family engagement and the tremendous impact of including family in the decision-making process both during and after the course of a youth’s incarceration, which has demonstrated positive results in preventing recidivism in
addition to producing effective treatment outcomes (Garfinkel, 2010; Walker et al., 2015).

**Research Question 2**

*What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?*

**Major Finding 4.** The fourth finding, the importance of counseling as a type of support, was found among the responses of a great number (11) of study participants. The participants identified counseling that encompasses the ecological aspects of their social-emotional well-being (family, community, peers, school, etc.) as the primary type of support perceived to be important to avoid recidivism upon exiting from alternative education. This finding is consistent with the literature associated with Goldkind (2011), Gonsoulin and Read (2011), Sinclair et al. (2003), and Klietz (2007), who asserted that promoting an evidence-based practice known as multisystemic therapy, when facilitated by social workers, is effective in reducing juvenile recidivism.

**Major Finding 5.** The fifth finding, the importance of obeying laws, was revealed in the responses of participants within the study. Participants asserted the importance of obeying all laws in reference to drug use, gun laws, and other important pieces of legislation and societal rules as a type of support to avoid recidivism upon exiting from alternative education. Participants asserted that individuals should obey these laws. The participants’ perceptions support the notion that providing education around such laws within alternative education programs would be beneficial to students. The finding regarding obeying laws, as noted by each participant within this study, and
providing education and evidence-based curriculum on such laws supports current efforts to orchestrate effective measures to deter youth from recidivism (Abrams, 2006; Aos et al., 2006; Bradford, 2016; Freudenberg et al., 2010). Furthermore, such efforts would alleviate the cost of juvenile incarceration, rehabilitate and improve the well-being of youth involved in the JJS, and reduce the likelihood of future recidivism (Baltodano et al., 2005; Griller Clark & Mathur, 2010; Griller Clark et al., 2011; Mathur & Griller Clark, 2013; Unruh, Gau, & Waintrup, 2009).

**Major Finding 6.** The sixth finding was that student support services were identified by half of the participants within the study as a type of support perceived as important to avoid recidivism. The participants voiced their need for assistance with specific types of services (housing, employment, transition services, financial assistance, and college placement) upon exiting from an alternative education program in order to avoid recidivism. This finding is consistent with findings from Maillet (2017) and Foley and Pang (2006) regarding the need for alternative education programs to implement program models that promote successful student outcomes within the contexts of education, employment readiness, community engagement, parental involvement, and skills to collaborate effectively with the community (Foley & Pang, 2006). According to Zolkoski et al. (2016), such efforts have the propensity to promote resilience for students who are exiting from alternative education programs.

**Major Finding 7.** The seventh finding, the need for moral support as “I” exit, was found among the responses of all participants within the study. Participants revealed that they needed moral support from school staff, administrators, and policymakers as they exited from alternative education. Every participant defined moral support as “I”
exit as follows: providing guidance and preparation for the future, letting students know what their options are after they graduate, actively listening to students, providing verbal recognition, checking in on students, being there for students, facilitating positive communication with students, and offering encouragement. This finding is consistent with findings from Ferrante (2013), Freiburger and Burke (2011), Gavazzi et al. (2005), Porowski et al. (2014), and Zolkoski et al. (2016), who identified the importance of designing alternative education programs to meet the unique needs of the population served by the programs in order to foster resiliency and address the associated risk and protective factors that are related to juvenile recidivism as students exit from alternative education programs.

**Unexpected Findings**

Through the data collected, transcribed, and coded for this study, the researcher explored the perceptions of adult students 18 years of age and older, who either were exiting or would soon be exiting from an alternative education program, regarding the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education and the types of support that would be important to avoid recidivism. The findings regarding the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism and the types of support needed in efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education are consistent with the literature and current research discussed in this study in that drug use, mental health, and family dynamics are continually identified as contributing factors to juvenile recidivism, and the types of needs identified by participants (counseling, student support services, obeying laws, and moral support as “I” exit) are recommended to be taken into consideration in efforts to design and implement
effective 21st-century alternative education programs to prevent recidivism. The researcher was not surprised by the importance attributed to these findings but did identify some unexpected findings during the data collection process.

