

# “I am Stuck in the Crime Repetition and I don’t Wish this Life”: Exploring the Recidivism Factors of Homeless Recidivist Women in Jalan Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur

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## Abstract

Homeless recidivist women are a vulnerable community who end up on the streets due to failure to reintegrate. Returning to community life with a lack of resources and the absence of a support system causes them to return to criminal behavior, being re-arrested and returned to prison. Various risk factors that exist can influence these homeless recidivist women to be exposed to recidivism activities. A qualitative study using a phenomenological design was conducted and eight homeless recidivist women around Jalan Chow Kit were interviewed. The research findings led to the discovery of two main themes namely; personal factors and structural factors which notably influence the re-involvement of homeless recidivist women in criminal activities. The findings contribute to the knowledge related to homeless recidivist women based on gender aspects. This includes awareness to government agencies and stakeholders to provide post-release and extended care programs that could intervene the recidivism factors to avert homeless recidivist women from a life of crime, to become productive and law-abiding individuals.

**Keywords:** Recidivist, Homeless Women, Recidivism Factors, Gender, Reintegration

## Introduction

The increase in homeless recidivist women who are stuck in poverty is a very worrying thing. They are among those who have a record of repeated incarceration and end up living as homeless people without any support system. The involvement of women in crime is

evidently increasing every year. Over the past few decades, the number of women in the criminal justice system has experienced a very significant increase (Gorbanescu, 2013; Javdani et al., 2011; Sawyer, 2019; Walmsley, 2015). However, the criminal justice system is still largely based on empirical research by focusing on the mainly male research subjects of male prisoners instead of female prisoners. Female prisoners continue to be one of the fastest growing segments of the prison population in any criminal justice system in the world (Greiner et al., 2015; Guerino et al., 2011; Public Safety Canada, 2012). As a result of the rapid increase in women prisoners, correctional scholars and policy makers have begun to be interested in exploring studies related to women prisoners specifically. In fact, the issue involving the repetition of crimes in women recidivism is also starting to develop rapidly in the country. This situation caused the researcher to try to delve into the lives of homeless recidivist women since this group was found to show an increasing trend in the criminal justice system. The researcher attached the following statistics to prove the increase in repeat crimes among women from year to year in Table 1

Table 1

*Statistics of Recidivist Prisoners by Male and Female Breakdown for the Years 2010-2020 in Malaysia*

Year	Release in 3 years Total (People)	Prisoner who repeats criminal behavior (Recidivist)						
		Total (Men)	Total (Women)	Total	Percentage (Men)	%	Percentage % (Wome)	% Total
2010	75,397	5,420	104	5,524	7.19		0.13	7.32
2011	76,699	5,911	122	6,033	7.71		0.15	7.86
2012	81,862	6,389	135	6,524	7.81		0.16	7.97
2013	88,893	6,627	142	6,769	7.45		0.16	7.61
2014	94,495	7,449	170	7,619	7.88		0.18	8.06
2015	102,214	8,737	160	8,897	8.54		0.16	8.70
2016	110,682	9,626	249	9,875	8.70		0.22	8.92
2017	124,567	11,214	306	11,520	9.00		0.25	9.25
2018	134,690	13,518	378	13,896	10.04		0.28	10.32
2019	141,636	14,959	451	15,410	10.56		0.32	10.88
2020	210,251	31,614	1,288	32,902	15.03		0.61	15.64

Source Jabatan Penjara Malaysia (2021)

The statistics (in Table 1) show the number of recidivism by gender from 2010 to 2020. The 10-year period shows an increase in the number of recidivism of women every year. Naturally from a gender point of view, recidivist women are a smaller segment of the population than male prisoners. However, it does not indicate that a specific study on women recidivism would be insignificant. Past studies that focus more on men recidivism in particular make this study very important to be conducted immediately (Mastrorilli et al., 2015). The need to explore the lives of homeless recidivists brings new discussions in the field of science. In 2010, there were only 104 women recidivists, which has increased to 1,288 in 2020. It shows an increase of almost 100 percent in 10 years. When comparing the recidivism rate from a gender perspective, women and male recidivists show a significant difference. There were 31,614 male recidivists and 1,288 female recidivists in 2020.

