

Model of Homeless Former Prisoner's Life Experiences and Basic Needs: A Theoretical Paper

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ABSTRACT

Studies on former prisoners who end up homeless are relatively new in Malaysia, although the phenomenon itself has been around since the advent of prison institutions. Most former prisoners live in the city and rely mostly on individual or community sympathy to survive. Former prisoners are the most marginalised group in the stratification of marginalised communities in Malaysia. This theoretical paper was written solely using data gathered via library research methods, conducted by examining the documents and web pages to support the discussion throughout this study. The issue of homeless former prisoners is not widely discussed. As a result, no specific research has focused on the problem of homelessness among former prisoners. It is hoped that this theoretical paper will serve as a guide to improve some existing policies to provide more appropriate social interventions to help this group. This model can be a guideline in drafting a better policy in making sure the welfare of this marginalised community. Like all citizens, former prisoners who are homeless also deserve to have their basic rights acknowledged and protected. It is the researcher's hope that through this paper, the 'justice and welfare' of this group is upheld.

Contribution/Originality: This concept paper carefully presents the life experiences and needs of homeless ex-convicts. This concept paper can be used by the Malaysian Prisons Department as a guide in designing post-release programs and extended care after former prisoners are released.

1. Introduction

In Malaysia, the issue of former prisoners ending up homeless is relatively new. The number of homeless people is increasingly alarming. In 2015 alone, there were 1527 homeless people in Malaysia (Ramli & Dawood, 2017). The number as of now is

unknown. Therefore, the number of homeless people may be higher, considering the unreported numbers. The Malaysian government's hopes of reducing the percentage of homeless in Malaysia appear to be failing because the percentage keeps increasing especially in Chow Kit Road, Dang Wangi, Masjid India, and other areas of major cities in the country.

In Malaysia, the number of homeless individuals recorded was 1048, comprising 730 men and 318 women in 2013 (Ramli & Dawood, 2017). Additionally, the number of individuals living as homeless increased in 2014 with a total recorded 1496 of which 988 were men and 481 were women. In 2015, this number increased to 1527—1003 men and 524 women (Ramli & Dawood, 2017). According to Ramli and Dawood, (2017), the highest numbers of homeless in 2013 to 2015 were recorded in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, and Penang. According to Adib, Hussin and Ahmad (2016), these cases of homelessness were not only among Malaysians, but many were also immigrants from neighbouring countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar, who were living in Malaysia. Only 10 per cent of the homeless on the streets of Kuala Lumpur are non-citizens (Adib et al., 2016). This concentration of homeless people is prevalent in major cities in Malaysia, such as Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Kuching, and George Town (Ramli & Dawood, 2017).

Homeless individuals can comprise of drug addicts, former prisoners, the elderly, families of the disabled, the mentally ill and many other groups living in poverty; these individuals have no stable home or residence. However, this theoretical paper focuses only on former prisoners with absolute homelessness problems or those with no access to suitable shelter, rental room or residence. They face problems in finding shelter after being released from imprisonment. Failure to meet the basic necessities of life makes former prisoners feel inadequate to live in cities and other areas of major cities in the country. The term “prisoner” comes with bad connotations, often causing former prisoners to feel oppressed and discriminated. Homeless former prisoners are a marginalised community. They are either labelled as dangerous or no longer important enough to receive help. The lack of effort to find an appropriate label for this group has also led to poor social intervention efforts as a whole. Are they to be referred to as homeless people with a record of incarceration or as former inmates who have ended up homeless? This issue has spurred the initiative to propose a model that discusses the life experiences and basic needs of former prisoners, as well as their risk of repeating crime. Groups that have been marginalised because of their past are stigmatized and continue to live without motivation and long-term goals. It is undeniable that former prisoners are vulnerable people who face many challenges and limitations upon their release from prison, and for some, these challenges might last forever (Davis, Bahr & Ward, 2012; Shinkfield & Graffam, 2009).

This issue is exacerbated among former prisoners living in poverty (Sanei & Mir-Khalili, 2015), those experiencing homelessness (Herbert, Morenoff, & Harding, 2015; Lutze, Rosky & Hamilton, 2013), those with fragile family relationships (Brunton-Smith & McCarthy, 2017), those with drug addiction issues (Scott, Grella, Dennis & Funk, 2014; Sota & Agolli, 2015), the unemployed (Nally, Lockwood, Ho & Knutson, 2014; Maruna, 2011; Weissert, 2016), those with mental problems (Abracen, Langton, Looman, Gallo, Ferguson, Axford & Dickey, 2013; Brown, 2016), those returning to poor neighbourhoods and surrounding discrimination (Morenoff & Harding, 2014), those surrounded with negative peers (Tenibiaje, 2013), those with HIV disease, and diabetes

mellitus and some who have low emotional intelligence (Stephens & Nel, 2014). Reintegration becomes very challenging for these people.