**Unexpected Finding 1**

The researcher hesitated to include motivation (alone) as one of the characteristics of what two participants (Participant 11 and Participant 12) perceived to be a type of support important to their efforts to not reoffend. The statements from these two participants emphasized the importance of support staff’s talking to students and encouraging students. This finding is consistent with the finding from Voisin et al. (2005), who suggested that further studies should concentrate on examining the strength of student-teacher connectedness within schools in an effort to prevent youth from engaging in behaviors that could place them at risk of becoming incarcerated. The researcher placed these two types of support under the category of counseling, recognizing the consistency in terminology with what the participants were trying to convey. This finding is consistent with the findings from Horton (2013), Weist et al. (2006), and Racz et al. (2015), who asserted that mental health services such as counseling and multisystemic therapy are effective when implemented in schools to address the holistic needs of students involved with the JJS. As data collection continued, the participants unknowingly expressed counseling as a type of support perceived as important to their efforts to not reoffend.

**Unexpected Finding 2**

The researcher hesitated to include building relationships with school staff as one of the characteristics of moral support as “I” exit. The researcher observed that only two
participants (Participant 1 and Participant 11) identified this as a type of support perceived to be important to their efforts to not reoffend. The researcher found this as unexpected given that the literature suggests social connectedness (specifically student-teacher connectedness) as an important component to implement within the school environment in efforts to deter students from engaging in risky behaviors that have the propensity to create a pathway toward incarceration (Ferrante, 2013; Gavazzi et al., 2005; Voisin et al., 2005). This is different from a large body of research that suggests that these relationships are beneficial when alternative education students are provided with compassionate teachers, supportive and positive educational environments, small class sizes, resiliency, and self-regulation skills in efforts to deter youth from reoffending upon exiting from alternative education (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014; Toering et al., 2012; Ward & Gannon, 2006; Zolkoski et al., 2016). The researcher placed building relationships under the category of moral support to prevent reincarceration.

Conclusions

The analysis of the common themes and major findings led to conclusions that address the research questions. The following conclusions are aligned to the two research questions.

Conclusion 1

Personal testimonies of youth provide valuable insight into the social phenomenon of juvenile recidivism. In this study, participants shared real-life experiences that added invaluable insight into the root cause of juvenile recidivism. The participants of this study were more than just numbers, codes, and patterns and themes. They were human beings who added value, truth, and depth to this research. This study
contributes to the growing body of qualitative research on juvenile recidivism in efforts to continuously meet the unique needs of alternative education students and to improve both public and educational policy in order to address such efforts (Anders, 2007; Barnert et al., 2015; Miner-Romanoff, 2016).

**Conclusion 2**

According to the literature, the lack of appropriate substance abuse screening tools, insufficient mental health services, and the need to implement policy reform and supportive budgets to support alternative education, in addition to the efforts to reduce juvenile recidivism, demonstrate how alternative education can be an overlooked sector of the education system (Aos et al., 2006; Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Jenson & Howard, 1998; Stein et al., 2006; Tobin & Sprague, 1999). Based on the aforementioned findings of the literature, alternative education can be portrayed as a separate and underserved entity, as effective prevention and intervention methods to reduce juvenile recidivism that orchestrate effective measures within public education have yet to be established (Abrams, 2006; Aos et al., 2006; Bradford, 2016; Freudenberg et al., 2010). While the vast majority of youth who are incarcerated or have been previously incarcerated are incubated within alternative education settings, they are pushed back out into society without the support they need to fully function and thrive as independent adults and active, productive citizens of society. This finding is consistent with the finding from D’Angelo and Zemanick (2009) and Kleiner et al. (2002) that alternative education programs can no longer afford to operate from a traditional model of academic instruction and student support.
The demographics of the student population are continuously changing within alternative education (Aalsma et al., 2015; Coffey & Gemignani, 1994; Lancaster et al., 2011; Macomber et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2014; Taliento & Pearson, 1994; Velasquez & Lyle, 1985). While decisions are being made at the executive, federal, state, and local levels to build more prisons for youth and to eliminate funding, staff, and resources from public education (which are desperately needed to effectively run an alternative education program), effective educational and life outcomes for alternative education students are left on the backburner to deteriorate while some individuals may be asking for solutions to help prevent these youth from becoming either perpetrators or victims of crime (Denney & Connor, 2016; Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2012; Henggeler & Schoenwald, 2011; Rogowski, 2014).

