REVIEW OF CRIME, PEACE AND SOCIETY
ISSN (O): 3079-6105, ISSN (P): 3079-6091
Vol. 3, No. 8, 2026, 387-395

Exploring the Causes and Patterns of Criminal Recidivism Among Inmates in Central Correctional Facility Hyderabad, Sindh

Hyder Ali Memon[1]*, Nabi Bakhsh Narejo[2], & Islahuddin Narejo[3]

Abstract

Criminal recidivism remains a significant challenge for correctional institutions in Pakistan, particularly in relation to prison management, rehabilitation services, and institutional responses to repeat offenders. This study examines the institutional factors associated with criminal recidivism and explores correctional practices at Central Correctional Facility Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan. A qualitative exploratory research design was adopted, using purposive sampling to select 50 participants, including 30 recidivist inmates, 10 prison officials, and 10 rehabilitation personnel. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, field observations, and institutional documentation and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings identified three major institutional areas: correctional administration and the management of repeat offenders, organizational practices in correctional service delivery, and institutional responses to repeated criminal involvement. The study revealed that prison officials and rehabilitation personnel performed different but interconnected responsibilities, requiring coordination in the delivery of correctional activities. It also highlighted organizational challenges in programme implementation and the need to examine whether repeat offenders receive individualized assessment and appropriate rehabilitation services. The findings suggest that improving correctional responses requires stronger institutional coordination, professional staff development, systematic offender assessment, and effective programme monitoring. Although the study does not establish a direct causal relationship between institutional practices and repeated offending, it provides valuable insights into correctional management in Sindh. The study recommends strengthening institutional arrangements and developing more structured rehabilitation and pre-release planning mechanisms for repeat offenders.

Article History
Received 02 September 2026
Revised 18 October 2026
Accepted 20 October 2026
Published 22 October 2026

OPEN ACCESS

Keywords
Criminal Recidivism, Repeat Offenders, Correctional Administration, Institutional Management, Prison Rehabilitation.

Introduction

Recidivism is an important factor to consider in criminal justice systems. It shows whether the criminal justice system is effective at reducing crime through penalizing, reforming and preparing offenders for life post release. Recidivism can be measured in many ways such as rearrests, reconviction and reincarceration (National Institute of Justice, 2008). It is very

[1] Ph.D. Scholar & Assistant Professor, Department of Criminology, University of Sindh Jamshoro
*Corresponding Author Email: hyder.memon@usindh.edu.pk
[2] Professor, Department of Criminology, University of Sindh Jamshoro. Email: nb.narejo@usindh.edu.pk
[3] LLM Scholar, Institute of Law, University of Sindh Jamshoro. Email: islahuddinnarejo@gmail.com

important to measure recidivism accurately to understand criminal justice outcomes. In qualitative studies recidivism can be measured by understanding the experiences of those involved. Prison sentences are seen traditionally as a punitive measure to reduce crime and protect the public. However, modern approaches to criminal justice show that prison plays an important role in reforming offenders and helping them reintegrate into society. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (Nelson Mandela Rules) show a clear link between reducing recidivism and prisons. They state that prisoners should be given education, training, employment and other support to help them reintegrate. (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). This therefore shows that prisons should not be measured by security and order, but by the opportunities given to help improve behavior.

There has been much research carried out into the link between prisons and recidivism. Research into the impact of incarceration in Norway shows that imprisonment can lead to a reduction in future criminal behavior and employment opportunities, especially for those without employment (Bhuller et al, 2020). This shows how important it can be to offer rehabilitative opportunities. However, there are many factors that can affect the impact prisons have on offenders. Evidence from one criminal justice system cannot be generalized as they may have different resources, schemes and support available. Research into rehabilitative opportunities in corrections shows that there are factors to consider when looking at prison schemes. MacKenzie (2012) looked at research into corrections, academic and vocational education schemes to see how they could help reduce recidivism. More recent research by Rocque (2024) looked at evidence from various rehabilitative schemes, including education, vocational programmes, cognitive behavior and substance misuse. This showed that rehabilitation schemes are not just simply offering programmes for offenders in prison. It is important to consider what type of schemes is being offered, whether they are suitable and how they are being delivered.

