EX-OFFENDERS EMPLOYABILITY BARRIERS AND PRACTICAL TRAINING FRAMEWORK

Singh Jit Singh Keshminder [1] 🔘 **, Soo-Cheng Chuah** [1] 🔘 **, Melissa Shahrom** [2] 🔘 **,**
Muhammad Azman Ibrahim [3] 🔘 **, Siti Mahirah Mohamed** [4] 🔘

1 Department of Economics & Financial Studies, Faculty of Business and Management,
University Teknologi MARA, 42300 Selangor Campus, Malaysia
2 Department of Technology & Supply Chain Management Studies, Faculty of Business
and Management, University Teknologi MARA, 42300 Selangor Campus, Malaysia
3 Department of Entrepreneurship & Marketing Studies, Faculty of Business and Manage-
ment, University Teknologi MARA, 42300 Selangor Campus, Malaysia
4 Kolej MDIS Malaysia, Persiaran Graduan, Kota Ilmu, 79200, Nusajaya, Johor, Malaysia
E-mail: keshm967@uitm.edu.my

Abstract

With the marginalised group gaining greater attention for employment, this paper explores the barriers faced by ex-offenders during the hiring process. This study uses a qualitative approach via face-to-face semi-structured. Twenty-one cases were selected from the Malaysian bakery businesses since it actively hires ex-offenders. Findings demonstrate that job barriers faced by ex-offenders generally consisted of their self-efficacy belief, attitude, job-related skills, and self-appearance, which were fairly within their control to manage. Meanwhile, the type of offence and gender discrimination were two other barriers identified; however, these obstacles were beyond their control. This study is the first to propose a training framework to help relevant authorities assist the ex-offenders in reducing the employment barriers and justifying the training performance as a testimonial in convincing potential employers of their credibility.

Research paper

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Keshminder, S. J. S., Chuah, S. C., Shahrom, M., Ibrahim, M. A. & Mohamed, S. M. (2022). Ex-Offenders Employability Barriers and Practical Training Framework. *Journal of Entrepreneurship, Business and Economics*, *10*(2S1), 53–78.

Introduction

In recent times, many governments worldwide have actively offered tax reliefs and promotional campaigns to encourage employers to hire ex-offenders (MOHE, 2018; Tim, 2018). However, the question remains: are the employers ready to hire them? And are the ex-offenders themselves ready to be employed? First and foremost, it is well-known that employment is essential for one's physical and mental health (Fassinger, 2008). Past studies have repeatedly underlined its role in providing people with income, identity, and independence as opposed to unemployment, which leads to boredom, poor motivation, low self-confidence, and poor mental health (Agerbo *et al.*, 1998; Harris and Keller, 2005). However, marginalised groups, namely ex-offenders, have severely suffered from a lack of employment opportunities (Flatt and Jacobs, 2018; Oliver, 2017). Here, prior works have indicated that around 60 percent of employers are not interested in hiring this particular population (Schmitt and Warner, 2011). By definition, an ex-offender is an individual that has been arrested, found guilty, and served time in jail or prison for violating a law (Dunn, 2017). Consequently, this group of individuals faces a tough time searching for a job (Lukies *et al.*, 2011). They also receive lower wages relative to peers of comparable demographic characteristics with no criminal records (Freeman, 2003).

In general, ex-offenders who cannot secure employment are linked with a higher tendency to re-offend (Van Der Geest *et al.*, 2011), thereby rendering it necessary to reduce the likelihood of recidivism (Zakaria* *et al.*, 2018). Employment offers this population the chance to empower themselves through rehabilitation to experience progressing in life (Duwe and Clark,

2017; Piazza, 2017) and reintegrating back into the local community (Freeman, 2003; Wodahl, 2006; Radović-Marković et al., 2019). Reintegration, in particular, is an act dependent on the sense of self-belonging encountered by ex-offenders upon their release (Hirschfield and Piquero, 2010), which may be achieved via employment, family support, and social encouragement from peers. Accordingly, some studies have revealed that crime rates committed by ex-offenders are reduced once they are employed (Bowen *et al.*, 2019), which is in line with the economic theory of crime as described (Becker, 1968). The theory details explicitly how the anticipation of higher perks through employment and training can potentially reduce the possibility of illegal activity.

Currently, many employers are either unwilling to employ ex-offenders (Schmitt and Warner, 2011) or inclined to offer short-term opportunities only (Flatt and Jacobs, 2018). Stigmatised and discriminated, ex-offenders face many employability barriers (Walkowitz, 2019), which tremendously influence employers' hiring decisions due to their search for credible and trustworthy individuals. According to past literature, the significant barriers faced by ex-offenders include the type of crime committed (Maddox, 1971), low level of self-efficacy belief (Choi *et al.*, 2012; Judge and Bono, 2001), lack of desire to learn (Behan, 2014), poor attitude (Luu, 2011), meagre job skills (Oser, 2006; Weiman *et al.*, 2015), deprived self-appearance (Oliver, 2017), and gender discrimination (Benda, 2005; Kruttschnitt, 2013).