**Conclusion 3**

Nationwide, substance abuse, mental health, and family dynamics are major social phenomena that continue to have a significant impact on youth incarceration (Anders, 2007; Barnert et al., 2015; Miner-Romanoff, 2016). As all of the participants in this study experienced the effects of these social phenomena from one extent to the other, strong collective efforts through community engagement are highly encouraged in order to effectively implement both realistic and timely strategic measures to help prevent youth incarceration and to deter youth from juvenile recidivism (Mathur & Clark, 2014).

**Conclusion 4**

This study proposes a theory based on the literature, the testimonies of participants, and the data analysis. The theory generated from these sources reveals that overlooked and underserved alternative education programs contribute to the social
phenomenon of juvenile recidivism; the ayes have it. The ayes represent the internal consensus generated by all participants in the study who came to an agreement regarding the major findings of this study. The testimonies of these participants revealed that alternative education is most often the last resort of hope and source of support for these students prior to exiting their program and transitioning back into society. It is within these doors of hope and support that alternative education students have the opportunity to become thoroughly equipped (prepared with tools and resources they need) to successfully reenter society and to acquire the skills necessary to avoid reincarceration upon exiting from alternative education. These findings are consistent with findings from Abrams (2006), Abrams et al. (2011), and Denney and Connor (2016), who posited that youth who are entering the stage of emerging adulthood (ages 18 to 25) while exiting the public education system and transitioning into society are in need of reliable and trusted support systems from a variety of sources in order to help prevent them from falling into a continuous cycle of reincarceration.

**Implications for Action**

As mentioned above, this research resulted in the theory that overlooked and underserved alternative education programs contribute to the social phenomenon of juvenile recidivism; the ayes have it. One may challenge this theory and conclude that it is not the schools’ responsibility to prevent juvenile recidivism. While there could be some truth to the challenge, there are many perspectives. A question would be, Given the worldwide issues of poverty, homelessness, and unemployment, whose responsibility is it? In short, the parents and the children can be held accountable, but what good would
that do if they do not have the resources or support necessary to adequately address the problem (Foley & Pang, 2006; Maillet, 2017)?

There is a need for alternative education programs to make greater investments in implementing strategic plans to provide greater intervention methods that are uniquely designed according to the needs and the demographics of their student population. The recommendation for action for this conclusion is to start where there is the most potential to reach youth, which is in the alternative education settings. To most youth, school is a protective factor and a place where they can obtain safety, support, and student success. This is consistent with the results of Zolkoski et al.’s (2016) qualitative study on the factors associated with student resilience based on the perspectives of graduates of alternative education programs. Zolkoski et al. discovered that protective factors (compassionate teachers, supportive and positive learning environments, small class sizes, and resiliency) can deter youth from reoffending upon exiting from alternative education, and historical literature asserts the importance of teaching students self-regulation skills (Panadero & Alonso-Tapia, 2014; Toering et al., 2012; Ward & Gannon, 2006).