These barriers pose challenges for reintegration and increase the chances of former prisoners becoming homeless, forcing them to go back to criminal activity. Former prisoners who have no place to go will end up homeless—a phenomenon that is increasingly seen worldwide. According to Davis, Bahr and Ward (2012), six factors are thought to affect the former prisoners' ability to re-integrate and avoid crime: (1) substance abuse; (2) employment; (3) family support; (4) friend types; (5) motivation to change; and (6) age. Many have shown that drug abuse is a major contributor to criminal activity (Davis et al., 2012).

This study focuses on several basic need deficits that may be associated with the behaviour of former prisoners. This basic need is an essential requirement for former prisoners that have just been released to reintegrate smoothly. Former prisoners are often viewed or evaluated as having more than one need, which is as interdependent as the lack of jobs and their financial problems. It is very important to understand how to address more than one of these needs. This theoretical paper looks at former prisoners with two or more needs. Therefore, this theoretical paper further explores these overlapping needs.

As such, the entire theoretical paper discusses in depth the homelessness scenario, former prisoners, and the basic needs deficit among them. Not many studies have focused on homeless former prisoners in Malaysia. This theoretical paper therefore incorporates previous studies on homelessness issues, former prisoners, and re-integration into society after release. The researchers hope that this theoretical paper will contribute to the field of knowledge related to the criminal justice system and social rehabilitation work in Malaysia.

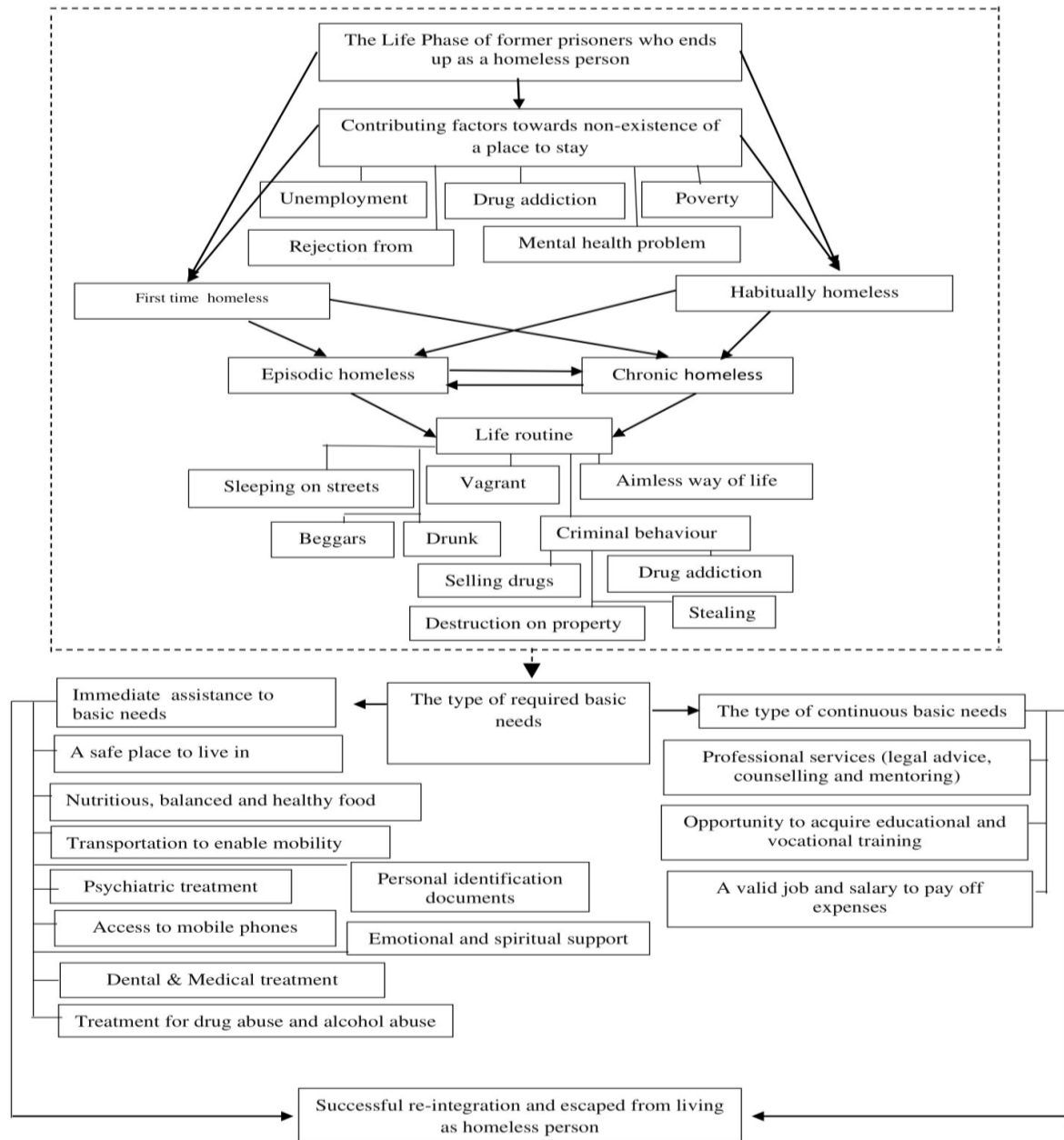
2. A Model Representing The Homeless Former Prisoner's Life Experiences And Basic Needs

