

The Need of More Halfway Houses as Transit to Reduce Homelessness amongst Former Prisoners in Malaysia

Keperluan Lebih Banyak Rumah Perantaraan Sebagai Transit untuk Mengurangkan Gelandangan dalam Kalangan Bekas Banduan di Malaysia

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ABSTRACT *Fundamentally, former prisoners who have no access to transit home or residency after being released from prison are often found to be homeless. In this manner, such failure to obtain a home has been commonly associated with family rejection. The existing halfway houses throughout Malaysia are limited, therefore, the program failed to accommodate a large number of released former prisoners each year. In lieu of this, many former inmates are unable to acquire proper shelter or a suitable place to live after their release. Due to the arising concern, a study was conducted in 2018 with regards to the former prisoners' life challenges during the re-integration process within the community. Detailed interviews were carried amongst 19 former prisoners with their background of criminal records. In addition, the analysis from this study revealed the difficulties and challenges faced by the former prisoners that had led them to be homeless. The data had also revealed that the issue is related to the absence of residency as well as family rejection. Subsequently, the findings provided evidence-based for authorities to address the current issues as well as established more halfway houses in assisting the re-integration process. Furthermore, critical understanding of the needs and living with economic hardships amongst former prisoners will indeed be a good steer to initiate the development of effective post-release and advanced care programs in supervising and guiding former prisoners to abide by the law of Malaysia.*

Keywords: former prisoners, homeless, halfway houses, re-integration, crime repetition

ABSTRAK Secara asasnya, bekas banduan yang tidak mempunyai akses ke rumah transit atau kediaman selepas dibebaskan dari penjara sering didapati menjadi gelandangan. Dengan cara ini, kegagalan untuk memperolehi rumah biasanya dikaitkan dengan penolakan keluarga. Rumah perantaraan yang ada di seluruh Malaysia adalah terhad, oleh itu, program ini gagal menampung sejumlah bekas banduan yang dibebaskan setiap tahun. Sebagai ganti, banyak bekas banduan tidak dapat memperolehi tempat perlindungan atau tempat yang sesuai untuk hidup selepas pembebasan mereka. Disebabkan kebimbangan yang timbul, kajian telah dijalankan pada tahun 2018 berhubung dengan cabaran hidup bekas banduan semasa proses integrasi semula dalam masyarakat. Temu bual terperinci telah dijalankan di kalangan 19 bekas banduan dengan latar belakang rekod jenayah mereka. Di samping itu, analisis dari kajian ini mendedahkan kesukaran dan cabaran yang dihadapi oleh bekas banduan yang menyebabkan mereka menjadi gelandangan. Data juga telah mendedahkan bahawa isu itu berkaitan dengan ketiadaan kediaman serta penolakan keluarga. Seterusnya, penemuan ini menyediakan bukti berasas kepada pihak berkuasa untuk menangani isu-isu semasa serta menubuhkan lebih banyak rumah perantaraan untuk membantu proses integrasi semula. Selain itu, pemahaman kritikal tentang keperluan dan hidup dengan kesulitan ekonomi di kalangan bekas banduan akan menjadi pemacu yang baik untuk memulakan pembangunan program pasca pembebasan dan jagaan lanjutan yang berkesan dalam menyelia dan membimbing bekas banduan untuk mematuhi undang-undang Malaysia.

Kata kunci: bekas banduan, gelandangan, rumah perantaraan, integrasi semula, pengulangan jenayah

1. Introduction

As observed in every criminal justice systems around the world, residency is essentially one of the most important needs of the former prisoners upon their release. Hence, it is pertinent to provide halfway houses that act as a transit for the released. Moreover, the provision of residency as one of the post-release and advanced care programs is also expected to reduce recidivism and homelessness issues amongst former inmates as both programs are addressing important components in the rehabilitation process. The task of restoring former prisoners is not suitable to be conducted while in prison but rather requires a long, continuous process in providing them with the opportunities to integrate well within the community. In line with the need to ensure that the funding of prison institutions are utilized as efficiently and economically as possible, it is vital for the authorities to ensure that former prisoners are fully restored.

Table 1. Provision of National Financing for Crime and Rehabilitation Services Budget from 2011-2016 for the provision of treatment and rehabilitation.