To begin, alternative education programs have the most robust demographic student population, and these students are in these programs for various but seriously sensitive reasons (Aalsma et al., 2015; Coffey & Gemignani, 1994; Lancaster et al., 2011; Macomber et al., 2010; Ryan et al., 2014; Taliento & Pearson, 1994; Velasquez & Lyle, 1985). Students within alternative education settings need to be provided with the opportunity to access student support services that are both culturally and linguistically appropriate (Gottesman & Schwarz, 2011; Racz et al., 2015). This does not mean that
only individuals of the same gender, sexual orientation, culture, or ethnicity as students can serve those particular students. To require this could be viewed as discriminatory and a disservice as there are many individuals with the professional expertise and skillset suited to provide student support services to a vast majority of students of various cultures, ethnicities, genders, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Second, given the aforementioned statement, alternative education programs could benefit from promoting and investing in employing the services of school social workers who have the proper credentials to provide pupil services and counseling in public education in order to meet the unique needs of this student population (Carchedi, 2013; Goldkind, 2011; School Social Work Association of America [SSWAA], n.d.-b). In addition, possessing an administrative credential or being in the process of obtaining an administrative credential would allow the school social workers to effectively function at a macro level. Moreover, school social workers within alternative education settings should have a master’s degree from an accredited school of social work program and should uphold the ethical standards of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA). They should also be registered with their state board of behavior sciences as appropriate, for example, as an intern, licensed clinical social worker, marriage and family therapist, or licensed professional clinical counselor (California Board of Behavioral Sciences, 2018; NASW, n.d.; SSWAA, n.d.-b; State of California Commission on Teaching Credentialing, 2015).

There are many benefits to employing school social workers within alternative education settings (Carchedi, 2013; Goldkind, 2011; Lane, 1998; Ohio School Social Work Association, n.d.). School social workers play a vital role in promoting student
engagement and have an impact on creating positive school climates. They also have the skillset and attributes of fostering trusting and healthy relationships. Furthermore, school social workers possess the political and emotional intelligence to implement sound policies and procedures in order to ensure that students are provided with equitable services (NASW, n.d.; SSWAA, n.d.-b).

School social workers also play a crucial role in shaping and developing alternative education programs in order to help prevent juvenile recidivism (Carchedi, 2013; Goldkind, 2011; Lane, 1998). They possess strong skills in research and policy analysis, and they have the knowledge and expertise in community organization, management and planning, service coordination, professional development, program implementation, and facilitating collaborative partnerships (Carchedi, 2013; Goldkind, 2011; Lane, 1998; NASW, n.d.; SSWAA, n.d.-a). Finally, school social workers have the heart and compassion to serve and meet the needs of the most vulnerable student population. As previously stated,

School social workers—with their orientation toward ecological approaches to problem solving, professional training in relationship building, advocacy strategies, and youth development—are ideally suited to supporting young people returning from the justice system to reengage themselves with school, families and communities. (Goldkind, 2011, p. 229)

Third, alternative education programs must thoroughly examine their leadership and staffing model (SSWAA, n.d.-a). Students in alternative education need to be assured that their program is being run with integrity and fidelity. This is consistent with findings from a number of research studies that have indicated that whenever a youth has
contact with the JJS, the likelihood of juvenile recidivism is based on the fidelity of programs and services with appropriate policies and practices in place, especially in public education (Aos et al., 2006; Holman & Ziedenburg, 2006; Jenson & Howard, 1998). Not only should program evaluations and staff evaluations be conducted in-house, but also both internal and external stakeholders, including students, parents, and community partners, should be given the opportunity to evaluate both. Alternative education programs’ ability to demonstrate accountability, demonstrate effective program outcomes, build and maintain healthy relationships, and meet the needs of the students and families they serve should serve as an indicator of proficiency in order to gain the attention and financial support of the community as well as public officials at the executive, federal, state, and local levels in efforts to prevent being overlooked and underserved.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Although various studies have explored the social phenomenon of juvenile recidivism from a quantitative perspective, there is limited research available from a qualitative approach in order to determine the root cause of this social problem. This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge regarding the testimonies of youth who have been involved in the JJS and who are exiting from an alternative education program. Their perspective regarding the perceived predictors of juvenile recidivism along with the types of support perceived as important to avoid reoffending upon exiting from alternative education was sought to provide guidance and to influence policymakers, government entities, nonprofit organizations, grassroots organizations, public education, higher education, social services agencies, social workers, probation
officers, mental health service providers, faith-based organizations, school staff, teachers, and administrators to make a transformational change within alternative education.