This theoretical paper aims to discuss the demographic changes in the lives of the homeless former prisoners (first-timer or habitual) on the streets. The first-time or repetitive offenders who have been imprisoned end up homeless upon being released after serving their sentence. Hence, such demographic profiles can become episodic or chronic. An episodic profile refers to the life of a former prisoner who becomes homeless for a certain time. This type of individual may also have a home for the time-being but might end up homeless later. On the contrary, chronic homelessness refers to those who are homeless for a prolonged period. However, both scenarios can occur interchangeably. Having said that, this model aims to explore the former prisoners' experiences of having been homeless previously, particularly for recidivists who are repeatedly released from the prison (see Figure 1 model).

Most of them end up homeless because they are left with no choice from the pressures of life. While many homelessness problems are caused by undesirable conditions, and often unavoidable. Former prisoners become completely homeless due to loss of a job, divorce, addiction, family rejection and so on. The existence of homeless people is more visible at night than during the day. It is difficult to identify and distinguish homeless former prisoners from the normal people during the day as they will be carrying out their daily activities such as working, running daily errands and so on. At night, many

choose to sleep on the sidewalk in front of stores, collecting recyclable items from garbage bins, while some even use drugs without hesitation amidst public area with people around.

Figure 1: Model of Homeless Former Prisoner’s Life Experiences and Basic Needs



Note: This Model of Homeless Former Prisoner’s Life Experiences and Basic Needs has been registered with the Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO) on December 9 2020 with registration LY2020006565

On the other hand, homeless people who are often considered 'dirty,' 'smelly,' 'inferior' and 'unhappy' are often excluded from the society as stated by Hodgetts, Stolte, Chamberlain, Radley, Nikora, Nabalarua, and Groot (2008), Krajewska-Kułak, Wejda, Kułak-Bejda, Łukaszuk, Repka, Guzowski, Cybulski, Stelcer and Jasiński (2016). Thus, homeless life often leads to trauma and prolonged isolation. In general, the homeless experience can depend on a variety of complex interactions between individuals, interpersonal and socioeconomic factors (Fowler, Hovmand, Marcal & Das, 2019). Moreover, based on research, mental illness and addiction have been identified as risk

factors for homelessness (Gaetz, Dej, Richter & Redman, 2016). Thus, we can ascertain that personal struggles affect interpersonal relationships with family, friends and romantic partners which, in turn, could damage relationships and potential housing support (Dawson, Jackson & Cleary, 2013; Pavao, Alvarez, Baumrind, Induni, & Kimerling, 2007).

Therefore, challenging life experiences due to the aforementioned factors lead former prisoners to become homeless. Failure to obtain necessities of life can significantly impact the process of reintegration. This paper also discusses the routine life of a former prisoner as a homeless man. Homeless individuals inevitably have life routines like everyone else. So they may have planned strategies in coping with survival throughout the day. The most commonly cited life routines for the former prisoner include having to sleep on the streets, begging, living without direction and alcohol consumption. They are often inclined to engage in criminal behaviours such as taking drugs, selling drugs, stealing and property crime. Many of these life routines of a former prisoner stem from the challenges of life and failure to meet their basic needs. Homeless former prisoners were found to have a series of basic requirements needed in the process of reintegration. When they fail to acquire their basic needs, these former prisoners often end up on the streets. The basic necessities in the life of a homeless former prisoner are categorised into immediate basic needs and ongoing basic needs. The basic needs include living, healthy food, transportation to and from the hospital, work, emotional support, identity documents for the lost, access to mobile phones, medical and dental care, psychiatric and drug and alcohol addiction treatment.