Output	2011 (real)	2012 (approximate)	2013 (real)	2014 (real)	2015 (approximate)	2016 (approximate)
Allocation amount	RM 79,559,200	RM 71,655,200	RM 72,141,000	RM 102,749,200	RM 105,749,400	RM 140,000,000
Prisoners' admission amount	100,000 (Approx.)	120,000 (Approx.)	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
Prisoners' release amount	123,402 people	112,536 people	124,379 people	179,712 people	188,298 people	197,712 people
Human developmental participation (%)	96.8% (No data available)	95.0% (No data available)	95.0% (No data available)	96% (29,637 prisoners out of 30,846 prisoner)	98% (32,963 prisoners out of 33,613 prisoners)	96% (31,119 out of 32,388 prisoners)
Prisoners' parole amount	1,482	2,193	3,289	2,268	2,700	3,000
Operational workshop amount	371	378	290	469	469	475
Prisoners amount according to industrial and vocational section	9,987	11,495	13,318	6,117	6,200	6,300

% = percentage

Source: (Ministry of Finance, 2016).

The Malaysian justice system is also facing the increasing number of incarceration and repeating crimes among former convicts. This statement is further supported by the evidence of budget-spending of prison institutions' management that showed an annual increase in number with regards to the issues of incarceration and repeating crimes in the country (Table 1). Based on the national budget, it is exhibited that the cost of rehabilitation and treatment programs had risen to a significant increase over the years. Hence, this huge provision underscores the importance of

rehabilitation and treatment programs as the former prisoners can undergo the period of detention safely and securely as an effective recovery approach in realizing them to succeed. Nevertheless, the budget is intended to provide them with systematic, non-technical recovery, and training towards becoming a responsible and productive citizen.

In this study, there is an emphasis on the allocation to fund the post-release and advanced care programs for former inmates, since the task of recovering crime is not confined to prison alone. The human developmental program provided in prison is not sufficient to rehabilitate them. Hence, authorities should be aware of the allocation for these programs as both approaches enable proper assistance for these former prisoners. For example, a halfway house is a transit home for them upon release. These programs are able to equip former prisoners with appropriate services in meeting their needs.

Based on the yearly recidivist data in Table 2 had clearly shown a considerable number of former prisoners who continued to fail in the re-integration process within their society upon release. Nevertheless, the data illustrated a vast amount of prisoners' population throughout Malaysia. The findings also exhibited a steady increase of recidivists over the years with a total of 4,359 criminal offenders in 2016, presenting the failure of the criminal justice system in ensuring continuous recovery after their release. However, the stated number of convicts by the Malaysian Prison Department did not include the number of repeating crimes involving drug-related abuse, hence, it is believed that the number of offenders is likely to be higher. Besides, the situation is further reiterated in statistics whereby 8,897 of former prisoners were recorded in 2015 whilst 7,619 of former prisoners were documented in 2014. It is vitally important to take into account the undeniable existence of an unknown, unreported, and/or unrecorded crime cases by governmental bodies, such as the Royal Malaysia Police or *Polis Diraja Malaysia* (PDRM). Typically, in the field of criminology, the number of criminal cases/offenses reported to the authorities is only 25% of the actual cases whilst another 75% is known as the dark-crime number, which is an unidentified amount. It is a common knowledge among criminologists that only a small number of cases were made known with further action by the authorities.

Table 2. Number of former prisoners released within 3 years and criminal repeaters

Year	Released for 3 years	Former prisoners with repeating crimes	
	Total (People)	Total (People)	Percentage (%)
2000	27,579	11,157	28.8
2001	29,253	12,215	29.5
2002	32,574	16,669	33.9
2003	49,757	15,878	24.2
2004	46,564	19,202	29.2
2005	41,477	19,857	32.4
2006	55,869	16,746	23.1
2007	62,966	18,918	23.1
2008	79,144	8,019	9.3
2009	56,503	23,375	29.3
2010	75,397	5,524	7.32
2011	76,699	6,033	7.86
2012	81,862	6,524	7.97
2013	88,883	6,769	7.61
2014	94,495	7,619	8.06
2015	102,214	8,897	8.70
2016*	50,747*	4,359*	8.59*

% = percentage

*Criminal repeaters without taking into account any drug-related abuse

Source: (Mohd Alif, 2018).

The currently available data does represent the actual number of repeating crimes amongst former convicts throughout Malaysia as the data failed to include the number of criminal repeaters, hence, unable to reflect the exact crime scenario. Nevertheless, this unreported number has also failed to identify the root cause of the recurring crime in Malaysia. Despite the fact that the dependence on numbers may not indicate an alarming figure, however, in reality, the figure can be remarkably high (Mohd Alif et al., 2017).