Conceptually, the social cognitive career theory (SCCT) by Albert Bandura (1977) has long emphasised the way perceived employability barriers can influence the resultant career outcomes. This model underlines that the amount of time and energy ex-offenders put into the job-search process

and the level of persistence, when faced with adversities, may depend on several elements—job-search self-efficacy, job-search outcome expectations, goals, availability of a social network for support in the job search, and emotional strains (Brown *et al.*, 2013). Once an ex-offender is released from incarceration, their career success afterward relies upon their ability to reduce any inherent employment barriers. Unfortunately, hiring managers are imperfect themselves and may make hiring decisions based on stereotypical judgements (Perry *et al.*, 1994), which are again rooted in the aforementioned employment barriers.

Although past studies have brought forward the employability barriers ex-offenders face (Young and Powell, 2015), the elements have yet to be fully explored and the works are not inclusive. Despite the relevance of this particular issue, minimal empirical or qualitative justification is available to support the inherency of these barriers, as many ex-offenders face difficulties in securing a job (Zakaria et al., 2018). Furthermore, a closer look at the availability of literature has shown that the field is relatively nascent and requires further exploration.

To put forward strong reasoning supporting these barriers, an in-depth review specifically in the context of a specific sector that rigorously hires ex-offenders is required. This notion is attributable to past studies that have underlined the differing employee characteristics required by employers from one industry to another (Barth *et al.*, 1987; Keshminder and Cheng, 2019).

Therefore, this paper aims to explore the barriers ex-offenders face during the hiring process in a specific sector setting. The bakery business is chosen due to its active employment of this population in Malaysia. Accord-

ingly, the findings will allow for the proposal of a strategic training framework specifically suggesting the form of training required to reduce the employability barriers faced by ex-offenders in this business. For this reason, the focus is placed on a twofold research question, namely: (a) what are the barriers faced by ex-offenders during the hiring process in the food and beverage (F&B) sector? and (b) what is a suitable training framework that can be used by prison training centres or related rehabilitation centres for reducing the barriers faced by ex-offenders during the hiring process in the bakery business? In addressing the identified gaps, this exploratory study was completed by employing a multiple case study technique, wherein a face-to-face semi-structured interview routine was implemented accordingly (Yin, 2018).

Furthermore, this study emphasises augmenting the comprehensive knowledge available on detailing the barriers to employment faced by ex-offenders, which is currently limited. Moreover, it will provide a training framework to reduce the employment barriers among ex-offenders, which can be highly useful for the prison training department and correctional centres to prepare their inmates for post-release endeavours and challenges. Finally, considering the results reported, a higher number of ex-offenders that gain lawful employment will further aid in mitigating any collateral consequences to the community.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows: Sections 2 and 3 provide an overview of prison statistics in Malaysia and a review of ex-offender's employability barriers accordingly, while Section 4 presents the methodology employed in this work. Then, Section 5 presents the findings and discussion, and the last section concludes the paper.
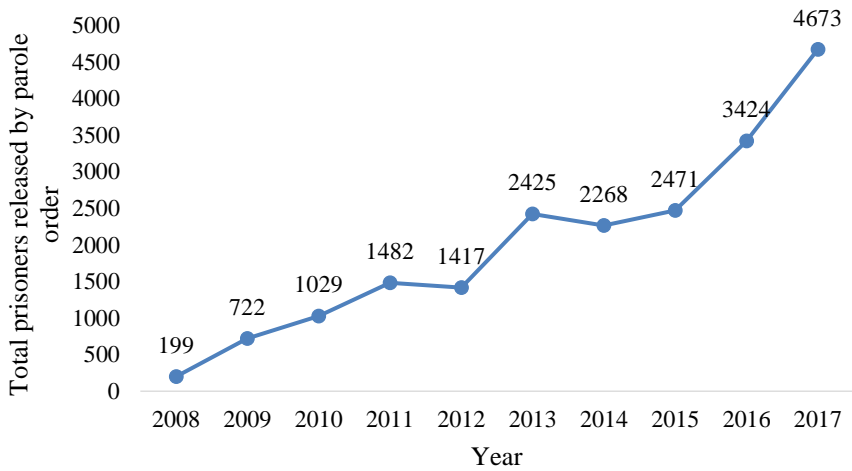
Prison and parole statistics in Malaysia

Malaysia is witnessing an increasing prison population, as indicated in Figure 1. The statistics showed that the highest prison population in Malaysia was recorded in 2018. Since 2015, 102,214 ex-offenders have been released from Malaysian prisons, with 8,897 recidivating during the same period (Malaysian Prison Department, 2017).
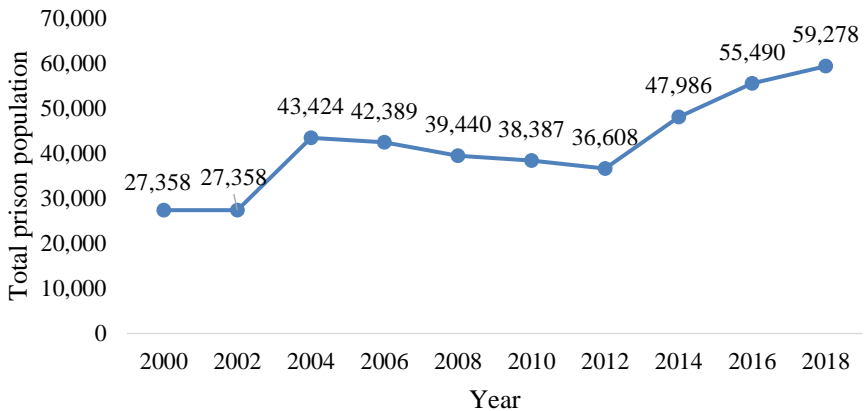
Figure 1. The Statistics of Prison Population in Malaysia from 2000 to 2018 (Source: World Prison Brief (2018))

As of 2017, 7,934 offenders have applied for parole. Only those eligible were granted parole. Figure 2. presents the statistics of offenders freed on parole. Each year, the number of offenders who are given parole increases. These offenders work under the Malaysian Prison or Police Department's surveillance (Malaysian Prison Department, 2017).