When the prisoners are released, they need basic opportunities to obtain educational and vocational training, legal employment and professional services (such as legal aid, counselling and mentoring). The success of former prisoners in obtaining basic and immediate needs for their basic living enables them to integrate and survive without becoming homeless. The provision of these immediate and ongoing basic needs is expected to ensure successful re-integration when former prisoners are released from the prison. The basic requirements of this model are based on the highlighted literature. All these requirements are essential to ensure successful re-integration. Re-integration becomes easier when all these basic needs are accessible in life for former prisoners to lead a productive and meaningful life.

3. The Life Routine of Former Prisoners in Living on The Street

There is almost no study reporting on the routine lives of former prisoners who are homeless. Not much is known about their daily routine and what they do. Most of the previous studies on former prisoners consist of factors that cause them to fail to integrate, engage in crime and even become lost due to lack of direction (Murphy, 2016). Factors which lead to challenges in life for the former prisoners in the community life include individual characteristics and their circumstances, the social environment of peers and family, community attitudes and government policies that determine the availability of specific support for these former prisoners (Belenko, 2006). According to Murphy (2016), among the critical factors that contribute to the problem of homelessness among former prisoners are unemployment, lack of low-cost housing, poor family ties and release from rehabilitation institutions (such as mental rehabilitation or prison). These factors are not static but are embedded in the personal and social lives of former prisoners and their interactions with others in society (Visher & Mallik-Kan 2007).

Moreover, relationship between poor health and deprivation, such as income, area, employment and lack of education has been well studied and recorded. However, according to [Chandola and Conibere \(2015\)](#), there are still debates on the causal direction of such interrelationships. Most former prisoners who were in the process of re-integration experience unpleasant challenges and experiences. Many former prisoners who fall out from the re-integration process end up living a homeless life. In short, the process of re-integration is very challenging, not only to former prisoners but also to members of the community who should accept the presence of former prisoners in their lives.

The problem of homelessness among former prisoners could automatically lead to a recurrence of crime or recidivism. The relationship between homeless people and prisons is reciprocated, whereby being homeless increases the chances of getting arrested for a crime and imprisonment ([Nooe & Patterson 2010](#)). Studies show that imprisonment can lead to negative effects such as the inability or critical difficulty of former prisoners to obtain a stable home ([Geller & Curtis, 2001](#); [Herbert et al., 2015](#)), upon release due to discriminatory and destructive factors. Moreover, mental problems, drug and alcohol abuse are the determining factors leading to the issue of homelessness among former prisoners ([Herbert et al. 2015](#)). Drug abuse and mental illness are also considered as major risk factors affecting homeless prisoners and re-incarceration. The challenge of finding a stable home due to a history of mental health problems or drug abuse among former prisoners has led many to become homeless ([Hammett, Rhodes & Harmon, 2001](#)).

Lack of support and release systems continues to contribute to homelessness among former prisoners when released from prison. On the contrary, all homeless people are less likely to be punished for violent offences because on average many of them are subject to property-related charges to meet their living needs. The homeless often resort to begging ([Eberle, Kraus, Serge & Hulchanski, 2001](#)). Crime among homeless people is easily spotted as it often occurs in public areas which attracts immediate police attention ([Eberle et al., 2001](#)).

The risk factors that have been linked to the re-involvement of former prisoners in crime which in turn costs them their home include their exposure to criminal activity. Thus, this theoretical paper records the life experiences of former prisoners and the life challenges they face in obtaining the basic needs. Such vulnerable groups are often unable to afford accommodation due to overpriced rental or need to seek the help of informal relationships (for example with a friend or relative) or live in a shelter or stopover. Finally, former prisoners often end up homeless as a result of life events. This theoretical paper will focus on identifying the forms of basic needs that former prisoners need in the process of reintegration when they are released. Through the identification of these basic needs, efforts to design a basic needs support model to assist homeless former prisoners can be done. Such a model can be utilised as an intervention to help these released former prisoners. This basic needs support model includes a range of additional assistance providing food, shelter to help ensure their basic needs are met. Former prisoners are often displayed or assessed as having more than one basic need depending on their situation. Having said that, it is important to understand on ways to tackle the needs of the homeless. As such, the model is expected to make a significant contribution to the knowledge body of the criminal justice system and the social work of

rehabilitation in channelling aid and social welfare depending on the basic needs for the lives of former prisoners living homeless to prevent destructive life and poverty.