Moreover, one of the biggest concerns related to crime is the homelessness issue. It is discovered that former prisoners who end up living homeless are often trapped to commit the crime again. The living environment surrounded by criminal activities as well as the presence of co-conspirators contributed to a negative socialization process among these

former inmates. The said negative lifestyle becomes the main reason for them to be affected by criminal or illegal activities, such as the consumption and selling of drugs in order to finance and supply their addiction. Henceforth, the absence of a post-release program has given them no other alternative but to become homeless.

This situation demonstrates the importance of having an efficient recovery program in ensuring the former prisoners to recover and become law-abiding people as well as capable to stand on their own. In view of the rehabilitation system provided in Malaysia during incarceration, former prisoners ought to follow a series of institutional and social rehabilitation programs known as the Human Developmental Plan (PPI). PPI is a social rehabilitation program for former convicts and it is based on phases system consisting of 4 main programs, namely Therapeutic Community Program, Halaqah, Education, Guidance as well as Academic Programs. In addition, PPI equips former prisoners with the social skills needed to re-integrate with society upon their release.

Conjointly, the evidenced number of repeating crimes as described in Table 2 led to the view that Malaysia certainly needs better, effective post-recovery program towards former prisoners during social integration as it is deemed indispensable for the country to curb this issue. On the other hand, the authorities must ascertain proper requirements for ensuring former prisoners to have residency after being released. The existing halfway house programs are still inadequate and insufficient to accommodate the large population of the former inmates.

Post-release programs, such as halfway houses in Malaysia does not function as temporary residences, hence, it needs to be progressive and comprehensive by emphasizing the variety of services within the program. Likewise, this study will discuss the importance of post-release and advanced care programs as well as the existing halfway house programs in Malaysia. The literature review would not be complete without discussing the importance of the residency as one of the post-release and advanced care programs. Next, the discussion further highlights the importance of more halfway houses in Malaysia with regards to their large number and to serve as a transit center in assisting the process of integration amongst former prisoners.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Importance of Recovery Programs in Malaysia's Criminal Justice System

In the context of the criminal justice system, the issue of released former prisoners into the public is often debated by society when it comes to repeating crimes. As aforementioned, the main focus of this study is on the homelessness issue amongst the former convicts. The issue had certainly raised questions on why some of them failed to acquire residency whilst others had managed to integrate successfully after being released. Therefore, this matter had opened a wider concern, especially on the academic discussion on the importance of understanding the factors leading to homelessness among the former prisoners.

The experiences obtained in developed countries along with well-planned criminal justice systems and remedies have presented a great number of showcase studies related to the former prisoners in enhancing the post-recovery programs for them. The results from Western studies revealed systematically gathered information from extensive studies on re-integration problems towards a more positive outcome together with local communities as well as agencies involved in the criminal justice system. Indirectly, this study provides an opportunity for the former prisoners to voice out and report on the deficits that they faced while undergoing the re-integration process within the community. In addition, the community members and agencies that deal with post-rehabilitation programs towards the former inmates can also refer to this information in assisting them to succeed in their re-integration process. Whether they want or not, the responsibility of ensuring the smooth process of integration amongst former prisoners is indeed a shared responsibility, hence, the accountability is not entirely up to them or their recovery agency. Besides, it is also due to the establishment of rehabilitation and incarceration institutions in developed countries that exhibit systematic studies of re-integration that contributed to the dynamic improvement of institutional-based rehabilitation programs as well as community-based post-rehabilitation programs.

The social re-integration program can be divided into two types, (1) social integration programs provided in prison institutions towards prisoners while in prison, and (2) community re-integration programs

within the community towards former prisoners. Indirectly, the increasing number of recidivism described less efficient social integration programs within prison institutions in providing former prisoners the economical and social skills when they re-enter into community life after release. These improvements are crucially important in ensuring that our country's prison systems and correctional treatments are of the capability to recover the released former prisoners to be productive and law-abiding communities. In addition, by providing public protection and security services to the nation, prisons also served as corrective institutions to shape and restore former prisoners' behavior in line with the requirements of society's norms and values. Thus, improvement initiatives on social integration and rehabilitation programs based on the findings from this study have been helpful towards the prison department to produce an effective rehabilitation program for the released of former prisoners.

2.2 Halfway Houses Programs Provided in Malaysia

In this manner, national interventions in providing various types of halfway houses are increasing at the international level (Mills, Gojkovic, Meek, & Mullins, 2013). However, there is still a lack of stable housing available for released former prisoners with complex needs, due to the inability of the prison system to give adequate rehabilitation services to former prisoners that enable them to survive after imprisonment.