Figure 2. Statistics on Parolees from 2008 to 2017 (Source: Malaysian
Prison Department (2017))

In Malaysia, ex-offenders who are granted parole go through four
phases. Prison staff focuses on rehabilitating the offenders mentally and phys-
ically during the first and second phases. These two stages entail bettering
their attitudes, abilities, mental health, and social functioning. The third phase
involves providing the offender's vital skills to access employment. And lastly
is the fourth phase, the offenders are integrated into the community to see if
employers and their families are willing to accept them. Also, in the last stage,
they can work with Corporate Smart Internship (CSI) affiliated companies.
The companies come from various industries, and more than 200 companies
have participated in the CSI programme since its start in 2016. The pro-
gramme assists parolees and those under the Licensed Released of Prisoners
Program (PBSL) in obtaining training and skills for the workplace. As of Oc-
tober 2021, this programme had attracted 10,446 parolees and 1,284 PBSL
participants (BERNAMA, 2021).

Ex-offender's employability barriers

Ex-offenders make up a unique marginalised group in today's society; they may suffer from multiple hardships and barriers sustained before incarceration, during incarceration, or after release (Oliver, 2017). The subcategories of offenders may be differentiated based on the type of legal violation carried out, which include: a) victimless crimes, such as possession of illegal drugs; b) property crimes, such as shoplifting; c) crimes against a person or people, such as armed robbery; d) sex crime, such as rape; and e) violent crimes, such as aggravated assault (Dunn, 2017).

In general, the 'change' or rehabilitation experienced by an ex-offender can only be confirmed once they are successfully integrated into the community (Bowen *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, criminal behaviour among these individuals is considerably reduced once employment is attained (Van Der Geest *et al.*, 2011). Unfortunately, barriers such as concentration of poverty, lack of resources, and various aspects of social inadequacy have been collectively linked to explain the concentration of crimes observed among those who remain unemployed (Oliver, 2017). Similarly, some studies have shown that the possibility of re-offending is lower for ex-offenders who have better mental health post-release (Wallace and Wang, 2020), thus indicating the necessity of employment to promote better mental health among them.

Meanwhile, employers often have reservations about hiring ex-offenders as they may not be willing to take any risks (Jung, 2015). This is possibly due to such a decision being associated with potentially risking their organisation's image, productivity, and employees (Hipes, 2019). Accordingly, research has indicated that almost half of ex-offenders remain unemployed for nearly eight months post-release (Visher *et al.*, 2011). Therefore,

the baggage of crime and stigma they shouldered further reduces the opportunity to gain employment. At the same time, the persuasive negative stereotyping among employers against them during the hiring process becomes a barrier to securing a job.

Methodology

This paper employed the qualitative approach via multiple case-study techniques. This approach was deployed to explore better the relatively nascent field of study (Yin, 2018). The methodological approach was deemed necessary due to the non-fully investigated field of interest, leaving some areas for any unanticipated insight by the researcher (Anderson, 2010; Yin, 2018). Furthermore, a semi-structured interview protocol was utilised for data-gathering by engaging with key informants.

The population of this study was sampled from the F&B sector. Yang Liang (2012) showed that in terms of career choice, ex-offenders are more interested in joining the F&B and hospitality sector than any other sector. To support Liang's (2012) findings and ensure the scenario is similar in Malaysia, a preliminary interview was conducted with an officer from a correctional centre in Malaysia. According to the correctional officer, training on food preparation is actively provided in their centre and is a favourite among the trainees. Moreover, sampling was carried out from the F&B sector, specifically the population of bakery operators, due to correctional centres offering food preparation training focused on baking cakes and cookies.

Among the bakery operators available, only medium to large-scale operators were considered. Their selection was attributable to their expansive menus offering more than cakes and cookies; some operators even offered

fine dining. Therefore, these bakery operators would be capable of providing various employment options, ranging from line cook, fast-food cook, dishwasher, and barista to cashier, kitchen managers, servers, runners, and others. Consequently, there would be a greater chance for an ex-offender to be employed than small bakery operators; in the case of Malaysia, these operators are mostly family-oriented and only focused on limited products (Salamzadeh et al., 2011). Accordingly, the list of bakery operators was obtained from the Companies Commission of Malaysia (SSM). Based on the recorded sales revenue, bakery operators with the highest sales revenue were sampled using the purposive random sampling technique and contacted via telephone. Twenty-one bakery businesses from the state of Selangor agreed to the interviews. Only those who confirmed that they had hired ex-offenders were interviewed. The profiles of the sampled bakery operators are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Participant Profile

Key Characteristic	Values/Information
The number of bakeries interviewed	21
The average number of jobs [full-time equivalent]	11.6
The average number of ex-offenders employed	1.3
Average annual sales [MYR]	2,340.00
Common products offered	Cake, bread, rolls, cookies, pies, pastries, muffins, a variety of starters, salad, soup, Asian/western main course (lunch or dinner), & beverages (hot and cold)