The circumstances surrounding recidivism may be linked to those before, during and after the sentence. Visher and Travis (2003) explain that the transition back into society from prison depends on the individual's circumstances, family and social connections, and experiences during their time in prison and post release. This shows how important it is to look at prison as part of a process. This can be linked to recidivism as offenders may have multiple prison sentences and continue to struggle when returning to society. Looking at their criminal history alongside their experiences in prison can give a more detailed insight. Prison in Pakistan varies between each province. In Sindh the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act, 2019 outlines how prisons should be managed. With this legislation it is important to look at how goals within corrections are met. This includes rehabilitative opportunities, trained staff and support for prisoners. The Nelson Mandela Rules internationally also show how important it is for staff to be trained, treated as individuals, given opportunities for education and prepared for release. (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). Rule 75-78, 91-94 & 104-108. This can be used as a good starting point for looking at the practices in prisons without assuming those policies are strictly followed.

Looking at recidivism from an institutional perspective is important as repeat offenders will have had multiple prison sentences and can reflect upon their previous experiences. Their experiences can give insight into the patterns of repeat offending, how they were rehabilitated in prison and any issues they faced. Prison staff and rehabilitative staff can give insight into how the institution works, what resources are available, what schemes are being run and any issues they face when dealing with repeat offenders. This can help to understand how institutional factors interact with repeat offenders. This does not conclude that certain conditions within prison are causing repeat offending but can identify issues that the institution is facing that need to be looked

into. Although there is lots of research internationally into recidivism and rehabilitative opportunities within corrections, this cannot fully explain the experiences of repeat offenders in a specific prison in Pakistan. Therefore it is important to investigate the issue from an institutional perspective to understand how the practices within corrections and reported patterns of repeat offending are experienced. This study looks at criminal recidivism within inmates in Central Correctional Facility Hyderabad, Sindh. It looks at the institutional factors that may contribute to repeat offending. Qualitative interviews with repeat offenders, prison staff and rehabilitative staff were carried out to try and make recommendations to overcome institutional issues and improve rehabilitative opportunities. This study contributes by looking at the institutional factors surrounding repeat offending and identifies practical ways to improve corrections. The following study has two research objectives:

i. To examine the institutional factors contributing to criminal recidivism and the patterns of repeated offending among inmates incarcerated.

ii. To propose recommendations for addressing the institutional challenges contributing to criminal recidivism and improving rehabilitation and reintegration opportunities for repeat offenders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Criminal recidivism is an important variable studied within criminology. Recidivism can be broken down into rearrest, reconviction and reincarceration. Each measure provides different information regarding recidivism (National Institute of Justice, 2008). When studying repeat offenders within a correctional facility, we can gain insights into what leads to repeat imprisonment. When analyzing recidivism within individuals we must ensure we consider their individual situations. Correctional facilities play an important role in tackling repeat offending. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners highlight the importance of reducing recidivism through rehabilitation whilst in a prison. (United Nations General Assembly, 2015) Correctional facilities will also provide education, vocational training and other opportunities for offenders. It is important to consider the opportunities available within a correctional facility.

There has been a lot of discussion around the impact of imprisonment on criminal recidivism. In a study conducted by Bhuller et al (2020), the impact of incarceration on recidivism and employment in Norway was analyzed. As the study was designed appropriately, they were able to analyses the causal impact of imprisonment on the population. They found incarceration decreased recidivism, especially in those who were unemployed. Improvements were also seen in employment. This suggests imprisonment can lead to behavior changes in certain circumstances. However, the correctional system in Norway differs to many developing countries. This study is relevant as it shows that the relationship between imprisonment and recidivism cannot be purely understood by considering the length or severity of sentence. Opportunities and experiences within the correctional facility may impact the outcome of the prisoner. However, the study does not prove imprisonment will have the same impact in all correctional facilities. If the rehabilitation programmes are limited by resources or difficult to implement, the experiences of those in prison may differ greatly. Research should be completed looking at specific correctional facilities to understand how repeat offenders experience imprisonment.