In Malaysia, the Malaysian Prison Department is also in the position of providing halfway houses as temporary residential for released former prisoners. The idea of setting up halfway houses was first sparked at the Crime Lab held from the 5th of October 2009 to the 6th of November 2009 (Department of Prisons Malaysia, 2012). A halfway house is a place of residence, leisure, and learning classes provided by the Malaysian Prison Department in collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). There are approximately 13 halfway houses throughout Malaysia, including Sabah and Sarawak (Malaysian Prison Department, 2012). The halfway house is considered a shelter for newly released former prisoners after they had completed their serving imprisonment sentence. It is also an ideal setting for prisoners to undergo Parole Orders. In simpler words, the halfway house is an initiative by the Prison Department in providing a residential medium for former prisoners who have just completed their jail term before returning to the community.

On top of that, an important aspect of halfway houses is that it helps the Prison Department by reducing the rate of recidivism among former convicts who are participating in this program (Wan & Najibah, 2014). The halfway houses gave protection and support to ensure that their release from prisons is left untouched and freed from feeling pressure from the public perception (Utusan Online, 2014). The halfway houses also provided emotional and mental support as well as an additional aid in the process of assisting former prisoners to re-integrate successfully into the community (Utusan Online, 2014).

However, the problems that were identified from these existing halfway houses were when they became selective and unable to offer their places to all released former prisoners. Halfway housing programs have their own limitations as they are unable to cope with the high number of former prisoners released each year as a result of Malaysia's limited infrastructure. As of 2019, there are only thirteen halfway houses available around Malaysia. Besides, the situation also does not take into account the duration of stay amongst the former prisoners (no longer than three months). Hence, the short period of time is seen as unrealistic since the recovery process of a former prisoner requires a long process and must be carried out gradually in terms of monitoring and follow-up programs to ensure the effective recovery.

2.3 The Importance of Shelter as a Core Element in Post-Rehab Program

It is indeed hard to imagine establishing a successful life without a home. However, this basic need is often a problem for newly released former prisoners. Barriers to employment coupled with clear discrimination, have created a crisis of finding a residency that is often a rarely discussed issue. Recognizing these issues had led the government's need to formulate policies in addressing the challenges faced by the former convicts in obtaining shelter outside the criminal justice system.

Furthermore, the residency involves short-term transit housing for the homeless, who may have special needs, particularly amongst former prisoners moving out from the prison and into the society. In the criminal justice system, the most common instance is that halfway house acted as a shelter for former prisoners who are leaving prison. The main attention of the halfway house program is to assist them. There is also an evidence stating that halfway house programs able to accommodate former prisoners

who are out of prison in order to reduce homelessness problems amongst them, thus, preventing crime recurrence, especially when they are provided with other re-integration services. Therefore, the hypothesis mentioned that a stable residency is associated with a reduction of recidivism. Apart from that, family members play a major role in housing support towards former prisoners when they are released. However, this is not a long-term solution and may not be available to other newly released former prisoners (Naser & La Vigne, 2006). Family members may or may not be prepared to provide housing at the time of their release, or it may be due to the absenteeism of family in their community. Upon release, former prisoners have no income to rent a private property. Due to this, those with criminal convictions will face a similar challenge of finding a suitable home with additional barriers to their criminal background.

One study had shown that former prisoners who returned home without stable residency are twice as likely to re-committing crime than those living in stable residency. Research had reported that crime is often associated with homelessness and residency is considered as one of the critical factors in helping to reduce the crime recurrence (Gojkovic, Mills, & Meek, 2011). In fact, international research has consistently affirmed that appropriate residency is essential for the reunification of former prisoners and criminal recurrence often occurred when appropriate accommodation is not found after their release (Baldry, McDonnell, Maplestone, & Peeters, 2006). For example, it has been found that poverty, lack of social support, and homelessness are associated with repeating crime and returning to prison (Baldry et al., 2006).

While occupations and integration challenges are important to be pondered, the findings indicate that adequate residency is the most significant for the re-integration process amongst former prisoners. Understanding and explaining the need for residency is rather complicated for these two main reasons (Fontaine, & Biess, 2012). Firstly, the need is immediate and long-term while secondly, the needs of individuals are varied depending on their circumstances. Unfortunately, there are systemic challenges faced by people who have been incarcerated whilst trying to find and access housing in the community. Various studies have documented the challenges that former prisoners encounter in finding a stable and secure residency upon their release from prison, as follows: (1) income and employment history for renting and obtaining housing, (2) formal policies that restrict their ability to obtain public housing, (3) long waiting lists for public housing, and (4) resistance by landlords to rent to them (see Fontaine

& Biess, 2012; Roman & Travis, 2004). For these reasons and among others, the imprisonment had caused former inmates a higher risk to experience residential instability upon their release from prison (Geller & Curtis, 2011).