The data collection process was twofold. In the first stage, pertinent information was gathered from secondary sources, such as journal articles, the Department of Prison Malaysia's website, bakery business websites, and news articles. This stage explored ex-offender employability barriers to struc-

ture the interview questions and determine the right probing points, thus ensuring an effective data gathering process in the second stage. Furthermore, information obtained from this stage was used for triangulation purposes to gauge the coherency and find any anomalies from the interview data collected in the subsequent stage. Lastly, this stage assisted in identifying the key informants—which is critical to capturing the breadth and depth of the issue under investigation (Ashenbaum *et al.*, 2012; Salamzadeh et al., 2022; Soleimani et al., 2022). Besides, the triangulation and key informant selection processes are crucial for enhancing the precision and trustworthiness of the qualitative findings (Krefting, 1991; Rahman et al., 2021). A high level of rigour and trustworthiness will allow a researcher to apply the findings in a different context due to their consistency (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Meanwhile, the second stage consisted of conducting interviews with one key informant from each bakery business, the hiring manager —tasked with interviewing potential applicants and making the hiring decisions. Data collection was performed by executing personal face-to-face interviews using the semi-structured interview protocol (see Appendix 1). Each interview session lasted for about 30 to 45 minutes, and the process of data collection was halted after the third participant when the saturation point was reached (Yin, 2017). Then, a thematic approach was employed for data analysis purposes (Gibson and Brown, 2009; Stebbins, 2001; Dana et al., 2022). The data were analysed manually using a six-step procedure suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006) as follows: (1) The data was familiarised by listening to the interview recordings and reading the field notes multiple times, whereby this step was supplemented by making cross-references to documented resources; (2) Primary codes closely related to the objectives of the study were generated; (3)

Codes generated from Step 2 were grouped under specific themes based on their similarities; (4) The themes generated from Step 3 were reviewed to ensure consistency and rigour in identifying the themes; (5) Based on the uniqueness and specificity, the themes were then named and defined; (6) The final step was completed by writing the report.

Findings, Discussion and Implications

Gender biases

In general, hiring managers showed no discrimination towards hiring ex-offenders—equal consideration to other job applicants. However, the hiring managers exhibited variations in their preferences for female or male ex-offenders. Those who preferred female ex-offenders reasoned that the management was more confident having them around—female co-workers would be comfortable and safer with these hires in the event of an absent manager compared to their male counterparts. There were also lower chances for female ex-offenders to overpower their co-workers during the absence of a manager. On the other hand, hiring managers who preferred male ex-offenders were because they were more hardworking than female ex-offenders. In addition, they are emotionally more stable compared to their female counterparts, leading to more minor workplace disputes between co-workers—and lesser workplace drama.

Type of offence committed

Hiring managers seriously consider the type of offence committed by ex-offenders. According to them, trustworthiness is the core aspect they look

for in their employees. With a bad criminal record, employees' trustworthiness is questionable. It forces the hiring manager to be more cautious in their hiring decisions. If in doubt, the hiring managers check the ex-offender's criminal history and family background to justify the hiring decision. They also kept a close watch on the newly hired ex-offenders until they were fully convinced that the new inclusions were not a threat to the organisation. The type of offence committed by ex-offenders is a significant barrier for ex-offenders during the hiring process—the primary deciding factor in the hiring process.

Self-efficacy belief

Hiring managers look for ex-offenders that exhibit a high level of commitment. Only then are the hiring managers confident that they can accomplish the assigned tasks. Fundamentally, the confidence to perform specific job results from a positive self-efficacy belief (Bandura, 1989). Therefore, it is evident that a high level of such belief among ex-offenders is necessary to secure a job. The bakery business requires employees with high confidence. They will frequently have to attend to demanding customer needs—a high level of self-efficacy is necessary to ensure that ex-offenders are stable emotionally to handle the pressure. For ex-offenders to survive in the bakery business, motivation, commitment, and emotional stability are prioritised to increase production and retain customers—the self-efficacy belief of ex-offenders is crucial to securing a job.

Job skills and desire to learn

Ex-offenders with job-related skills have an extra advantage during the hiring process. Hiring managers prioritise these applicants since the resources required to train them. Often job applicants are without skills and experience. Hiring managers still consider them based on other merits. Training is provided to these employees and closely supervised before they can independently handle the job assigned. Having the skills gives a competitive advantage to ex-offenders during the hiring process. However, it does not deter those with less or no skills from applying for a bakery business job.

Ex-offenders without skills and experience get hired due to their portrayal of a high desire to learn. The desire to learn among ex-offenders is crucial for hiring managers since they frequently search for employees who can work independently and are fast learners. This type of ex-offenders strives for self-development independently, becoming an asset to the organisation. Hiring managers see applicants with low enthusiasm for knowledge and skills as a burden to the organisation. They jeopardise the organisational image by offering low-quality service to the customers.

Attitude

Hiring managers can foresee an employee's performance during the hiring process based on their attitude. The bakery business inherently necessitates a positive attitude as employees must be willing to work for extended hours under pressure. These demanding working conditions require them to be honest with the tasks allocated. Hiring managers perceive attitude to influence many aspects of an ex-offender, such as discipline, work ethics, and good manners. Employees will have to frequently engage with customers in

the bakery business, requiring practical communication skills. Hiring managers believe a positive attitude drives effective communication. Only ex-offenders with excellent work ethics and high discipline can survive the bakery business's strenuous and demanding work conditions. With a positive attitude, ex-offenders stand a higher chance to secure a job.