Increased funding, highly trained and qualified staff, innovative program models, evidence-based practices, equitable student support services, and school-based curriculums tailored to meet the unique and robust needs of students within alternative education are necessary in order to prevent juvenile recidivism. Recommendations for future studies on this topic are as follows:

1. The researcher recommends that similar studies to this one be conducted at the elementary, middle school, and high school levels. Studies at these three levels will add to the research on implementing preventative measures to combat youth incarceration. Such preventative measures could include exploring multi-tiered approaches and their effectiveness in preventing juvenile recidivism.

2. Another area that should be studied is teachers’ perceptions of the predictors of juvenile recidivism and the type of support perceived as important to deter students from reoffending as they exit from alternative education. Data collected from this type of study would provide a deeper understanding of the root cause of this phenomenon from an educator’s perspective.

3. Additionally, the researcher recommends a qualitative study conducted with leaders within public education, such as superintendents. This type of study would add qualitative data to determine the effectiveness of alternative education programs and the type of support needed from the executive, federal, state, and local levels in efforts to prevent juvenile recidivism as students exit from alternative education.
4. Furthermore, the researcher recommends a mixed-methods study of probation officers’ perceptions regarding the predictors of juvenile recidivism and students’ success upon reentry into society and avoidance of recidivism as they exit from an alternative education program. Any of these studies would add to the academic knowledge regarding preventing juvenile recidivism as students exit from alternative education.

5. Lastly, the researcher recommends a replication of this study with a larger sample population and/or within another area or country and a disaggregation of the data by gender and/or ethnicity.

Concluding Remarks and Reflections

The findings of this study call for an act of urgency. This study adds to an emerging body of literature on the predictors of juvenile recidivism as students exit from alternative education. This research fills a gap in the knowledge base of understanding the predictors of juvenile recidivism according to youth who have personally experienced reincarceration for repeated offenses. Superintendents, principals, administrators in student services, social workers, probation officers, mental health workers, policymakers, government entities, faith-based organizations, and nonprofit organizations may benefit from the data presented in this study as they encounter students who are exiting from an alternative education program.

This study reaffirmed the significant impact alternative education schools have on helping to prevent juvenile recidivism as students exit from their programs. The students who agreed to participate in this study demonstrated their eagerness to share their stories and personal encounters as they strive to obtain their educational and career goals despite
the setbacks, struggles, and hardships they have endured. Their perspective regarding the predictors of juvenile recidivism and the type of support perceived as important to avoid reoffending provided valuable insight into opportunities for improving practice and fostering innovative ways of transforming alternative education.

Suffice it to say, research has revealed the need for more progressive efforts to improve alternative education programs (Foley & Pang, 2006; Porowski et al., 2014; Zolkoski et al., 2016). The need for improvement attests to those programs that are overlooked and underserved, thus contributing to the perpetual cycle of juvenile recidivism. The ayes have it. Just listen.
REFERENCES


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## APPENDIX A

### Synthesis Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emerging Adulthood Theory</th>
<th>Self-Regulation Theory</th>
<th>Mental Health</th>
<th>Substance Abuse</th>
<th>Social Connectedness</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Progressive Alternative Education Programs</th>
<th>Unique Service Needs of Alt. Ed. Students</th>
<th>Methods to Reduce Juvenile Recidivism</th>
<th>Family Dynamics</th>
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STUDY TITLE: The Predictors of Juvenile Recidivism: Testimonies of Adult Students 18 Years and Older Exiting from Alternative Education

Dear Participant,

If this consent form contains language that is unclear, please ask the researcher to answer any questions or concerns you may have about the consent process and the purpose of this study. If you consent to participate in this study, please sign and return this form in the envelope provided.