Systematic reviews have been completed looking at the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes within correctional facilities. Lipsey and Cullen (2007) conducted a systematic review of all systematic reviews of rehabilitation in correctional facilities. They found rehabilitation generally had better outcomes for reducing recidivism compared to supervisory

and punitive methods. However, there was great variation in the effectiveness depending on the type of intervention, quality of implementation and offender type. This shows rehabilitation programmes should not be assumed to be effective just because they are being offered within a correctional facility. Consideration must be given to the design, implementation and needs of offenders within the programme. Education and vocational training have also been considered. A meta-analysis completed by Davis et al (2013) looked at education programmes in correctional facilities in the United States. They found those who took part in education programmes had reduced odds of recidivism compared to those who did not. The review also considered employment outcomes. This supports the idea that offering education opportunities within a correctional facility can be valuable. However, this does not mean adding education programmes to a correctional facility will reduce repeat offending. Consideration must be given to whether the offender participates in the programme, quality of education, consistency and opportunities to utilize new skills.

A meta-analysis conducted by Bozick et al (2018) looked at the relationship between education and post release outcomes. They looked at 57 studies regarding recidivism and 21 studies regarding employment. They found further evidence that those who participated in education within a correctional facility had reduced recidivism. This is relevant to the current study as it shows the importance of considering the opportunities available to offenders to engage in education within a correctional facility. The ability of correctional facilities to implement rehabilitation will depend on the capacity of the prison staff. Even if a rehabilitation programme is in place, the staff, expertise, resources and organization of the correctional facility may impact the delivery. Lipsey and Cullen (2007) highlighted the importance of programme implementation. The review shows that just having a programme in place does not necessarily mean it will be delivered consistently to achieve the desired outcome. This is important when considering rehabilitation programmes within correctional facilities with multiple demands.

The international standards of correctional facilities highlight the importance of capacity. The Nelson Mandela Rules highlight the importance of training for prison staff and ensuring there are specialist staff such as psychologists, social workers, teachers and vocational trainers. Rules 75-78 show the importance of trained and qualified staff. Rules 91-94 show the importance of individualized treatment and rehabilitation. (United Nations General Assembly, 2015) This shows how correctional facilities should be run. However, evidence must be obtained from correctional facilities to understand how well these are being implemented. The patterns of repeat offending are very linked to the experiences of offenders. A review conducted by Visher and Travis (2003) looked at research regarding prisoner reentry. They argue that successful reentry should be viewed from a long term perspective considering pre-sentence, in-prison and post release. The review identified that individual factors, family and social relationships, community and in-prison experiences would all impact how they adjust post release. This suggests that repeat offending cannot be fully understood by looking at criminal behavior at one point in time.

This study also identified the importance of considering the challenges faced by offenders post release. Whilst inmates may have opportunities to improve behavior through education, they will need to implement these changes within their social and economic situation. This can be a challenge if they struggle to find employment, rebuild relationships and receive practical assistance. This can be considered when researching recidivist inmates. However, qualitative data should be seen as showing perceived situations and processes. Prisons in Sindh function according to the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act 2019. This provides a structure to ensure prisons are run effectively, offenders are treated well and rehabilitation is provided. The aim of

the act is to reform legal provisions regarding prisons and correctional facilities and provide correction and rehabilitation for offenders (Government of Sindh, 2019). Whilst there is a structure in place for rehabilitation, international research has shown the importance of quality of programmes, capacity and consistency. This must be considered within the relevant correctional facility. Understanding the experiences of repeat offenders and views of staff within the correctional facility can help identify challenges within the rehabilitation process. This evidence can be used to create recommendations based on the correctional facility.