Self-appearance

Hiring managers with their vast experience can gauge the capabilities of employees based on their self-appearance. Self-appearance is linked to confidence—decent self-appearance accentuates an employee's confidence. Ex-offenders self-appearance signals to the hiring managers whether they have the qualities that the organisation is looking for. In the bakery business, employees must be neat as they often deal directly with customers. Thus, hiring managers scrutinise ex-offender job applicants based on their self-appearance in the initial hiring process. Whether they are rejected or move into the next hiring stage depends on self-appearance. Ex-offenders must ensure that they are groomed when attending job interviews.

Supporting Document

Supporting documents by the prison department or rehabilitation centres validating ex-offenders ' performance (e.g., skills and attitude) amplifies their credibility in the hiring process. Hiring managers are more confident hiring ex-offenders with documents/certificates detailing the training that they had undergone. For hiring managers, the information in the supporting documents becomes a checklist for them to assess the ex-offender's skills during the hiring process. These documents affirm that ex-offenders at least have

basic employability skills to the hiring managers like self-management, willingness to learn, communication, and resilience. Some of these skills are essential to adapt to the working environment quickly. With these skills, the hires can easily integrate with other employees.

## Research implications: Training framework to reduce ex-offender's employability barriers

The interviews conducted in this study clearly showed that many employability barriers are present, which ex-offenders need to break to secure employment. In the second stage, ex-offender barriers to employability as explored in the interviews were strategically linked, and the types of training capable of reducing each barrier were extracted. The strategic link between the barriers and barrier-reducing training was then utilised to propose a training framework geared towards amplifying the employability of ex-offenders (see Figure 1).

First, the framework suggested that training be offered during incarceration or post-release. Training directed at promoting positive self-efficacy should be provided first as it would directly influence other employability barriers. Furthermore, increasing the self-efficacy of ex-offenders may be achieved by providing training centred around motivational programmes that could improve their self-esteem and assist them in managing any physical and emotional challenges. According to the feedback obtained from the hiring managers, they were looking for employees with high motivation and self-esteem for completing the tasks allocated.

Once the self-efficacy belief is strengthened, only then should the training focus on reducing other barriers. Here, the study hiring managers indicated that they were looking for employees who were independent and fast learners. Therefore, exposure to online learning platforms, networking techniques, and knowledge about how life-long learning influences self-development should be provided accordingly. These types of training can promote these individuals towards being independent learners and nurture their desire to learn concurrently.

Next, in the context of attitude, the hiring managers required prospective ex-offender hires to have a positive attitude when working extended hours and under pressure. Therefore, the training to face these strenuous conditions should emphasise content detailing how to control their emotions and maintain the appropriate work ethics. Additionally, the bakery business further requires good manners for their employees, especially when communicating with customers, which is an aspect that should be covered in training.
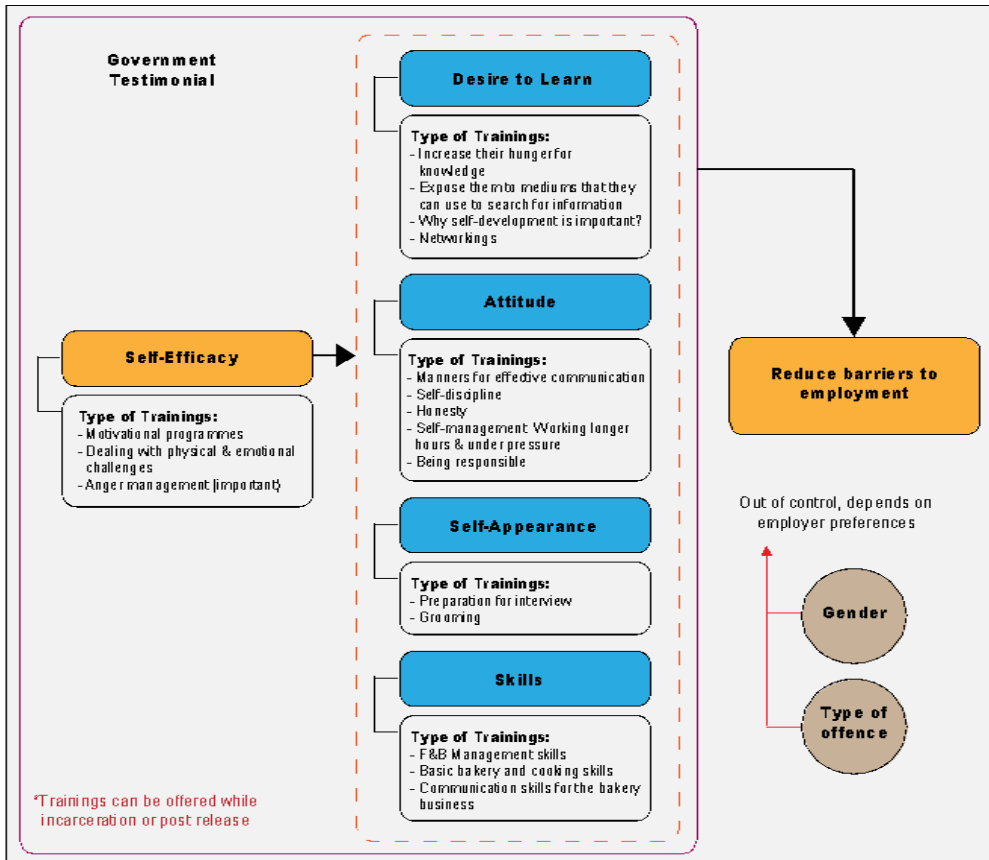
Figure 3. Ex-offenders training framework (Source: Author's conceptualisation)