3. Research Methodology

A qualitative approach based on a designed case study with regards to crime recurrence among former prisoners was conducted in 2016. The main aim of the study was to identify the challenges faced by former convicts in leading to factors of repeating crimes after their release. The study population was of former prisoners with the background of criminal records without misconduct, sentenced to imprisonment, and currently in the process of re-integration within the community. The snowball sampling technique was employed in selecting survey respondents which deemed to be suited to the characteristics of the study population. A total of 19 former prisoners that includes 17 men and 2 women had voluntarily agreed to be the respondents. Then, the researcher selected a smaller number of respondents to participate in this study.

All respondents were thoroughly interviewed by the researcher, based on a structured interview protocol contained questions related to the study objectives. The employed interview protocol able to assist the researcher in providing a more structured interview while maintaining the flexibility of the session. Prior to the interview, protocols were prepared accordingly and then, reviewed by experts in the field. The interview protocol for this study was semi-structured, consisting of a number of key questions on the studied topic as well as enabling the researcher to exchange questions in obtaining a deeper idea or answer from the respondents. It is believed that in a good interview, an open question provides neutral feedback rather than a yes-or-no answer while acquiring an in-depth understanding of the topic without any sensitive-related issues. Commonly, questions in the interview protocol began with questions that allow respondents to answer them easily, and later into a gradual phase and finally, respondents will be moved to a more difficult question or topic of the conversation. This procedure is pertinent to assist respondents to feel comfortable at the beginning of the interview process followed by building confidence, and providing a good relationship with the interviewer, which in turn promotes information-rich data generation.

Meanwhile, the construction and development of the interview protocol are based on literature reviews, research questions, and the

theoretical framework of the study (refer to Table 3). The interview protocol for the respondents consisted of two parts. The first part contained demographic information such as age, educational attainment, and criminal history of the respondents whilst the second part contained questions designed based on the research questions and organized on the following topics, namely challenges faced upon release, family relationships, work experience, life and relationships with friends, and possible reasons on why they reiterate to crime.

Table 3. Interview protocol

Agenda
Part 1: Demographic details
1) Name
2) Age
3) Education background
4) Criminal history (age at the time of the first imprisonment, time of release, and repeating crime)
Part 2: Interview topics
1) Challenges face after being released
2) Family relationship
3) Marital status
4) Employment opportunity
5) Community and surroundings' acceptance
6) Acquaintances relationship
7) Drug addiction and alcohol abuse
8) Mental health

In lieu of this, all collected verbatim was processed using the Atlas.ti program and was presented thematically. This study applied the open coding that allows the researcher to create his own code for identification. After the researcher named the selected code, it will then appear in the software. The researcher was able to encode the script based on the code that emerged on the objective of the study as to identify factors that lead to repetition and cessation of crime. The first code identified was in relation to a placement wherein former prisoners refused to return home. Subsequent concepts were identified and named using Atlas.ti software. Then, the

codes were incorporated into one group named 'families' in the software. The use of the term 'Families' allowed similar themes to be added together with some of the themes found was in terms of placement, family relationships, marriage, work, community, peers, drug, and alcohol addiction as well as health status.

Additionally, this analysis method has provided the researcher with the opportunity to manipulate data in strengthening the study's findings and conclusions. It also helps the researcher in compiling data through various ways to make new additions and observations for discrepancies to be analyzed during the analysis. In addition, thematic analysis methods have been used to extract more information and considered an approach to deal with data involving the use of code (Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano, & Morales, 2007). Besides, the thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes for the data. Remarkably, honest confessions and explanations of former prisoners as recidivists provided useful input for prisons to improve their existing social integration programs as efficient programs ensure successful integration amongst them. The information gathered through the analysis of the researcher's needs has the potential to be a useful input for future planning of the post-recovery program and effective social integration program towards former inmates who are released from prison.

Furthermore, respondents' names were kept in confidential and is replaced with pseudonym. Every pseudonym was followed by a numbering system to ease the researcher in identifying the sequence of their interviews for it can simplify the process of arranging the codes according to their turns. Besides, this was also done with the purpose to comply to the research ethics by veiling respondents' identity; even more in this kind of a sensitive research as it could raise a high risk of respondents being labelled negatively by society. Correspondingly, the social demographic information was arranged carefully into a table in a manner to show the real situation and how the research could connect the link between family refusal and difficulty of obtaining shelter amongst former prisoners (refer table 4). Alluding to this context, the researcher had interviewed 16 former prisoners without taking into account their past offences; where 14 were male and 2 were female. Based on the table provided, it shows that the respondents were all from various states and aged between 36 and 63 years old. In this very research, the researcher did not exclusively classify or define the interviewed respondents as being homeless or having no permanent shelter. Nevertheless, the research findings demonstrate that 14 out of the total number of respondents were homeless.