3.1. Deficit of Basic Needs Among Homeless Former Prisoners

Homeless former prisoners face various basic needs deficits. Basic needs are the resources that are considered necessary for individuals to achieve and maintain physical well-being. The traditional list of basic needs consists of the minimum requirements for personal use such as food, water, and shelter (Emmerij, 2010). According to Travis (2004), one of the key determinants of whether former prisoners can re-establish a conventional lifestyle is to meet material needs. For former prisoners, each time they are released, they have a series of urgent basic requirements needed to re-integrate. The main reason for this gap in the current knowledge is that this particular population is difficult to study. They are also difficult to track over time due to their high mobility (Harding et al., 2014). As such, this theoretical paper aims to report on the range of basic needs that former prisoners need to prevent them from becoming homeless. The deficits they face are as follows (Prison Fellowship, 2017):

3.1.1. A lack of safe housing or shelter to live

Housing or shelter is one of the primary needs of former inmates. The first trajectory of each former prisoner is to find a place residence upon release from prison. The first question often asked by newly-released inmates is "Where can I sleep tonight?" (Ramirez, 2016). The search for a home is the first destination in the life of a former prisoner after being released from prison. Previous studies on homelessness tended to focus on homelessness issues as a result of housing choices (Bird, Rhoades, Lahey, Cederbaum, & Wenzel, 2017; Winetrobe, Wenzel, Rhoades, Henwood, Rice, & Harris, 2017). Persistent homelessness problems are due to difficulty in finding a home. Often, former prisoners fail to choose appropriate housing. A lack of financial stability and a criminal record are the main factors for their failure to obtain a permanent home. The stigma of a homeowner renting a room or house to a former prisoner further complicates the situation. Mabhala, Yohannes and Griffith (2016) acknowledged that the problem of homelessness is a social health phenomenon. Therefore, providing accommodation to former prisoners, especially those released from prison and have nowhere to go, is a must. Yani, Zahari, Samah, Azahar, Yasin, Saman, and Noor (2016) supported this fact, stating that living accommodations are an essential part of homeless life. This theoretical paper aims to emphasise that settlements, residences, rent rooms, or houses are one of the major factors that can prevent former prisoners from ending up homeless and at the same time reduce the rate of recidivism.

3.1.2. No adequate, balanced, and nutritious food

One of the consequences of homelessness is the risk of food shortages, i.e. limited availability of adequate food (Olsen & Holben, 2002). Food is needed to sustain life and to meet one's basic physiological needs for growth, development, and function. Adequate nutrition is essential in preventing chronic diseases such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and some types of cancer. Food is a necessity for the homeless (Yani et al., 2016). In general, the homeless survive with the money and food provided by the public and some humane shopkeepers. However, it is not common for homeless former inmates to find a balanced and nutritious diet. Although there is help available from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), not all homeless former prisoners are

able to enjoy this opportunity. In fact, [Alowaimer \(2018\)](#) also mentioned that the nutrition of these homeless people is so low that they could easily fall ill. There are situations when homeless people usually have to rely on leftover food from the trash ([Henwood, Wenzel, Mangano, Hombs, Padgett, Byrne, Rice, Butts & Uretsky, 2015](#)), thus proving that their food is unhealthy ([Alowaimer, 2018](#)). This theoretical paper, therefore, looks at the physical capability of the former prisoners that make them not suitable or fit for work. It is very sad that this group has to rely on the sympathy of volunteers and non-governmental organisations that come down to meet them occasionally. Food is the most important need in a person's life.

3.1.3. Lack of Clothing and personal items

When someone such as former prisoners live outside and sleeps on the street, clothing can be one of the most important things he would need to survive. According to [Henwood et al. \(2015\)](#), most of the homeless wear old and worn-out clothing. A former prisoner may also need better clothes at some point so they could be presentable when finding a job. Humans have no natural protection against climate and weather, like most animals. Therefore, one must wear a cover that protects one from nature. The reality is that former prisoners have to rely on the help of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and volunteers to obtain clothes. However, this theoretical paper aims to highlight that the issue of homelessness does not only involve the basic needs of clothing and personal items. Rather, the question arises, whether the help in the form of used clothing is appropriate to the physical shape and size of the group. Repeated use of daily clothing raises issues of personal hygiene. It is a separate issue from bath soaps, hair shavers, toothbrushes, toothpaste, or other essentials.