Meanwhile, another employability barrier that requires due consideration is self-appearance. For example, training on interview and grooming skills should be provided as the element of self-appearance is the first hurdle faced by ex-offenders even before they can proceed with the interview process. Similarly, they should be equipped with the relevant skill sets required for the bakery business, such as essential bakery and cooking techniques, and

be exposed to the specific communication skills needed to deal with customers. This is especially true because the hiring managers directly indicate that bakery business employees must frequently deal with customers.

Furthermore, all forms of training provided to ex-offenders should be carefully crafted and assessed. It is suggested that the prison department or correctional centres generate a testimony regarding these individuals' performance based on their training. The presence of this testimony will further increase their chance to secure a job. In contrast, another two barriers pointed out by the hiring managers, namely gender differences and the type of offence committed, were beyond the ex-offender's control.

Conclusion

The baggage and burden of crime and stigma shouldered by ex-offenders generally reduce their opportunity to gain employment. Research has shown that hiring managers have their own reservations when hiring those who come from this stigmatised group. Besides, these individuals oftentimes lack the characteristics required by hiring managers, which directly surfaces as a barrier to their employability. More importantly, employers may not be willing to risk their organisation's image, productivity, and employees by hiring an ex-offender as their background may be shoddy and their behaviour, once hired, is uncertain. Due to such stereotypes, this marginalised group is unable to progress in life, and thus often resorts to re-offending. Therefore, this study explored ex-offender employability barriers and proposed a strategic training framework to reduce these barriers. A qualitative approach via the multiple case study technique with supplementary face-to-face semi-structured interviews was utilised to explore these barriers. The cases were

selected accordingly from the domestic bakery business in Malaysia as the sector has been actively and consistently hiring ex-offenders, and extensive training for the inmates has also been provided in this area.

The results showed that several identified barriers were within the control of the ex-offender themselves, such as self-efficacy belief, attitude, job-related skills, and self-appearance. In contrast, two barriers were beyond their control, namely the type of offence committed and gender discrimination by hiring managers. Therefore, it is suggested for the prison department or correctional centres to provide training to reduce the controllable barriers by the ex-offenders. The different forms of training may focus on motivational programmes, lifelong learning skills, communication skills, techniques to control emotions, grooming, and basic skills required in the bakery business. Once ex-offenders are equipped with these skills, they have a higher chance for employment since the hiring managers may overlook any personal gender bias and the severity of the crime committed. Therefore, convincing the hiring managers may be done by the prison department by assessing all the training undertaken and providing testimonials regarding the ex-offender's performance. The testimonial can then be used and presented during their job application process.

This study largely benefits ex-offenders in reducing their employability barriers and attaining employment, as well as assisting the prison department in planning the different types of strategies to increase their employability. Increasing their employment opportunity helps in reducing recidivism and crime rates. This will in turn improve the wellbeing of ex-offenders and promote a safe environment for the community to live in.

Regardless, the study may be influenced by several limitations such as observer error and observer bias as it is dependent on the data gathered from the interview sessions conducted. To counter these limitations, the triangulation and expert panel review process was implemented accordingly. Meanwhile, another limitation underlined is the interview cases, which are from Malaysia and sourced from a single business setting. This may limit the generalisability of the findings. However, a large amount of literature has shown that ex-offenders are mostly and commonly hired in the F&B sector, thereby rendering the findings applicable to a certain extent for many businesses within the sector. Hence, future studies can implement the information obtained in this study to empirically investigate these barriers.

Appendix: Interview Question

1. What is your opinion concerning hiring an ex-offender?
2. What are the characteristics that you look for in a job applicant during the hiring process in general?
3. How will the characteristics that you mentioned earlier differ for an ex-offender?
4. What is your biggest fear or challenge in hiring an ex-offender?
5. How will a government/prison department testimonial validating the skills of an ex-offender affect your hiring decision?

Acknowledgements

References

1. Agerbo, E., Eriksson, T., Mortensen, B. and Westergård-Nielsen, N. (1998), "Unemployment And Mental Disorders- An Empirical Analysis", Centre for Labour Market and Social Research Working Paper), 98–002.

2. Anderson, C. (2010), "Presenting and evaluating qualitative research", American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 74 (8), 1–7.

3. Ashenbaum, B., Salzarulo, P.A. and Newman, R.W. (2012), "Organizational Structure, Entrepreneurial Orientation and Trait Preference in Transportation Brokerage Firms Citing Literature About Wiley Online Library Help & Support Contact Us Opportunities Subscription Agents Advertisers & Corporate Partners Connect", Journal of Supply Chain Management, 48 (1), 7–25.

4. Bandura, A. (1989), "Exercise of Control Through Self-Belief", Current Contents, 20, p. 14.

5. Barth, J.R., Cordes, J.J. and Haber, S.E. (1987), "Employee characteristics and firm size: are there systematic empirical relationship?", Applied Economics, 19 (4), 555–567.