4. Research Findings

Shelter is definitely an important requisite for each former prisoner once they are released from prison. Shelter is also the place for former prisoners to rest and sleep in. Without shelter, most of former prisoners have to live on the streets or in other words; become homeless. Based on the collected findings out of the 14 respondents, 13 of them were single. The research found out that 14 former prisoners were unemployed too. For this reason, this situation shows that unemployment is also a problem that gives effects to these former prisoners and which causes them to be homeless. The accomplished research also shows that 14 of the homeless former prisoners were infected by either HIV, hepatitis B or C, and tuberculosis, or a series of combination of these diseases. Also, only one of them suffered from a psychological disease. In terms of family relationship, 13 of them have weak family relationships whilst 3 of them were well received by their families.

The findings from this study had clearly shown that former prisoners do not possess a great support network or sufficient life expectancy when they return to society (Seiter & Kadela, 2003). Many researchers found that former prisoners returning to society encountered significant problems of economic disadvantages, access for residency, and family support (Altschuler & Brash, 2004). Moreover, most of the interviewed respondents indicated that they had trouble acquiring a home once they had been released, generally due to the absenteeism of place to stay and their family's unacceptance. Studies have also discovered that former prisoners who failed to obtain employment became dependent on their family and without a proper residency, they will have to sleep on the streets and live as homeless people. Based on the findings, respondents' confessed to their refusal to return home. However, the confession was different from what had been expected from initial thoughts and compiled literature that was considered a slight misleading from the reality that occurred in Malaysia, as earlier reason was thought to be largely due to family rejection. Ensuing this, residency options for the former inmates will become increasingly limited when they cannot rely on families after their release. Furthermore, the absenteeism of parents, either losing parent(s) or lacking their support, has a significant impact on them as a parent(s) are considered the only person who can serve as the backbone to them in starting their new life. Suhaimi and Ramli had described the absence of their parents gave them the major obstacle in securing home. It is even more difficult for them who have no immediate family members, such as Suhaila

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who was raised by a foster family and the imprisonment had caused her adoptive family members to sever family ties with her. Thus, Suhaila needs to be self-reliant without expecting any help from them. The researcher would like to mention the respondents' verbatim with regards to this:

This is because my parents had passed away and the remaining are only my siblings (Suhaimi).

Even if I wanted to return to the village, there's no one else as I own no family (Suhaila).

Barriers to secure home have left former prisoners to be economically disadvantaged and caused them to sleep on the streets. Consequently, exposed themselves with the risk of re-engaging in crime, which contributes to the increased rate of recidivism. This is due to the fact that former prisoners are surrounded by unfavorable living environments and they are also accompanied by negative friends that can cause them to easily fall back into their old activities. Besides, the strained family relationship is also another factor on why the respondents no longer wanted to stay with their family members. Lufti further added that he was more comfortable to stay away as his feelings towards his family members had faded. Similarly, Syamsul described that he felt unloved by his family members and made him at ease to move out. These feelings have clearly given a significant impact on the process of re-integration for the former inmates. The following are the respondents' verbatim with regards to this matter:

For each and every time, I would always come back to the same old place. I would never get back to my family but rather I would go to the old place because even if I wanted to return to my family, I have nothing". (Lufti).

Certainly, it is, I have thought about it and nobody loves me (Syamsul).

Table 4. Demography and History of Former Prisoners Went Homeless

Respondents	Gender	State	Age	Amount of Imprisonment	Marital Status	Residency	Family relationship	Employment Status	Addiction Status	Health Condition
Lufti	Male	K.L	36 years old	2 times	Single	Lives under a bridge	Accepted by family but refused by siblings	Unemployed	Stopped	HIV
Siva	Male	Perak	54 years old	8 times	Single	Has No home	Refused by family	Unemployed	Still addicted	HIV
Hafiz	Male	Melaka	48 years old	7 times	Married	Has No home	Not all family members accept	Unemployed	Stopped	Hepatitis B and C
Suhaimi	Male	Negeri Sembilan	42 years old	More than 3-4 times (Respondent could not remember)	Single	Has No home	Refused by family	Unemployed	Still addicted	HIV
Suhaila	Female	Kelantan	63 years old	5 times	Widow	Has No home	Refused by family	Working	Stopped	Hepatitis B
Rahimah	Female	Kelantan	46 years old	4 times	Single	Has No home	Well accepted	Unemployed	Still addicted	Psychological problem
Latif	Male	Terengganu	43 years old	5 times	Single	Refused to live with family	Refused by family	Unemployed	Still addicted	HIV
Nabil	Male	Kuala Lumpur	40 years old	2 times	Single	Returned to family	Refused by family due to repeating crimes	Unemployed	Still addicted	HIV

Cont.