The debate of this study tries to dispute the issue of increasing women recidivism every year without the existence of a gender-responsive and gender-sensitive study in researching this.

This study tries to present with a new lens when focusing the study directly on homeless recidivist women. In addition, the lack of local studies focusing specifically on homeless recidivist women makes this study important to implement. The need to understand the factors of repeated criminal behavior from the point of view of homeless recidivist women themselves in the local context makes this study comes up with a very new lens.

Studies involving recidivist homeless women who have not yet been researched in detail lead to a lack of understanding of their lives. Understanding recidivism among homeless recidivist women is critical in order to optimise the correctional system's ability to rehabilitate women prisoners and reintegrate them into society. Therefore, it is very important to explore the factors of homeless recidivist women into recidivism. All of these are in fact capable of understanding the repeated criminal behavior of homeless recidivist women (Brennan, 2015). This type of research is very important in the light of informing gender-responsive risk management strategies as well as to provide important discoveries in the future.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Understanding Homeless Recidivist Women as a vulnerable community***

It is important to understand the concept of homeless recidivist women as a vulnerable community. There are three big concepts that need to be discussed carefully which are homeless, recidivists and women. It is necessary to understand the definition of these three terms considering that this entire study will use the concept of homeless recidivist women as the focus of the study subject. As so far, it is still no effort at the local level to academically define the terms of homeless recidivist women. There is a certain ambiguity that exists in the definition of homeless people in Malaysia, while the composition of homeless people is gradually large and wide. As such, it is important for researchers to reach an agreement to briefly define this concept.

The first is the definition of homeless. The focus of this study is on former prisoners who live as homeless people. In Malaysia, homeless groups are also categorized as *orang papa* under the Destitute Act 1977 (ACT 183). The homeless discussion is also closely related to the Destitute Act 1977 (ACT 183). A solid definition of homelessness is a necessary basis for producing accurate statistics in terms of the size and characteristics of the homeless population for policy makers (Amore et al., 2011). The definition of homeless is considered applicable if the identification and classification of homeless are defined accurately and can be developed to monitor the effectiveness of interventions (Amore et al., 2011). Definitions of homelessness vary widely around the world and few have a conceptual basis. The definition of homelessness generally refers to people who face the absence of a safe place to live that is needed to rest and connect with people and places (Fowler et al., 2019). Homelessness also includes people living on the streets or in shelters, as well as patterns of housing insecurity such as overcrowding or excessive cost burdens.

Next is to define the concept of recidivist. Recidivist can be referred to a criminal offender. In general, it comes from the term recidivism which introduce to the action of a person repeating an unwanted behavior after they have experienced the negative consequences of that behavior. Almost everyone sent to prison will one day return to the community. This means that understanding recidivism is very important for these community members. In this study, the recidivists studied focused on the female gender only. Therefore, there is a need in this study to define women as a concept. Researchers found that a woman refers to a human being with a female gender in adulthood (Mosby, 2009; Venes, 2017). By semantic, the word woman is used to mean the opposite of men. Through the lense of gender

stereotype, women are seen as having a soft and delicate nature. This is different from the male gender where men are harder and rougher.

In this study, homeless recidivist women refers to women criminal offenders who continue to commit offenses or crimes and end up living as homeless people. Homeless recidivist women are the subject of this study. They live in communities that continue to fail to reintegrate due to crushing poverty and various factors that exist which cause them to be involved in criminal activities continuously.

### ***Factors in Repeated Criminal Behavior of Homeless Recidivists Women***

The focus of the study on homeless recidivist women takes into account that it is a small group in the criminal justice system that has not yet been thoroughly discussed, especially in the local context. They are among those who have failed to reintegrate and end up homeless. The increase and concentration of homeless recidivist women in the same geographic location and their failure to reintegrate makes this study important to examine their experiences during their release from prison. A discussion of the behavioral factors of criminal recidivism can provide a deeper understanding of the lives of homeless recidivist women throughout their lives on the streets. Factors known to affect prisoners' success in reducing recidivism include antisocial behavior, negative peer influence, drug abuse, mental illness (Broidy, Payne, & Piquero, 2018; DeHart et al., 2014), lack of financial stability, barriers to obtaining legitimate employment, and unstable family issues (Lockwood et al., 2012; Mears & Mestre, 2012; Murphy, 2016).