There is a large volume of evidence from international research looking at rehabilitation, education, imprisonment and challenges faced by prisoners. However, most of the evidence comes from correctional facilities in the United States and Norway. Whilst this can provide useful insights, it cannot fully explain the experiences of recidivist inmates within correctional facilities in Sindh, Pakistan. Quantitative research looking at recidivism does not necessarily show how repeat offenders and correctional staff perceive challenges, opportunities for rehabilitation and repeat offending patterns. The current study looks at the factors within the correctional facility associated with criminal recidivism and repeat offending patterns reported by inmates within Central Correctional Facility Hyderabad. The views of prisoners, prison staff and rehabilitation staff are included to identify challenges within the correctional facility and create recommendations. This study aims to understand the experiences of participants rather than the causal effectiveness of programmes.

Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach and exploratory research design to investigate institutional factors related to criminal recidivism amongst inmates held at Central Correctional Facility Hyderabad in Sindh. A purposive sample was used to select 50 participants (30 recidivist inmates, 10 prison staff and 10 Rehabilitation staff). Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews (lasting between 30-40 minutes) and field observations. The data was supplemented with institutional documentation. The data was analyzed using the six-stage thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The interviews were transcribed into written format and manually coded to identify patterns within the data. In order to protect participants' identities codes were added to the participant's names.

During the interviews participants were asked about their experiences of being in prison, previous criminal activity, and access to rehabilitation services. The prison staff and Rehabilitation staff also provided further information regarding the resources available within the institution, correctional methods and access to rehabilitation. The information from different participant groups was analyzed to identify common experiences and different views. This provided a greater understanding of institutional factors relating to criminal recidivism and identified areas that could be improved in relation to correctional rehabilitation.

Findings

The findings of this article focus on the institutional processes through which correctional services were managed and delivered to inmates with histories of repeated offending. Data were obtained from interviews with recidivist inmates, prison officials, and rehabilitation personnel, supported by institutional information and field observations at Central Correctional Facility Hyderabad. Rather than examining individual motivations for criminal behavior, the present analysis concentrates on the operational responsibilities of correctional personnel, differences

between institutional roles, and the organization of rehabilitation services. Three analytical areas are presented.

1. Correctional Administration and the Management of Repeat Offenders

The findings highlight that managing recidivist prisoners is part of prison staffs responsibilities within the prison. This includes managing prisoners, keeping them safe, maintaining discipline and running the day to day running of the prison. An important aspect to emerge from this was that rehabilitative activities require organization but must fit into the processes already in place. This will rely on staff availability, prison timetables and staff responsibilities.

The findings also show that there are differences in prison staffs and rehabilitative staff's roles. Prison staffs take a more administrative and supervisory role when it comes to rehabilitative activities whilst the rehabilitative staffs concentrate on providing services. This therefore provides two contrasting views on managing recidivist offenders. Overall it identifies that there is an important aspect of prison management in relation to recidivism by looking at the rehabilitative administration. Although managing recidivist offenders is more than just keeping them in custody, this study does not show that there is a specific administrative system in place for recidivist prisoners.

2. Organizational Practices in Correctional Service Delivery

The second area of analysis looked at the organization of rehabilitation within the prison. The findings highlighted that there was a level of coordination necessary to ensure that correctional activity could be provided. There was a clear distinction between the roles of prison officials in providing institutional coordination, and the role of rehabilitation staff in providing or assisting with education, training and other programs. This shows that programmes were reliant on collaboration between different staff members. The interviews also showed that there were challenges in providing correctional activities due to the other operational requirements of the prison.