6. Becker, G.S. (1968), "Crime and Punishment: An Economic Approach", Journal of Political Economy, 76 (2), 255–265.

7. Behan, C. (2014), "Learning to Escape: Prison Education, Rehabilitation and the Potential for Transformation", Journal of Prison Education and Reentry, 1 (1), 20–31.

8. Benda, B.B. (2005), "Gender differences in life-course theory of recidivism: A survival analysis", International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 49 (3), 325–342.

9. Bernama. (2021), "Over 200 companies involved in providing training, skills to prisoners", BERNAMA, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 14 October.

10. Bowen, K.N., Nhan, J. and Polzer, K. (2019), "Comparing Ex-offenders Who Use and Decline Job Readiness Training", Policy, Practice and Research, 4 (3), 183–194.

11. Brown, S.D., Lent, R.W. and Knoll, M. (2013), "Applying Social Cognitive Career Theory to Criminal Justice Populations: A Commentary", The Counseling Psychologist, 41 (7), 1052–1060.

12. Choi, B.Y., Park, H., Yang, E., Lee, S.K., Lee, Y. and Lee, S.M. (2012), "Understanding Career Decision Self-Efficacy: A Meta-Analytic Approach", Journal of Career Development, 39 (5), 443–460.

13. Dana, L. P., Salamzadeh, A., Hadizadeh, M., Heydari, G., & Shamsoddin, S. (2022). Urban Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Businesses in Smart Cities: Exploring the Role of Digital Technologies. Sustainable Technology and Entrepreneurship, 100016.

14. Dana, L. P., Salamzadeh, A., Mortazavi, S., & Hadizadeh, M. (2022). Investigating the impact of international markets and new digital technologies on business innovation in emerging markets. Sustainability, 14(2), 983.

15. Dana, L. P., Salamzadeh, A., Mortazavi, S., Hadizadeh, M., & Zolfaghari, M. (2022). Strategic futures studies and entrepreneurial resiliency: a focus on digital technology trends and emerging markets. Tec Empresarial, 16(1), 87-100.

16. Dunn, L.K. (2017), Hiring Managers' Consideration Process For Ex-Offender Job Applicants: A Grounded Theory Study.

17. Duwe, G. and Clark, V.A. (2017), "Nothing will work unless you did: The predictors of post-prison employment", Criminal Justice and Behavior, SAGE Publications Sage CA: Los Angeles, CA, 44 (5), 657–677.

18. Fassinger, R.E. (2008), "Workplace Diversity and Public Policy: Challenges and Opportunities for Psychology", American Psychologist, 63 (4), 252–268.

19. Flatt, C. and Jacobs, R.L. (2018), "The relationship between participation in di ff erent types of training programs and gainful employment for formerly incarcerated individuals Citing Literature About Wiley Online Library Help & Support Contact Us Opportunities Subscription Agents Advertis", Human Resource Development Quarterly, 29 (3), 484–502.

20. Freeman, R. (2003), "Employment Dimensions of Reentry: Understanding the Nexus between Prisoner Reentry and Work Can We Close the Revolving Door?: Recidivism vs. Employment of Ex-Offenders in the U.S", Urban Institute), 1–19.

21. Gibson, W. and Brown, A. (2009), Working with Qualitative Data, Sage.

22. Harris, P.M. and Keller, K.S. (2005), "Ex-offenders need not apply: The criminal background check in hiring decisions", Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, available at:https://doi.org/10.1177/1043986204271678.

23. Hipes, C. (2019), "The impact of a felony conviction on stigmatization in a workplace scenario", International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice, Elsevier Ltd., 56 (January), 89–99.

24. Hirschfield, P.J. and Piquero, A.R. (2010), "Normalization and legitimation: Modeling stigmatizing attitudes toward ex-offenders", Criminology, 48 (1), 27–55.

25. Hosseini, E., Ardekani, S. S., Sabokro, M., & Salamzadeh, A. (2022). The study of knowledge employee voice among the knowledge-based companies: the case of an emerging economy. Revista de Gestão.

26. Judge, T.A. and Bono, J.E. (2001), "Relationship of core self-evaluations traits - Self-esteem, generalized self-efficacy, locus of control, and emotional stability - With job satisfaction and job performance: A meta-analysis", Journal of Applied Psychology, 86 (1), 80–92.

27. Jung, H. (2015), "The Long-Term Impact of Incarceration During the Teens and 20s on the Wages and Employment of Men", Journal of Offender Rehabilitation, 54 (5), 317–337.

28. Keshminder, J.S. and Cheng, C.S. (2019), "Mechanisms used by chemical manufacturing firms to promote green skills among employees: a case study in Malaysia", International Journal of Environment and Sustainable Development, 19 (2, p. 138.

29. Krefting, L. (1991), "Rigor in qualitative research: the assessment of trustworthiness.", The American Journal of Occupational Therapy. : Official Publication of the American Occupational Therapy Association, 45 (3), 214–222.

30. Kruttschnitt, C. (2013), Life Course Criminology View Project Gender and Crime, Annual Review Sociol, 39, available at:https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-071312-145605.

31. Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985), Naturalistic Inquiry, CA: Sage Publications.