There are two main factors that prove that the relationship between homelessness and crime is so strong (Campaniello, 2019; Young & Petty, 2019). First, many of the behaviors associated to homeless people are criminal behaviour. Just trying to survive puts people who go through a life of homelessness more easily involved in the criminal justice system. The second factor is the constant association of homelessness and crime in the media. Being homeless leads to many serious disadvantages. Homelessness is understood as a manifestation of various disadvantages. Among them are having mental illness (Morash et al., 2015), chronic illness, unemployment, lack of a good educational background, history of trauma or neglect, drug addiction and, often, being in a chronically poor life (Chandola & Conibere, 2015; Fazel et al., 2014; Lockwood et al. al., 2012; Mears & Mestre, 2012; Murphy, 2016; Tsai et al., 2017). This situation emphasizes that the homeless are unable to escape from the factors of criminal behavior and crimes that occur.

From a gender point of view, according to Mastrorilli et al (2015), much of the literatures on recidivism has focused on men or compared recidivism between men and women (Cobbina, 2010; Deschenes et al., 2007). Research focusing on women tends to have smaller samples (Maruna, 2001) and is often based on in-depth qualitative analysis. Most of these studies have produced valuable insights but are limited in their ability to study recidivism for a cohort over time and statistically analyze demographic factors associated with this group (Huebner et al., 2010). One area that has been explored in depth over the last 20 years is the extent to which traditional factors for crime are gender invariant (Andrews et al., 2012). This situation makes this study appear so unique when making homeless recidivist women as the subject of study by studying from the perspective of feminism and gender-responsiveness. Indeed, it is known that the study of recidivist prisoners has long attracted the interest of criminal justice researchers (Mastrorilli et al., 2015).

According to latest research by Shahid and Ashraf (2022), factors in repeated criminal behaviors can be divided into two main themes namely; psychological factors (personality and social exclusion) and social factors (social demographic factors, family factors, community constituents, and the judicial system) behind recidivism. Greiner et al (2015) have stated that the main factors affecting the recidivism of women offenders include drug abuse, weak social bonds, unemployment, and lack of education and skills, etc. However, it has been found that these factors affect women offenders in different ways. A large number of women released from prison are found to have further contact with the criminal justice system. These recidivism estimates show that 58% of incarcerated women will be rearrested, 38% will be rearrested, and 30% will be returned to prison within three years of being released from prison (Deschenes et al., 2007). About 40% of female former prisoners are remanded, and the other half commit other crimes (Rodermond, 2018).

There is a general perception that women's criminal behavior is not a serious problem. According to Edwards et al (2019), although men commit more crimes and are incarcerated at a higher rate than women (Carson & Golinelli, 2013), the incarceration rate of women has been found to be increasing significantly over the past few decades, so that women are now considered to represent one of the fastest growing segment of the criminal justice system (Javdani et al., 2011). A large number of studies on social factors that predict criminal recidivism have largely examined only male prison populations (Edwards et al., 2019). This fact may be partly due to the perception of women prisoners as the most minimal risk to society (Abad et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2015), as men tend to have longer and more serious criminal histories than women prisoners. As a result, women prisoners are often understudied systematically (Edwards et al., 2019), despite the clear impetus for research in this growing population of women prisoners.

The increase in women's recidivism every day leads to the need to start researching about this phenomenon. Repetition of crimes among recidivist women is found to be more and more happening in the country making this study very important. This study is based on curiosity about the life of homeless recidivist women. Criminology scholars began to think about gender and crime differently, realizing how vast this topic had yet to be explored. The increase in the number of recidivist women makes this study very significant. Moreover, in the 21st century, criminology studies have begun to focus on intersectionality, considering the effects of race/ethnicity, class, sexuality (Brody et al., 2015), and other factors when studying criminal recidivism. Therefore, the presence of this study is seen as important and timely to be done in the local context. In 2023, research on recidivism should focus on the existence of gender factors. The previous gender-neutral studies are no longer appropriate considering that understanding crime from a gender perspective can lead to a greater contribution.