Rehabilitation staff discussed how they had to consider the practicalities of providing teaching activities, ensuring resources are in place and meeting the needs of inmates with varying needs. This showed that programmes were influenced by how institutional duties and resources were organized. Some correctional activities were provided with assistance from outside organizations. This shows that the provision of rehabilitation is not solely provided by permanent correctional staff. It was clear that there were issues around coordination and consistency, however there was no evidence to show that there were set processes in place for coordination, consistent processes for monitoring programmes or any documentation around how well they were performing. These areas would need to be explored further within the institution.

3. Institutional Responses to Recurring Criminal Justice Involvement

The third area of analysis focuses on how correctional staff perceives issues regarding repeat offending. Both prison staff and rehabilitation staff acknowledged that inmates with previous convictions had correctional needs. A good understanding of the prisoner's backgrounds and provision of suitable rehabilitation opportunities was highlighted. Findings indicate that repeat offenders were largely mentioned in relation to the correctional opportunities available in the institution. Education, vocational opportunities, positive behavior support and supervision were mentioned. There was however no evidence to suggest inmates were assessed and placed

on appropriate programmes based on their previous offending history. It is important to note that having repeat offenders in the institution does not mean there is a specific strategy being used to manage individuals. The study highlighted what correctional opportunities are present and the challenges faced by staff however did not look at whether there was a specific strategy for managing recidivism.

Interviews also indicated that correctional staff felt repeat offending was an issue beyond the time spent in prison. Whilst they knew that rehabilitation in the institution was just one part of the process, the study did not look at what happened to inmates following their current period in prison or whether any specific correctional strategies were impacting on their offending. Findings highlight the need to look at how institutions recognize repeat offending and what they do to address this. They also demonstrate the importance of recognizing the difference between general correctional opportunities and specific strategies in place for inmates with a history of recidivism.

Findings indicated that there are three institutional factors that can influence the management of repeat offenders. Firstly, it has been found that there is a relationship between prison management and correctional services. Secondly, it has been identified that there are differences in the roles of those working in prisons and those providing rehabilitation services. Lastly, findings have indicated that there was a lack of evidence regarding whether repeat offenders receive specialist assessment, management and rehabilitation services due to their history of offending. This provides an insight into how criminal recidivism can be influenced by institutions. Findings do not identify specific institutional factors that cause individuals to reoffend but have identified areas of correction and management that require further research.

Discussion

The results from the present study indicated the importance of correctional management and activities within prisons. The roles of prison staff and rehabilitation staff varied however they worked together to ensure security, monitoring and rehabilitation. In order to manage corrections effectively there must be a balance between prison and rehabilitation. The UNODC (2015) highlights that managing a prison involves balancing security within the institution alongside having positive relationships between staff and prisoners along with professional correctional activities. This result also demonstrated that managing corrections involved working together with prison staff, rehabilitation staff and external organizations. There were various types of rehabilitation activities however the appropriate structures would need to be put in place. Studies have shown that correctional rehabilitation can reduce recidivism (Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). This will depend on the nature and delivery of the interventions being used.

Another key result was the ways in which corrections were managed for repeat offenders. There were general activities put into place however it was not clear if repeat offenders were systematically assessed and placed onto the correct programmes. Andrews et al (1990) highlighted through the Risk-Need-Responsivity model that rehabilitation should be effective by considering the risk level, criminogenic needs and responsivity of offenders. These results also suggested that corrections should be managed by considering the relationship between rehabilitation and reparation. Visher and Travis (2003) explained that successful reintegration involved the offender having a series of interlocking experiences throughout their sentence. This indicates that corrections play an important role in offenders preparing for reintegration back into society. However, this study did not look at the outcomes of offenders once they had been released and whether specific management practices reduced repeat offending.

Overall, this study has provided an insight into understanding criminal recidivism from an institutional perspective in Sindh. It has shown the importance of having clear roles within corrections, working together with service providers and having appropriate ways to manage repeat offenders. Whilst this study does not show a direct link between institutional practices and recidivism, it has highlighted key areas to improve corrections management and rehabilitation.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the research, it is recommended that the following strategies be implemented in order to improve institutional management strategies in order to manage repeat offenders within correctional facilities across Sindh, Pakistan.