My name is La Toshia D. Palmer and I am a Doctoral Candidate from Brandman University. I am conducting research on the predictors of juvenile recidivism according to the testimonies of adult students 18 years or older who are exiting from an alternative education program. I am here to ask you questions on your experience and perceptions regarding juvenile recidivism and what is needed in order to keep youth from becoming re-incarcerated after they graduate from an alternative education program.

You may decide not to answer a question, and you may stop this interview at any time. The interview is scheduled to last for approximately 30 minutes. If you decide to be a part of this research study, you will be asked to sign this form. Please do not sign the form until you have all of your questions answered and understand what will happen to you.

Your answers to the interview questions are strictly confidential. We will not tell anyone the answers you give. We will not share your answers to teachers, administrators, parents or friends. If we talk about this study in speeches or in writing, we will not use your name.

You do not have to be in this study. If you chose to be in this study, you may stop at any time. No one will blame you or criticize you if you do not complete the study. If you have questions about being in this study, you can contact the following person:

Dr. Doug DeVore
Professor-Brandman University, Organizational Leadership
BUIRB Chair
ddevore@brandman.edu T: 623.293.2421 | Fax: 623.748.9705

CONSENT
I have been given the chance to read this consent form. I understand the information about this study. Questions that I wanted to ask about this study have been answered. My signature says that I am willing to participate in this study.

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Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent Discussion/Witness (Printed) Date

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent Discussion/Witness Date
Participant Informed Consent Form

INFORMATION ABOUT: The Predictors of Juvenile Recidivism: Testimonies of Adult Students 18 Years and Older Exiting from Alternative Education

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: La Toshia Palmer

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study being conducted by La Toshia Palmer, a doctoral student in Organizational Leadership at Brandman University. The purpose of this descriptive, qualitative study was to identify and describe the importance of the predictors juvenile recidivism and the effectiveness of efforts to prevent/avoid juvenile recidivism as perceived by previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education in Northern California. A second purpose was to explore the types of support provided by alternative schools and the perceived importance of the support to avoid recidivism according to adult students 18 years of age and older exiting from alternative education.

By participating in this study, I agree to participate in an interview either by video phone or in person. I give permission for the investigator to audio record the interview session to aid in the transcription process. The interview will last approximately 30-40 minutes.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping any identifying information on a password protected computer, online using password protected applications, or in a locked filing cabinet only available to the researcher.

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recordings will be available only to the researcher and the professional transcriptionist. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-redacted and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study all recordings, transcripts and notes taken by the researcher and transcripts from the interview will be destroyed.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input will add to the research on how to help prevent youth who are exiting from an alternative education program, from becoming re-incarcerated. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the study. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, feel free to contact La Toshia Palmer at lpalmer2@mail.brandman.edu; or Dr. Doug DeVore (chair) at ddevore@brandman.edu.

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the investigator may stop the study at any time. I also know that I may ask questions about the study before, during, or after the interview.
f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “Research Participant’s Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

______________________________________________
Signature of Participant or Responsible Party

______________________________________________
Signature of Principal Researcher
APPENDIX C

Interview Protocol

The Predictors of Juvenile Recidivism: Testimonies of Adult Students 18 Years or Older Exiting from Alternative Education

Introduction

“Hello, my name is La Toshia Palmer, and I am an administrator and school social worker. I am employed by the Monterey County Office of Education, and I work in alternative education. I’m a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I am conducting research to determine two questions: 1) what do young adults 18 years and older who have been involved in the juvenile justice system (either been detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) and who are either exiting or have exited from alternative education, perceive to be important factors that will help keep them from re-offending? And, 2) what type of support (personally and from their school) do alternative education students (either been detained, arrested, convicted, and/or incarcerated) who are 18 years and older, in order to not re-offend?

I am conducting approximately 15 interviews with alternative education students like yourself. The information you give, along with others, hopefully will provide a clear picture to school staff, teachers, administrators and policy makers on what is needed in order to keep youth from becoming re-incarcerated after they exit from an alternative education program.