### **Research Methodology**

In conducting this study, the researchers chose to use the paradigm of interpretivism. Interpretivists seek to find meaning in the subjective experiences of individuals engaged in social interaction. Many interpretivist researchers immerse themselves in the social context they study, seeking to understand and formulate theories about a community or group of individuals by observing it from the inside. In this study, the researchers interviewed homeless recidivist women to explore their lives. The use of interpretism is seen to be very compatible with the objective that is being attempted in this study.

**Research Design**

Researchers use phenomenology as a research design. Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of lived experience in a particular group. The basic goal of this approach is to achieve an overview of the nature of certain phenomena (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the researcher has used phenomenological methods to explore the lives of homeless recidivist women as long as they live on the streets.

**Population Study, Sample and Sampling**

The study involves homeless recidivist women as a sample group. Table 2 shows the characteristics of homeless recidivist women informants selected for this study. These characteristics fulfill the eligibility criteria (inclusion criteria) to be an informant. These selected inclusive characteristics can help efforts to explain the lived experiences of homeless recidivist women throughout their reintegrated lives. It is important to note here that all informants were given a pseudonym to protect their personal privacy and this research has been granted an Ethical Approval from the Ethic Committee of Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Table 2

***Inclusive Eligibility Characteristics for Informants Who Participated in the Study***

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Homeless recidivist women Informants</b>
Inclusive	1. A woman
	2. Having a record of repeated imprisonment
	3. Aged 21 years and above
	4. Malaysian citizens
	5. Living on the streets
	6. Not having a stable / permanent residence
Exclusive	Not having any mental illness diagnosed from any institution

**Sampling Technique**

This research used purposive sampling as sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique is a non-probability sample selected based on the characteristics of the population and the objectives of the study. Purposive sampling, also known as evaluative, selective, or subjective sampling, is a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when selecting members of the population to participate in their study. This sampling method requires the researcher to have prior knowledge about the purpose of their study so that they can select and approach qualified informants. The researcher already set up the inclusive criterias needed in order to be accepted as informant.

**Data Analysis Technique**

Data analysis is the most critical and challenging part of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). It should be remembered that, the researcher needs to prepare the text data that has been changed in the form of verbatim transcripts before the analysis is done. A verbatim transcript is a word-for-word written dialogue from an in-depth interview session. The in-depth interview copying process was done manually using Microsoft Word. After the transcription process, the researcher should carry out the coding process to interpret the data that has

been copied into written form in terms of themes, concepts or ideas. The process of data analysis also involves coding, classifying and categorizing the data to make sense of the data collected and to highlight important messages and features of the findings. This study uses thematic analysis since it is the most flexible method in analyzing data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In this thematic analysis process, the researcher will use the views of Braun and Clarke (2014) regarding the six steps in doing the thematic analysis, namely; Step 1: Familiarize yourself with the data; Step 2: Creating the startup code; Step 3: Finding a theme; Step 4: Revise the theme; Step 5: Decide on a theme; and lastly Step 6: Writing.

### **Research Finding**

The findings of this study are organised and discussed thematically to show the contribution found in the field of gender, especially in the field of criminal rehabilitation. This study discusses the demographic profile, and the factors of recidivism and the conclusion.

#### ***Social demographic profile of female recidivist homeless informants***

Social demographic profile of homeless recidivist women informants is displayed in Table 3. The first sample group, which is homeless recidivist women, involves a total of eight informants. A total of four (4) people are originally from Selangor, one (1) from Kuala Lumpur, one (1) from Perak, one (1) from Sarawak and one (1) from Penang. Seven (7) of the total informants are Malays. Only one (1) is Chinese but has embraced Islam. They are in the range of 21 years to 47 years old. There are three (3) people with an education level up to Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM), one (1) has Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR), a total of two (2) people have Ujian Penilaian Rendah Sekolah (UPSR), only one (1) informant studied up to Form Two and the other one (1) only up to Form One.