3.1.4. Lack of Transportation to facilitate movement

The findings of this study clearly indicate that past studies have not focused on the lack of transportation among the homeless former prisoner. Not only is transportation neglected in the related literature review, but also, there is a lack of research to prove that transportation is one way of meeting the needs of low-income communities in general ([Mattingly, Fields, Cronley, Miller, Murphy, Crawford, & Nargesi, 2018](#)). Individuals experiencing transportation problems also face challenges obtaining health services ([Turnbull, Muckle, & Masters, 2007](#)) or obtaining employment or permanent housing support ([Nino, Loya, & Cuevas, 2009](#)). Former prisoners cannot work or find places to live without access to transportation. For some former prisoners, close friends or family members will help carry them or retrieve them by bus, but for most former prisoners, friends and family members are few and far away. Some prisoners are released into post-release supervision and need to meet with probation or parole officers ([La Vigne, Davies, Palmer, & Halberstadt, 2008](#)). [Brallier et al. \(2019\)](#) mentioned the lack of reliable transportation as a significant obstacle to securing and retaining jobs, making and attending appointments, or maintaining a social support network. A lack of transportation can negatively impact job opportunities and education, healthcare, and social services. The cost of transportation has been found to hinder the movement of individual mobility to get out of homelessness ([Murphy, 2016](#)).

3.1.5. Lack of Emotional and Spiritual Support

Social support has been found to be an important component of research in the study of former health and psychological well-being ([Hochstetler, DeLisi & Pratt, 2010](#); [Iwamoto,](#)

Gordon & Oliveros, 2012), crime and crime recurrence (Cochran, 2014; Martinez & Abrams, 2013), as well as drug and alcohol abuse (Warner-Robbins & Parsons, 2010). Davis, Bahr, and Ward (2013) mentioned support from family, friends, and treatment services as essential for successful reintegration. Successful people tend to have a personal desire for change and a support system that would help them re-integrate and avoid the use of drugs and a life of crime. Homeless individuals who have strong social support are more able and more likely to access health and social services. A study by Tica and Roth (2012) showed that almost all interviewees had low marital status and low cohesion levels. Often, family support after release is limited and there are times when relationships break. Limited family support is often associated with the fact that these families face financial, emotional or health problems, when family members are incarcerated. Former newly-released prisoners often face emotional and spiritual challenges. Maruna (2011) suggested that the internal motivation for change and adequate social support are essential to re-integration. Support will have a greater impact on those who want to change.

3.1.6. Missing or Loss of Identification card

Former prisoners must have formal identification to find jobs and seek housing. This identification is an obstacle for many returning prisoners because they no longer possess documents. Luther, Reichert, Holloway, Roth, and Aalsma (2011) found that obtaining a personal identification such as a birth certificate, an identification card, or a driver's license or a State identification card, are significant challenges. The costs associated with obtaining new documents may be considered a barrier to some former prisoners (La Vigne et al., 2008). For former prisoners, an identity card is a major obstacle often encountered in the re-entry process. Personal identification is critical because it is a prerequisite to the long-term goal of resettlement, seeking employment, and housing (La Vigne et al., 2008). The identity card is clearly a requirement for re-entry into society, and employment. A card with details can be very valuable to a former prisoner. Having such a document leads to stable housing, better jobs, access to social services, educational opportunities, and more.

3.1.7. No access to a mobile phone

Because of their living conditions and instability, mobile phone access can be very important to maintain social connections and to obtain services among homeless people (Eyrich-Garg, 2010; Rice, Lee, & Taitt, 2011). However, not many studies have examined the use of technology among homeless adults. Rice et al. (2011) showed a prevalence of mobile phones among homeless youth, although studies on homeless adults found varying rates of technology adoption (Eyrich-Garg, 2010; McInnes et al., 2014). Today, the use of mobile phones at work is crucial especially to communicate with employers, colleagues, and clients. However, no specific study has investigated the telephone needs of former prisoners. Other studies have outlined the potential of social media, mobile phones, and the Internet in general to improve the general health, addiction, and sexual health of individuals experiencing homelessness (Rice, Kurzban & Ray, 2012; Sala & Mignone, 2014). The Prison Fellowship (2017) cited access to mobile phones as necessary for a former prisoner. The author therefore recommends that a more detailed study be conducted to investigate the purpose and importance of mobile use among former prisoners.