32. Lukies, J., Graffam, J. and Shinkfield, A.J. (2011), "The effect of organisational context variables on employer attitudes toward employability of Ex-offenders", International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology, 55 (3), 460–475.

33. Luu, H. (2011), The Relationship between Employee Attitudes and Organizational Performance: Evidence from Cooperative Retail Stores, Colgate University.

34. Maddox, J. (1971), "White Collar, Blue Collar: Job Trends", Yearbook of Agriculture), 51–54.

35. Malaysian Prison Department. (2017), Annual Review Malaysian Prison Department Jabatan, Malaysian Prison Department, Kuala Lumpur.

36. MOHE. (2018), Ministry of Finance Malaysia (MOHE): Malaysia Budget 2019, Putrajaya, Malaysia, available at: https://www.bnm.gov.my/files/2019/Ucapan_Bajet_2019.pdf.

37. Oliver, A. (2017), "We hereby approve the dissertation of".

38. Oser, C.B. (2006), "The Criminal Offending-Self-Esteem Nexus: Which Version of the Self-Esteem Theory Is Supported?", The Prison Journal, 86 (3), 344–363.

39. Perry, E.L., Davis-Blake, A. and Kulik, C.T. (1994), "Explaining Gender-Based Selection Decisions: A Synthesis of Contextual and Cognitive Approaches", The Academy of Management Review, 19 (4), 786–820.

40. Piazza, L.N. (2017), "A Case for Giving Ex-Offenders a Second Chance", Society For Human Resouce Management.

41. Radović-Marković, M., Salamzadeh, A., & Vujičić, S. (2019). Selection of organization models and creation of competences of the employed people for the sake of competitiveness growth in global business environment. International Review, (1-2), 64-71.

42. Rahman, M. M., Tabash, M. I., Salamzadeh, A., Abduli, S., & Rahaman, M. S. (2022). Sampling techniques (probability) for quantitative social science researchers: a conceptual guidelines with examples. Seeu Review, 17(1), 42-51.

43. Salamzadeh, A., Ebrahimi, P., Soleimani, M., & Fekete-Farkas, M. (2022). Grocery Apps and Consumer Purchase Behavior: Application of Gaussian Mixture Model and Multi-Layer Perceptron Algorithm. Journal of Risk and Financial Management, 15(10), 424.

44. Salamzadeh, Y., Nejati, M., & Salamzadeh, A. (2014). Agility path through work values in knowledge-based organizations: a study of virtual universities. Innovar, 24(53), 177-186.

45. Schmitt, J. and Warner, K. (2011), "Ex-offenders and the Labor Market", WorkingUSA, Wiley Online Library, 14 (1), 87–109.

46. Soleimani, M., Dana, L. P., Salamzadeh, A., Bouzari, P., & Ebrahimi, P. (2022). The effect of internal branding on organisational financial performance and brand loyalty: mediating role of psychological empowerment. Journal of Asian Business and Economic Studies.

47. Stebbins, R.A. (2001), Exploratory Research in the Social Sciences, 48, Sage.

48. Tim, M. (2018), "Why companies are turning to ex-cons to fill slots for workers", CNBC, available at: https://www.cnbc.com/2018/09/18/why-companies-are-turning-to-ex-cons-to-fill-slots-for-workers.html (accessed 2 April 2020).

49. Van Der Geest, V.R., Bijleveld, C.C.J.H. and Blokland, A.A.J. (2011), "The effects of employment on longitudinal trajectories of offending: A follow-up of high-risk youth from 18 to 32 years of age", Criminology, 49 (4), 1195–1234.

50. Visher, C.A., Debus-Sherrill, S.A. and Yahner, J. (2011), "Employment after prison: A longitudinal study of former prisoners", Justice Quarterly, 28 (5), 698–718.

51. Walkowitz, G. (2019), "Employers discriminate against immigrants and criminal offenders—Experimental evidence", Economics Letters, Elsevier B.V., 174), 140–143.

52. Wallace, D. and Wang, X. (2020), "Does in-prison physical and mental health impact recidivism?", SSM- Population Health, 11 (1), 1–17.

53. Weiman, D., Bushway, S.D., Kling, J.R. and Raphael, S. (2015), "Create new project 'Helping Students to Learn Statistics: An Assessment of Study Skills in a Criminal Justice Statistics Class' View project Barriers to Prisoners' Reentry into the Labor Market and the Social Costs of Recidivism", Punishment: The U.S. Record, ResearchGate, Columbia), 1–42.

54. Wodahl, E.J. (2006), "The challenges of prisoner reentry from a rural perspective", Western Criminology Review, 7 (2), 32–47.

55. World Prison Brief. (2018), "World Prison Brief data", Institute for Crime and Justice Policy Research, available at: https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/malaysia (accessed 17 October 2021).

56. Yang Liang, L. (2012), "Hospitality, F&B biggest hirers of ex-convicts", The Straits Times.

57. Yin, R.K. (2018), Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods, 6th Ed., SAGE Publications, Inc., California.

58. Young, N.C.J. and Powell, G.N. (2015), "Hiring ex-offenders: A theoretical model", Human Resource Management Review, Elsevier Inc., 25 (3), 298–312.

59. Zakaria*, S.M., Jaafar, J.R. and Lazim, N.H.M. (2018), "Employment issues among ex-offenders: difficulties in securing employment and barriers of employment", International Journal for Studies on Children, Women, Elderly and Disabled, 5 (July), 8–12.