In terms of employment, it was found that four (4) people were unemployed, one (1) was a drug seller, one (1) ran a business, one (1) was a massage therapist and engaged in sex worker activities, and one (1) worked in a Snooker shop. The majority of informants are from among those who committed crimes. A total of two (2) informants have entered prison twice, two (2) others have entered prison three times and the rest have entered prison more than eight times. This situation shows that all the interviewed samples are recidivists who have repeated crimes chronically.

Table 3

*Social Demographic Profile of Homeless Recidivist Women Informants*

No.	Name	State of origin	Ethnic	Age	Education	Employment	Criminal Record	Addiction	Illness
Informant01		Selangor	Malay	43 Years	Form 2	Unemployed	Drugs (3 Times)	(3 Heroin	Epilepsy
Informant02		Kuala Lumpur	Malay	21 Years	Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR)	Drug Dealer	Drugs (3 Times)	(3 Heroin	Disease Free (Learning Disabilities)
Informant03		Perak	Malay	45 Years	Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR)	Seller	Drugs (2 Times)	(2 Methaphetamin	Disease Free
Informant04		Selangor	Chinese (Mualaf)	36 Years	Tingkatan 1	Masseurs and sex workers	Drugs (14 Times)	(14 Methaphetamin	Disease Free
Informant05		Sarawak	Malay	43 Years	Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR)	Work in a Snooker shop	Drugs (10 Times)	(10 Methaphetamin	Disease Free
Informant06		Selangor	Malay	46 Years	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)	Unemployed	Drugs (8 Time)	(8 Methaphetamin	Chronic high blood pressure, hepatitis C
Informant07		Selangor	Malay	47 Years	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)	Unemployed	Drugs, theft in buildings and prostitution (23 Times)	(23 Methaphetamin	Disease Free
Informant08		Pulau Pinang	Malay	36 Years	Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM)	Unemployed	Drugs (2 Times)	(2 Methaphetamin dan ketum	Disease Free

In terms of addiction, two (2) informants addicted to heroin, five (5) have an addiction to Methaphetamin, and only one (1) person has an addiction to Methaphetamin and Ketum. This situation gives an overview of all the samples of this study showing a fairly chronic addiction problem. They still continue to take drugs for a period of time. In terms of illness, six (6) people were found to have no illness, one (1) had seizures, and one (1) had chronic high blood pressure and Hepatitis-C. The results of their joint interviews have produced diverse findings. The eight (8) informants who were interviewed have successfully obtained the required saturation point and are able to achieve the set objectives of the study. The researchers attached all the codes and themes found according to the sample group.

***Factors of Homelessness Recidivism Recidivism Homelessness Women***

After being released from prison, homeless recidivist women face an uphill battle when they return to their communities. Many homeless recidivist women have significant health challenges as well as emotional disturbances and repeat criminal behavior. For those who have not received the necessary mental health or substance abuse treatment after release it can lead to a more challenging reintegration process. Without comprehensive support, homeless recidivist women are vulnerable to re-engagement into criminal activity. Recidivism is linked to the failure to provide homeless recidivist women with the economic, health and psychosocial support needed to increase opportunities for reintegration. Most homeless recidivist women released from prison will have subsequent contact with the criminal justice system. They will continue to go to prison due to the repetition of crimes that stem from life

on the streets. In general, it has been found that women are less likely to become repeat offenders than men. However, it does not mean that research that focuses on women is not significant. Homeless recidivist women have been found to suffer from depression due to unemployment, alcohol or drug use, and problems with reintegration. There are various factors that can be identified when discussing recidivism. In this study, the researchers focused the discussion directly on the repetition of crimes committed by homeless recidivist women. The results of the study have led to various codes related to the repetition of crimes committed by recidivist homeless women. The researcher took the initiative by grouping these codes into two main themes namely; personal factors and structural factors. This is because the researcher wants to ensure that the discussion about the factors of crime repetition is more structured. The attachment of codes in this way allows for a clearer understanding of the factors of recidivism committed by homeless recidivist women. The researchers attached the main themes as follows

***Main Theme 1: Personal Factors***

The first main theme is related to personal factors. Personal factors are related to self-involvement of homeless recidivist women which cause them to continue in the activity of repeating crimes. In the study, personal factors are caused by oneself or involve factors related to one's own choices. The researcher has grouped all codes related to personal factors in this main theme and found the following sub-themes