3.1.8. Lack of Health and dental treatment

There is ample evidence that homelessness increases the susceptibility to various health risks and safety hazards (Edidin, Ganim, Hunter, & Karnik, 2012; Paat, Morales, Tullius, Moya, & Alcantara, 2019). This scenario is due to inherent discrimination. Besides, the homeless are often associated with poor health (Wenzel, Rhoades, LaMotte-Kerr, & Duan, 2019). Existing research has shown that discrimination is very common among the homeless, for example, distortion, extreme poverty, and mental health disorders are often linked to homelessness (Johnstone, Jetten, Dingle, Parsell, & Walter, 2015). Former prisoners should not be barred from receiving medical treatment. Once released from prison, their access to healthcare facilities should be extended; especially among former prisoners suffering from infectious, chronic, or mental illnesses. According to Henwood et al. (2015), the average homeless person does not have the luxury of thinking of health problems, as they have no money or social security. When they are sick, they either wait to heal naturally or endure the pain. Due to poor hygiene, hunger, and sanitation, this group is exposed to various diseases. Some diseases they have cannot even be detected or could be cancerous (Alowaimer, 2018). According to Yani et al. (2016), there is a high proportion of homeless people who have a low health status. Even dental treatment among this population has begun to be discussed abroad. The studies have found that it is important to provide dental treatment to former inmates while they are in the community. However, more detailed empirical studies must be performed in the local context to prove that dental treatment is an essential requirement for former prisoners.

3.1.9. Lack of Psychiatric Treatment

The impact of homelessness on health is an issue that is hotly debated with an obvious consequence: early death (Vandentorren & Chauvin, 2018). The homeless have higher rates of physical and mental illness and have poor access to healthcare services (Fazel, Geddes & Kushel, 2014). They live in a state of impurity and insecurity. All of these factors are exacerbated due to stressful situations and psychiatric disorders, which are major causes of anxiety. This issue illustrates the complexity of these risk factors (Vandentorren & Chauvin, 2018). Critical health problems also result in former prisoners having complex health needs. Accordingly, healthcare services should be provided continuously to former prisoners even after they have been released from prison. They need to be provided with ongoing care and access to advanced health and rehabilitation facilities while they are in the process of re-integrating with the community. Proper intervention in billing, mental illness, and chronic infectious disease among former prisoners could lead to improved public health and criminal justice outcomes. Likewise, treating addiction or engaging in harm reduction education could reduce the risk of illicit drug use, and potentially reduce recidivism. Mental health issues can also contribute to crime recurrence. Even the criminal justice system can lead to or exacerbate mental health problems.

3.1.10. Lack of Drug and alcohol treatment

The issue of homelessness is found to be caused by the problem of alcohol addiction (Alowaimer, 2018; Yani et al., 2016). Various studies have reported that drug abuse is higher among the homeless (Salomonsen-Sautel, Van Leeuwen, Gilroy, Boyle, Malberg & Hopfer, 2008). In fact, it is proven when almost one-third of the homeless have problems with alcohol and drugs (Gillis, Dickerson, & Hanson, 2010). The opportunity to gain access to drugs while on the streets makes many homeless individuals more comfortable

living as a homeless person (Rafiey, Alipour, Moghanibashi-Mansourieh & Mardani, 2019). Evidence from Rafiey et al.'s (2019) study stated homeless people who have drug addiction problems are often faced with less stable living conditions and poor socio-economics. Many former prisoner who were released from prison had a hard time dealing with drug addiction. This situation proves that drug and alcohol therapy is one of the important needs that must be provided to former prisoners to enable them to be free from addiction problems.

3.2. Deficit of Continued or Ongoing Basic Needs for Former Prisoners

In addition to immediate basic needs, former inmates also have a long list of basic needs they need in the long run. These basic requirements are crucial, as they could either lead to a smooth or rough integration process. The author thus investigated the following types of ongoing needs (Prison Fellowship, 2017):

3.2.1. A lack of opportunity to life skill training/educational training and/or vocational training

The most basic requirements of the former prisoner is training to enhance life skills. This type of training is essential for turning former prisoners into well-functioning people. The term 'Life Skills' refers to the skills one needs to take full advantage of life. Any skills that are useful for one's life can be considered a life skill. This type of training is crucial for former prisoners to prepare them for integrated life (Alowaimer, 2018). Life skill training is expected to allow former prisoners to 'blend in' with society again. Each of the exercises mentioned is important to former inmates who have the right to citizenship and thus to function as part of a community. Additionally, such training makes former prisoners more sensitive to surrounding situations and contributes to a smooth integration process. Besides, to ensure that these former prisoners have the opportunity to enter the working world, education and knowledge are also essential to survive. If they do not get education via vocational training, the former prisoners must improve themselves to prepare for employment. Educational and vocational programmes have proven to benefit former prisoners. Many former prisoners have a poor educational background or skills that tend to lead to repeat crime. This issue has led to the need for educational training to increase knowledge and prepare former prisoners to face the working world.