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Cont.

Respondent	Gender	State	Age	Amount of Imprisonment	Marital status	Residency	Family relationship	Employment Status	Addiction Status	Health condition
Amir	Male	Kelantan	53 Years Old	4 Times	Single	Has No home	Refused by family	Unemployed	Still addicted	Hepatitis C
Ramli	Male	Kelantan	38 Years Old	2 Times	Single	Has No home	Refused by family	Unemployed – refuses to work	Still addicted	HIV
Razak	Male	Pahang	41 Years Old	3 Times	Widower	Has No home	Refused by family	Unemployed	Still addicted	Asthma and Hepatitis C
Zahid	Male	Kelantan	33 Years Old	11 Times	Single	Has No home	Accepted by family but refused by siblings	Unemployed	Still addicted	HIV & tuberculosis
Naim	Male	Terengganu	46 Years Old	2 Times	Single	Lives away from family	Well accepted	Unemployed	Still addicted	Hepatitis C
Zarul	Male	Pahang	36 Years Old	5 Times	Single	Refused to stay with sister	Refused by parents but well accepted by siblings	Working	Still addicted	HIV, Hepatitis B and C
Fikri	Male	Johor	36 Years Old	3 Times	Married	Lives with family	Well accepted	Unemployed	Stopped	Nil
Syamsul	Male	Melaka	40 Years Old	4 Times	In a relationship	Has No home	Refused by family	Unemployed	Still addicted	HIV and Hepatitis C

Additionally, Lufti, Siva, and Razak also stated that their family relationships had been broken due to the accusations and negative perceptions being thrown at them. In fact, the suspicions had caused their family members to hid their valuable things (i.e. jewelry, purses/wallets) from the respondents. Lufti, Siva, and Syamsul added that this situation made them feel more comfortable staying away from their family members rather than being accused of stealing at home. These are some of the respondents' verbatim on this matter:

They accused me simply just like that, but actually, I did not do it. For instance, is the mortgage letter of my sister's jewelry that went missing (Lufti)

Although I tried to quit drugs, because of always being accused so I went bitter and feelingless since I did not dot it. But when they said so, hence I become so. (Razak).

Studies have also shown that diseases suffered by former prisoners, such as HIV, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C are also some of the reasons for their family refusal. Siva, Latif, and Ramli said that their HIV disease caused family members to deny them. They further notified that their families feared that they will spread the disease to other family members. Hence, former prisoners become increasingly frustrated and feel unacceptable when their own family members treated them badly. In fact, Latif also noted that his family members isolated food and beverage containers as they are afraid that the virus can infect them. He also stated that he needs to wash the dishes and bowls before use. Below is the respondents' verbatim on this:

It's because of my disease transmitted from taking drugs. And it's because of myself. I felt that I am not normal like everyone else, I am sick, have HIV, not normal and everyone else view at me with a different look, even the dishes and cutlery have to be isolated (Latif).

Since they knew I have HIV, their acceptance is so-so, in between, 50-50. Well, with this kind of disease, it could be a burden to them (Ramli).

To make matters worse, there are family members who immediately refused and denied former prisoners for their crimes. This situation led to a strained relationship between family members and the former convicts upon release. Suhaila and Zarul stated that their family members had no longer accepted them. Suhaila further added that her drug crime caused her family members to refuse her and Zarul mentioned that although he had the intention to change for the better, yet his family members still refused to accept him back. Syamsul also added that his family's refusal was a result of his siblings who

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were no longer able to accept him. This situation caused Syamsul's family members to remove him from the family. Below are the verbatim related to this:

My family disliked me ever since I was arrested for a drug-related crime, and they simply threw me out from the family (Suhaila).

I have tried to improve myself but my family still refused to accept me (Zarul).