- Correctional facilities should implement structured assessment processes for inmates who have a history of offending. This will allow correctional staff to identify any individual rehabilitation needs, behavioral issues and determine the correct interventions.
- Prison staff and rehabilitation staff should have regular professional development sessions to improve their knowledge in managing offenders, rehabilitation, communication and behavior. This will improve their ability to meet the varied needs of repeat offenders.
- Correctional authorities should implement monitoring systems to ensure rehabilitation activities are taking place, inmates are engaged and programmes are progressing. Keeping correct records will allow the facility to remain accountable and help managers identify areas for development.
- Prison facilities should implement personal release plans for repeat offenders. This should include referral to appropriate employment support services, vocational opportunities and community based support services. Collaboration with relevant organizations may help to ensure the individual can continue to benefit from rehabilitation whilst in the community.

Conclusion

This study investigated institutional factors which relate to re-offending and looked at correctional management strategies, organizational structures and management of repeat offenders within Central Correctional Facility Hyderabad, Sindh, Pakistan. This research has highlighted the roles and responsibilities of prison staff and rehabilitating staff and the importance of working together. It also revealed the need for personalization when assessing offenders, and for specific institutional structures to be put in place. Overall, this study shows that in order to improve correctional management strategies for repeat offenders, there needs to be an improvement in institution collaboration, staff capabilities, monitoring of programmes and planning for rehabilitating offenders. Whilst there is no direct link between specific management strategies and offending, it does provide useful information for correctional policies and management in Sindh. Future research should look into how specific management strategies are being implemented and their effectiveness.

Declaration

Thesis-Based Research: This article is derived from the PhD research of the first author, Hyder Ali Memon, entitled *"The Study of Criminal Recidivism, Its Causes and Patterns Among Inmates Incarcerated in Central Prison Hyderabad."* The present article focuses specifically on institutional management and correctional responses to repeat offenders.

References

Andrews, D. A., Bonta, J., & Hoge, R. D. (1990). Classification for effective rehabilitation: Rediscovering psychology. *Criminal justice and Behavior*, *17*(1), 19-52.

Bhuller, M., Dahl, G. B., Løken, K. V., & Mogstad, M. (2020). Incarceration, recidivism, and employment. *Journal of political economy*, *128*(4), 1269-1324.

Bozick, R., Steele, J., Davis, L., & Turner, S. (2018). Does providing inmates with education improve postrelease outcomes? A meta-analysis of correctional education programs in the United States. *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, *14*(3), 389-428.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Davis, L. M., Bozick, R., Steele, J. L., Saunders, J., & Miles, J. N. (2013). Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education. *Rand Corporation*.

Government of Sindh. (2019). *The Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act, 2019* (Sindh Act No. X of 2019). https://www.sindhlaws.gov.pk/setup/Publications_SindhCode/PUB-NEW-23-000010.pdf

Lipsey, M. W., & Cullen, F. T. (2007). The effectiveness of correctional rehabilitation: A review of systematic reviews. *Annu. Rev. Law Soc. Sci.*, *3*(1), 297-320.

MacKenzie, D. L. (2012). The effectiveness of corrections-based work and academic and vocational education programs.

National Institute of Justice. (2008, February 20). *Measuring recidivism*. U.S. Department of Justice. https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/measuring-recidivism

Rocque, M. (2024). Rehabilitation for Enduring Change. *The Oxford handbook of evidence-based crime and justice policy*, 286.

United Nations General Assembly. (2015). *United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules)* (Resolution A/RES/70/175). https://mandates.un.org/mandate/A/RES/70/175

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (2015). *Handbook on dynamic security and prison intelligence.* United Nations.

Visher, C. A., & Travis, J. (2003). Transitions from prison to community: Understanding individual pathways. *Annual review of sociology*, *29*(1), 89-113.