3.2.2. Unemployment and No stable Income to cover ongoing expenses

In addition to life skill training, the most important requirement for former prisoners is to obtain a legitimate and appropriate job. Work aims to turn former prisoners into productive members of society. Employment enables former prisoners to legally earn an income. Many of the factors that lead to criminal behaviour stem from the former prisoner being desperate and depressed with the pressures of life due to a lack of financial stability. Therefore, researchers place legitimate employment as a very important requirement in ensuring a valid integration process. Luther et al. (2011) also suggested that the job search process is not an easy one for this community. In fact, the study also mentioned that many former prisoners receive outdated and inadequate job-related information.

The difficulty in obtaining a job is largely due to the return of the former prisoners to poor neighbourhoods, which, in turn, causes the individuals to engage in risky

behaviours of the same level before incarceration (Luther et al., 2011). Many studies have emphasised that stable employment is essential to the process of reintegration, as it reduces the former prisoner's initiative to re-engage in crime (Loeffler, 2013; Mears & Mestre, 2012). Work is the main activity most adults engage in to earn money to cover daily expenses. Success in getting a job makes a former prisoners's life routine fulfilled and at the same time enables him to earn an income. Finding a legitimate job is a challenge for former prisoners and serves as a powerful predictor of a crime-free life (Morenoff & Harding, 2011). Prisoners lose their eligibility to any federal benefits they deserved before incarceration. As a result, many former inmates depend on their families for financial support to a greater degree than they had hoped before their release (La Vigne et al., 2008).

3.2.3. Lack of Professional services (lawyers, counsellors, mentors etc.)

This sub-topic discusses the need for legal aid, especially for former prisoners who feel left out when facing legal issues. Studies have shown that former prisoners are underprivileged and have legal problems involving the criminal justice system (Olesen, 2018). However, in addition to the general barriers identified above, many former prisoners often face obstacles to successful re-entry due to legal issues (Berger & DaGrossa, 2013).

As former prisoners may return to normal life in some form of family context, planning and treatment should include important family members. Being released without any form of support system or advanced assistance could be a source of stress among former prisoners. Hence, there are some counselling and support services needed to guide the former prisoner towards successful re-integration. In other words, counsellors should be able to identify any health problems, help the former prisoners access educational opportunities, and find out if they need help to integrate well. In general, marriage therapists provide the same mental health services as other therapies. The difference is that marriage therapy focuses specifically on a couple's relationship (McCollum & Trepper, 2001).

Besides, The Prison Fellowship (2017) has put in place a mentoring program and spiritual guidance and support as one of the needs of former prisoners. Former prisoners who are in the process of re-integration need a support system. One of the social supports they need is emotional support. Overseas evidence shows that self-help programmes are effective at providing a medium for former prisoners to share problems and then find solutions to their problems. For this reason, there are several counseling and support services that the former prisoner needs to successfully re-integrate. Hence, counselors should be able to identify any health problems, help this group to access educational opportunities, and determine whether or not they need help to integrate well.

4. Conclusion

This theoretical paper documented a range of basic needs, support systems, and advanced support services that former prisoners should receive upon being released. The goal is to protect this group from preventable harm and to ease some of their financial misery due to the high cost of living in cities. These requirements are essential to get them out of their homeless and crime-free lives in Malaysia. The unassisted former prisoner can be a contributor to the number of homeless in Malaysia. The

criminal justice system requires this type of information to establish appropriate interventions. To address the issue of homeless people, the best way is to respond to these homeless individuals; thus, ongoing efforts will be required to address macro-structural factors and poverty and income inequality. In conclusion, the recommendation on the forms of immediate and ongoing basic needs is based on a library report. Note that the needs of former prisoners living in homeless conditions may be different and some needs may even overlap. In fact, there is a possibility that the needs may vary according to social demographics such as geography, race, gender, and religion.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors reported no conflicts of interest for this work and declare that there is no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, or publication of this article.

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