Incidentally, although this may appear quite awkward, I will be reading most of what I say throughout the interview process. The reasons for doing this, is to ensure to a great degree, if at all possible, that my interviews with every participant will be consistent and conducted within the same matter.

Informed Consent and Recording

As a reminder, any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s). After the data is recorded and transcribed, I will send it to you via electronic e-mail in order for you to check and review the thoughts and ideas I have captured for accuracy.

There are two very important pieces of documentation that I would like to ensure that you have received: 1) The Informed Consent and, 2) The Brandman Bill of Rights. Do you have any questions or need any clarification about either document?

We have scheduled 30 minutes for the interview. The interview will be semi-structured around a list of areas of interest. The questions are intended to be open-ended and any insight you have about the different issues is appreciated. At any point during the interview you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview all together. For ease of our discussion and accuracy, I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent.
Before we begin, do you have any questions? Okay, let’s get started and thank you for your time.

**Interview Questions**

*Interview Question 1:* Please share with me your thoughts on what could keep you from re-offending after exiting from alternative education?

*Interview Question 2:* Could mental health services prevent youth incarceration, if at all?

*Interview Question 3:* Does drug use contribute to youth incarceration if any?

*Interview Question 4:* What type of experiences have you encountered with your family during and after incarceration?

*Interview Question 5:* How important are family and friends on your efforts to not reoffend?

*Interview Question 6:* How does gender and/or ethnicity contribute to youth incarceration, and if so, in what way?

*Interview Question 7:* How much impact do you think family background and dynamics contribute to youth incarceration? If yes, please give me an example or two how it might contribute to youth contribution.

*Interview Question 8:* Does a student’s level of education contribute to youth incarceration, and if so, how?

*Interview Question 9:* What type of personal support do you need in order to avoid re-incarceration?

*Interview Question 10:* What type of school support do you need in order to avoid re-incarceration?

*Interview Question 11:* How can school staff, teachers, administrators and policy makers support you as you exit from alternative education?

*Interview Question 12:* How can school staff, teachers, administrators and policy makers help prevent students in alternative education from re-offending?

*Interview Question 13:* What are some law/rules institutional or societal you perceive can help you not to re-offend when exiting from alternative education?

**Ending Interview**

This concludes the end of our interview. Are there any questions that you have for me? Thank you for your time and I appreciate the thought and energy you brought forth. Your participation in this interview has provided me with a lot of valuable information for this study. All of your contributions are greatly appreciated.
APPENDIX D

Semistructured Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How do alternative school (previously detained, arrested, convicted, and/or</td>
<td>a. From your perspective, what could keep you from reoffending after exiting from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older perceive the importance of the predictors of juvenile recidivism in their efforts to not reoffend upon exiting from alternative education?</td>
<td>alternative education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. From your perspective, how could mental health services prevent youth incarceration, if at all?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. From your perspective, how could drug use contribute to youth incarceration, if at all?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. What type of experiences have you encountered with your family during and after incarceration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. How important are family and friends in your efforts to not reoffend?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. From your perspective, does gender and/or ethnicity contribute to youth incarceration, and if so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. From your perspective, how do a person’s family background and dynamics contribute to youth incarceration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>h. From your perspective, does a student’s level of education contribute to youth incarceration, and if so, how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What types of support do alternative school (previously detained, arrested,</td>
<td>a. What type of personal support do you need in order to avoid reincarceration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convicted, and/or incarcerated) adult students 18 years of age or older exiting</td>
<td>b. What type of school support do you need in order to avoid reincarceration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>from alternative education perceive would be important to avoid recidivism?</td>
<td>c. How can school staff, teachers, administrators, and policymakers support you as you exit from alternative education?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. How can school staff, teachers, administrators, and policymakers help prevent students in alternative education from reoffending?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. What are some law/rules, institutional or societal, you perceive can help you not to reoffend when exiting from alternative education?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


APPENDIX E

Study Participation Flyer

USE YOUR VOICE TO MAKE A CHANGE!