***Sub-theme 1a: Own desire to be involved in crime***

The results of the research conducted have found that the involvement of homeless recidivist women in crime is due to their own desire to commit crime. These people are rational. They will behave according to their own choice. They will choose how to act, behave and decide in doing any criminal activity. In this study, it has been proven that the involvement of homeless recidivist women tends to be caused by their own desires. The researcher attached interview excerpts that support this sub-theme

*"I am the one who decide whatever I want to do in life. I willingly continue committing repeated crimes. No one forced me. Every decision is my own choice. If I want to change, it's my own choice. I am still stuck with my own choice."*

*(Informant01)*

***Sub-theme 1b: Continue to sell drugs for income***

In addition, the researchers also found that these homeless recidivist women continue to sell drugs due to the need of generating income. The lack of opportunity to get a job causes this group to turn to the activity of selling drugs. This is because selling drugs is one of the activities that can bring income easily. There is no denying that these people are aware of the consequences that can occur if they are caught. However, the desperation of life and unemployment may cause them to choose to sell drugs as one source of income. It provides insight into the continued involvement of these recidivist homeless women in crime. The researcher attached the interview excerpts to support this code

*"These people will continue to sell drugs because they want to earn income. Sometimes they can earn up to RM 200 a day. They already have regular customers"*

*who will seek them out. That's why it's hard for them to stop. Because they realize that it will be easy to get money by selling drugs."*

*(Informant02)*

*"Because you want drugs, you want quick money, when people want drugs. I know drug dealers, usually these people will push it to someone they know. I will sell drugs to get money to buy drugs."*

*(Informant07)*

***Sub-theme 1c: Still involved in prostitution as a source of income***

The researchers also found that these homeless recidivist women are still involved in prostitution because they want to get a source of income. The life of a woman on the street is not an easy one. They are often excluded from legitimate work opportunities. Most of them can only afford informal, part-time and unstable jobs. All of these are among the pressing factors that cause them to still turn to engage in prostitution as a source of income. The researchers can see the urgency and pressure of life making this group have no choice but to continue to be stuck in this type of activity. The researchers attached interview excerpts to support the code in

*"I asked where to get money, my partner said through prostitution. I often engage in prostitution. That's why it's easiest to get money. So I have no choice but to continue prostitution for money."*

*(Informant02)*

*"I prostituted myself because I needed money, because I wanted money, because I wanted it easy. Sometimes working as a prostitute is easier than doing work where you have to come to work every day."*

*(Informant08)*

***Sub-Theme 1d: Depressed due to Unemployment and held criminal record***

Involvement in crime can also occur due to the unemployment problem that has to be faced. They continue to fail to get a job due to their criminal record. This situation leaves them with no choice but to choose to do criminal activities again. Repeated incarceration still does not enable successful reintegration. They are stuck with the living conditions and chronic unemployment they have to face. Unemployment also causes this group to live in poverty and become stuck with the criminal circle throughout life on the streets.

*"Once, he (the employer) said you have a record he doesn't want. So I don't have much choice but to be a prostitute, steal, cheat and sometimes I also sell drugs. That's one of the things I do to get money. All because it is difficult to get a permanent job. So I have to do this kind of work"*

*(Informant02)*

**Sub-theme 1e: Drug addiction**

The researcher also found that the problem of drug addiction caused them to continue to be involved in drug activities. Drug addiction also contributes to criminal activities when they will sell drugs to get an easy source of income. In fact, the problem of drug addiction can also cause them to experience failure at work and continue to be unemployed. All of this leaves them with no choice but to engage again in criminal activities. The researcher attached interview excerpts to support this code:

*"I had to sell drugs because I wanted to get capital to buy drugs. So it's hard for me to stop. Because even going to work is difficult. So I will just sell drugs. That's the way to buy back drugs"*

*(Informant04)*

*"Being stressed with life made me take drugs repeatedly. When I'm stressed or sad, I'll take drugs again"*

*(Informant05)*

*" Because it depends on the drugs. Sometimes I will buy around RM 150. Always take drugs because of boredom,"*