Nonetheless, the absenteeism of a strong family support system affected the former prisoners' psychology to feel accepted. The absence of parents can also give a negative effect on their inclusion in the community. Concerns also arise when they are not treated with respect at home which leads them to move away from their family members. Former prisoners are no longer loved by family members and they will generally choose to live apart from them, hence, the rejection caused the former inmates to fail continuously in re-integrating into the society. Therefore, the scenario had made the researcher wonders about the importance of halfway houses program in helping former prisoners to obtain a place of residence during their release, especially for those who do not have anyone to rely on rather than becoming homeless as a result of this failure.

5. Discussion

The researcher's considerations and suggestions are laid out in this section based on several impressions based on the analysis of this study. In Malaysia, the number of available halfway houses are very limited. The existing halfway houses are not suitable and unable to accommodate a large number of released prisoners each year. In fact, along with the existing function of a halfway house does not provide sufficient services to act as a post-release and advance care program that is conducive for the former prisoners. This is due to the fact that there is no specific program that can meet their personal needs, such as home, work, and health care after serving their imprisonment term. The government, through its detention and rehabilitation agencies, is said to have failed in providing social policy or legislature that capable to re-integrate former prisoners into people's lives and therefore, to prevent recidivism and homelessness problems among newly released inmates. The establishment of more halfway houses combined with a variety of additional support should be offered to assist former prisoners in aiding their transition and ensuring their ability to be a law-abiding citizen.

Additionally, this has led to the research study in adding more existing halfway houses as well as re-integration programs towards former prisoners to meet their needs, once released. Based on the analysis, the researcher believed that they have their right to

obtain residency by establishing halfway house programs with various elements that capable to meet the needs of former inmates as well as prevent them from repeating the crime. Numerous studies have also shown a close relationship between home acquisition, crime recurrence, and release from prison. The residency has been identified as one of the key factors that can reduce the rate of repeating crime, as it can provide the stability needed in enabling the former convicts to address their old, wrong behaviors and access to other services, such as mental health and employment. Besides, various initiatives need to be introduced in an effort to increase the provision towards former prisoners, especially those released from prison.

In reality, obtaining residency is a challenge that most former prisoners faced after leaving prison. Failure to obtain residency is further complicated by several factors including family members' rejection, former prisoners' own refusal to return home, lack of affordable and available housing, legal barriers, and discrimination against former prisoners. The impact of the placement program appeared to be largely determined by the willingness of the ex-convicts to seek integration and the high risk of repeating the crime. The study revealed that it was extremely difficult for former prisoners to make a successful transition within society without a secure and safe settlement from activities that could lead them back into criminal violence. After being released, many former inmates returned to the environment that originally influenced them to commit crime. Therefore, the need for more halfway houses that functioned as temporary shelters should be one of the priorities in the criminal justice system. Preferably, various service programs are suggested to be integrated into this halfway house as former prisoners undergo a period of continuous recovery. A safe and drug-free residence is crucial in ensuring that the proposed post-reintegration program can be successful.

Most importantly, in establishing more halfway house programs in the country, various relevant agencies in the country must work together. The task of reclaiming the responsibility for recovering former prisoners cannot be done on an individual basis. Besides, the researcher recommended that each agency with its own role in ensuring the success of the halfway house program acknowledges the success of former prisoners in re-integration required assistance from all parties. Collaborations in the criminal justice system are aimed at addressing the limitations of traditional approaches in justice issues by bringing together stakeholders to share information and work together in forming a post-release and advanced care program.

Apart from that, the government should also provide the construction of more halfway houses for these former convicts. These programs are very expensive and therefore, required a lot of funding. With the provision provided for the rehabilitation of former prisoners, the Malaysian Prison Department is capable to invite non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other associations to participate in halfway house programs to offer their respective roles.

In its very essence, this study would further suggest that the conducted program within the community should be performed with appropriate monitoring. The researcher has agreed with the suggestion that the existing halfway houses can be improved by complementing programs, such as job placement, health care, and others, in ensuring a smooth transition of the recovery phase. Henceforth, the existing halfway house programs should be added and further improved to ensure the program's ability in offering a variety of services towards former prisoners.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research is an effort to reduce challenges amongst former prisoners upon their release. It is hoped that the above-discussed suggestions will serve as a guide in the formation of more halfway houses that can aid in the re-integration program for former inmates, particularly in Malaysia. Currently, halfway house programs are deemed a good practice in assisting ex-convicts. Despite being efficient and suitable, there is still a need for improvement. Hence, the suggestions presented can also be explored in a more impulsive and comprehensive manner for future studies. It is therefore suggested that the following actions can be taken into account to enhance the effectiveness of the halfway house program and the standard of imprisonment professionalism in parallel towards achieving the objectives, missions, and visions inherent to the country's criminal justice system.

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