THE PREDICTORS OF JUVENILE RECIDIVISM: TESTIMONIES OF ADULT STUDENTS 18 YEARS AND OLDER EXITING FROM ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Are you 18 years or older? Have you ever been in an Alternative Education School or getting ready to exit from one? Have you ever had any contact with the Juvenile Justice System? Want to make a change?

If you answered yes to all of these questions, then you are the perfect candidate for this Doctoral Study! LET YOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPAL KNOW THAT YOU ARE INTERESTED!

LOCATION: AT YOUR DESIGNATED SCHOOL SITE
DATE: TO BE DETERMINED BY THE RESEARCHER UPON YOUR SCHOOL SITE APPROVAL
NAME OF RESEARCHER:
La Toshia Palmer
Ed.D.
Candidate

DON’T MISS OUT ON THIS IMPORTANT OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE A CHANGE!

"BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THIS WORLD." -Mahatma Gandhi
Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.
5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB Adopted November 2013
## APPENDIX G

### All Themes From Research Questions 1 and 2

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<tr>
<th>All themes</th>
<th>Number count</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<td><strong>Research Question 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra Curricular Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Health Services are not helpful to prevent youth incarceration (nmh)</td>
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<td>Mental Health Services are helpful to prevent youth incarceration (ymh)</td>
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<td>Drug Use Contributes to youth incarceration (ydu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family depressed during and after my incarceration (fdp)</td>
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<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family is important on my efforts to not reoffend (fi)</td>
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<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family background deters me from incarceration (fbd)</td>
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<td>Personal Decision to drop out of school effects student's level of education and can contribute to youth incarceration (ypd)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anger from family during and after incarceration (aff)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perceived Gang Affiliation (pga)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental health effects level of education (ymhle)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family disappointed during and after my incarceration (fdi)</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Profiling (rp)</td>
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<td>Level of education does not contribute to youth incarceration (nle)</td>
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<td>Employment can keep me from reoffending (e)</td>
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<td>Family Gang Involvement (fgi)</td>
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<td>Morals and values (mv)</td>
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<td>Personal support (ps)</td>
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<td>Differential Treatment (dt)</td>
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<td>History of family incarceration (hfi)</td>
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<td>Family support during and after incarceration (fs)</td>
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<td>Goals (g)</td>
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<td>Family is important, Friends not important on my efforts not to reoffend (fifn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Profiling and Perceived Gang Affiliation (rppga)</td>
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### Research Question 1 (cont’d)

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<tr>
<td>Family is important on my efforts not to reoffend (f)</td>
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<td>Gender and Ethnicity does not matter when it comes to youth incarceration (gedm)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family upbringing contributes to youth incarceration (fu)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not applicable (N/A)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid negativity can help me not to reoffend (an)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Drug Use contributes to Youth Incarceration (yfdu)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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### Research Question 2

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<th>Service Description</th>
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<td>Counseling—from school, personal, etc - C</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Support with Building Relationships R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral Support as I Exit (MSE)</td>
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<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moral Support to Prevent Reoffending (MSPR)</td>
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<td>School Support Services—employment, housing, transitional services, college placement, financial support (SSS)</td>
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<td>111%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not Applicable (N/A)</td>
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<td>11%</td>
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<td>Obey Laws (OLAW)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Support from Family (PSF)</td>
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<td>7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shorter School Breaks (SB)</td>
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<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive School Environment (PSE)</td>
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<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Support School Activities (PSSA)</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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## APPENDIX H

### Matrix of Major Common Themes for Research Questions 1 and 2

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<th>Major common themes</th>
<th>Number count</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Question 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health services are helpful to prevent youth incarceration</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug use contributes to youth incarceration</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and friends are important on my efforts to not reoffend</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Research Question 2</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling-from school, personal, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obey Laws</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26%</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Support Services-employment, housing, transitional services, college placement, financial support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSE</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
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