*(Informant06)*

**Main Theme 2: Structural Factors**

Next is the second sub-theme related to structural factors. The researchers grouped all the codes related to the surrounding factors and the environment into this main theme. The researchers attached the following:

**Sub-Theme 2a: Bad influence of friends**

The results of the study found that the factor of involvement in repeated crimes can be caused by the presence of bad influence of friends around or sharing the same fate. This is because negative friends can influence the behavior of homeless recidivist women. The presence of these partners can reinforce the criminal behavior of homeless recidivist women. Researchers see peer influence as a very strong predictor of re-engagement in criminal activity. Homeless recidivist women tend to become criminal offenders when they re-associate with family members who also support their criminal behaviors. The absence of a positive social support system may cause them to return to peers as a replacement for the support system they lack. The researchers attached interview excerpts to support this code:

*"With a friend, they invited me to hang out near their house, I asked what is this, they said these stones are drugs, I said it's dangerous, last time he forced me to take the drugs with them"*

*(Informant02)*

*"Follow the members on motorbikes, steal cars, then take drugs. Doing drugs at their house"*

*(Informant03)*

*"Friends are here too because there is nowhere to go. They usually gives a lot of suggestions for criminal activities around here. They usually sells drugs. Here, you will end up become a drug runner. The easiest way to make money"*

(Informant04)

*"At first it was with the members, when I joined the members got stuck and stayed in the city. When there is no money, ask members for money. Usually friends make me worse. I know this stuff is bad. But still want to follow. Bad things are fun to follow"*

(Informant05)

*"I smoke this because I want to make friends, when I take drugs, I am been accepted in the group, when I live with these friends, that's what I smoke again because I meet with friends, hanging out will definitely smoke, That's why the influence of friends can also be the cause"*

(Informant06)

### **Sub-theme 2b: Spousal influence**

In addition, the researcher found that bad influence from a partner can also cause these homeless recidivist women to re-engage in criminal activities. Invitations and negative behavior from the partners' gangs can cause the homeless recidivist women to be willing to follow along. This proves that the bad influence of a partner can lead them to continue in repeated criminal behavior. The researcher attached interview excerpts to support this code:

*"My boyfriend taught me, he told me to take this drug to earn money, for now we don't feel anything. Because we use that thing can withstand pain. Sometimes I will serve up to 4 to 5 customers a day (referring to prostitution)"*

(Informant04)

### **Sub-theme 2c: Family problems**

Family problems can cause this group to re-engage in criminal behavior. This is because the absence of a family or the existence of a dysfunctional family can cause low social control. The absence of family members who monitor or control the behavior may cause them to be stuck in criminal activities again. Researchers see that family problems can be one of the factors of repeated crime in homeless recidivist women. The researcher attached interview excerpts to support this code

*"I continue with this crime because of family problems. There is no family. I was living without a family. That's why I need to live independently. Among them I had to commit a crime to get money. There is no family, there is no one to control, let me decide what I want to do every day"*

(Informant06)

### **Discussions**

Repetition of crime or recidivism among homeless recidivist women is a very serious issue that needs to be addressed immediately. This is because it can be a bad influence to the society including losses from an economic point of view, public health and social concerns (unemployment problems, drug addiction, family rejection and so on). Researchers see that homeless recidivist women often don't get much attention due to their much lower population. According to Golder et al (2013), women prisoners in America are only involved as much as 10 percent but have increased to 20% in the 2000s. An inherent increase can lead to a bad trend. Golder et al (2013) also added that almost half of these women prisoners will re-engage in drug abuse. In fact, Barrick et al (2014) say that social relationships can influence

recidivism among women. This relationship can involve family and community members. Various studies have agreed that the factors involved in recidivism involve anti-social behaviour, peer influence, drug addiction, unemployment, neglect, mental illness, lack of financial stability, difficulty in obtaining legal employment and family rejection (Broner et al., 2010; Chandola & Conibere, 2015; Fazel et al., 2014; Lockwood et al., 2012; Mears & Mestre, 2012; Murphy, 2016; Nally et al., 2011; Nooe & Patterson, 2010 ; Tsai et al., 2017). Finfgeld-Connett and Johnson (2011b) say women often have drug abuse problems. It is evident from this study when it shows that homeless recidivist women are more likely to be stuck in a cycle of chronic drug abuse. In fact, homeless recidivist women often have problems with unemployment, drug addiction and family rejection after being released (Urby, 2019). Tegeng and Abadi (2018) also said that contributing factors to crime recurrence are due to economic problems such as poverty, low income and unemployment. These women also show problems with mental illness, drug addiction, depression and psychotic disorders (Drapalski et al., 2009).

Greiner et al (2015) also said the main factors that cause women recidivism are drug addiction, weak social bonds, unemployment and low education. Drug abuse is one of the main factors that cause recidivism among homeless recidivist women (Golder et al., 2013). The researchers also found that homeless recidivist women tend to be victims of violence (eg. domestic and sexual) (Chakraborty et al., 2018). In fact, the violence they face makes them tend to engage in drug abuse. Apart from drug abuse, social relationship problems also cause these homeless recidivist women to be involved in repeating crimes . Barrick et al (2014) said this factor affects these women prisoners more than male offenders. Makarios et al (2012) said that family relationship is important in determining the success of these former prisoners in reintegration.

This discussion of crime repetition from a feminist point of view needs to focusing on economic marginalization, experiencing limited access to services, income opportunities and gender discrimination throughout the streets. This is due to economic marginalization has a great influence on the repetition of crimes. The reintegration process can be a stressful situation. Obstacles that often become challenges include employment, education, housing and drug addiction problems. Hence, this study divides the discussion on the factors of homeless recidivist women's crimes into personal factors and structural factors.

The first one can be due to personal factors that caused the homeless recidivist women to re-engage into criminal activity. Recidivism can be different depending on the type of drug chosen. The results of the study show that homeless recidivist women are more likely to suffer from methamphetamine, heroin and cocaine addiction. Recidivism can also vary depending on certain comorbid factors. This is because the factor of repeating this crime can involve personality disorders, drug abuse and disturbing psychiatric disorders. The researchers found that drug addiction is a complex issue that has affected homeless recidivist women. These personal factors can increase the risk of homeless recidivist women becoming addicted to drugs. In fact, drug abuse can be a strong predictor of recidivism (Walter, Wiesbeck, Dittmann, & Graf, 2011). Obviously, common drug abuse has increased among the homeless recidivist women.

In addition to drug addiction, the identified personal factor that is also involved is unemployment. Living on the streets has caused these homeless recidivist women to experience discrimination and injustice. They have difficulty in getting a permanent job. This difficulty has caused them to experience failure in reintegration, causing them to tend to commit crimes again and continue in this homeless and criminal life. High unemployment can

affect the quality of life of this group due to having to live without a source of income. In fact, researchers see this situation as causing them to continue to be stuck in poverty. It has a huge impact on them as a vulnerable minority group on the streets because it can perpetuate discrimination and oppression. The urgency and pressure of life can cause this group to often choose to turn to repeat criminal activities such as selling drugs, prostitution and continuing with addiction due to life's disappointment. In addition, continued involvement may also be due to the desire of homeless recidivist women. Those who do not have many life options will choose to engage in repeated criminal activities continuously

Structural factors can range from family rejection, peer influence and access to drugs that exist around Jalan Chow Kit. Peer communication and relationships can cause a negative influence to homeless recidivist women to engage in crime. The absence or rejection of family can cause them to experience a very low social contact. This situation can cause them to often turn to friends of the same fate who converge on Jalan Chow Kit. Inviting friends to engage in crime is a way to get an easy source of income. This bad influence can cause them to return to the activities of selling drugs, stealing and prostitution throughout the street life. Behavioral patterns of cohabitants and types of criminal activity have a significant effect on the recidivism behavior of homeless recidivists women.

### Conclusion

The main findings of the study have brought together a discourse on the factors of recidivism of homeless recidivist women throughout life on the streets in Jalan Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur. The results of this study has shown the importance of reintegration and preparation made for this group so that they will no longer engage in criminal activities. The relevant parties need to intervene in the factors of repetition of crime that exists among them.

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