

ABSTRACT

SOCIAL WORK

WRIGHT, TILDON J.

B.A. GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY, 1997

AN EXPLANATORY STUDY OF HOW CAREER ADVISEMENT

SERVICES ARE RELATED TO SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

BY EX-OFFENDERS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Advisor: Hattie M. Mitchell, MSW

Thesis dated May 2009

This proposed study examines the relationship between career advisement services and the employment seeking efforts by ex-offenders in Atlanta, Georgia. The study samples are fifty adult men living in Atlanta, Georgia. The study uses the Kendall's tau and Spearman's rho tests with an experimental design to measure the sample. Its projected findings are forecast to be consistent with prior research in the following manner: finding a relationship that exists between career advisement services and employment seeking strategies for participants of this study. Implications for social work suggest that new policies from the federal level will need to be instituted to strategically force employers to hire ex-offenders in order to decrease the recidivism rate which causes the U.S. penal system to be overcrowded. Limitations to this study are the relative small sample size.

AN EXPLANATORY STUDY OF HOW CAREER ADVISEMENT
SERVICES ARE RELATED TO SEEKING EMPLOYMENT
BY EX-OFFENDERS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY
TILDON J. WRIGHT

WHITNEY M. YOUNG, JR., SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

MAY 2009

© 2009

TILDON J. WRIGHT

All Rights Reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for allowing me to have this graduate experience. I am blessed to be able to utilize my social work education that I have acquired at Clark Atlanta University. I thank my wife, Keena H. Wright for supporting me over the last three years. I thank the faculty and staff at Clark Atlanta University for the support that they have provided to me as a developing social worker. Lastly, I thank my advisors, Professor Hattie Mitchell and Dr. Robert Waymer; I could not have completed my thesis without your guidance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	v
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	4
Research Question.....	4
Hypothesis.....	5
Significance of the Study.....	5
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	6
Historical Perspective.....	6
The Job Situation in Atlanta.....	7
The Ex-Offender Situation.....	8
Career Advisement Services.....	10
Employment of Ex-Offenders.....	11
Afrocentric Perspective.....	12
Theoretical Framework.....	15
III. METHODOLOGY.....	17
Research Design.....	17
Description of the Site.....	18
Sample and Population.....	19
Data Collection and Procedures.....	19
Treatment of Data.....	21
Limitations of the Study.....	21
IV. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	22
Demographic Data.....	22
Research Question and Hypothesis.....	37

TABLE OF CONTENTS

(continued)

CHAPTER	PAGE
V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.....	42
Summary of the Study.....	42
Implications for Social Work Practice.....	44
APPENDICES.....	48
Appendix A. Permission Letter.....	49
Appendix B. Survey Questionnaire.....	50
Appendix C. IRB Approval Letter.....	53
Appendix D. Informed Consent Form.....	54
Appendix E. SPSS Program Analysis.....	56
REFERENCES.....	64

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Demographic Profile of Study Participants.....	23
2. I have full time employment - 40 hours per week.....	26
3. On my job, I earn at least \$9.00 or more per hour.....	27
4. My job provides benefits.....	27
5. When I am unemployed, I look for a job everyday.....	28
6. When trying to find a job, I read the newspapers and follow job leads.....	29
7. Employment websites help me find stable employment.....	29
8. When job searching, I have adequate transportation.....	30
9. I am federally bonded by the Georgia Department of Labor.....	31
10. I have received a career assessment to identify my strengths and weakness.....	31
11. My family supports my employment search efforts.....	32
12. I have a marketable résumé to present to employers.....	33
13. I meet with a career advisor every week to discuss my employment plans.....	33
14. I submit a job search form to my career advisor every week.....	34
15. When unemployed, I seek out re-training programs to upgrade my skills.....	35
16. I attend job fairs on a weekly basis and discuss the outcomes with my advisor.....	35
17. When I received career advisement services my employability increased.....	36

LIST OF TABLES

(continued)

TABLE		PAGE
18.	Career advisement services are a reliable resource for ex-offenders seeking employment.....	37
19.	Cross-tabulation between Basic and Intensive Services.....	38
20.	Cross-tabulation basic career advisement services and question 10 that stated “Longest period I have ever been unemployed.”	39
21.	Chi Square Test Results for Cross-tabulation basic career advisement services and question 10 that stated “Longest period I have ever been unemployed.”	40
22.	Cross-tabulation intensive career advisement services and question 10 that stated “Longest period I have ever been unemployed.”	40
23.	Chi Square Test Results for Cross-tabulation intensive career advisement services and question 10 that stated “Longest period I have ever been unemployed.”	41

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been increased awareness of the challenges faced by ex-offenders who are returning to their communities and seeking employment. This has been spurred by the growing number of ex-offenders being released and the high rate of recidivism reported by criminal justice officials. Most ex-offenders face enormous barriers in their search for employment. Given the high positive correlation between educational achievement and wage earnings, the lack of educational skills can be a barrier to successful re-entry into the workforce.

Another barrier faced by ex-offenders is a poor employment history and the lack of marketable work skills. Breaks in employment caused by incarceration and the stigma associated with a criminal record all contribute to the poor work record that has become the norm for many former offenders. Ex-offenders are further hindered by obstacles, such as, laws prohibiting them from certain occupations and the prejudice many employers have toward hiring them, the lack of identity documents, interview appropriate clothing and transportation needed to secure work, the shortage of child care assistance, poor or nonexistent family support, and homelessness (Federal Probation, 2005).

According to Farrall (2002), finding stable employment is widely recognized as playing a central role in the life of an ex-offender attempting to stay away from a life of

crime. Sustainable employment reduces the likelihood of an individual re-offending between one-third and a half percent. There is also an increasing recognition that it is not employment alone, but the interaction between employment and events such as family formation that both encourage and enable ex-offenders to abstain from crime. Not only do social ties offer ex-offenders access to employment, they also encourage the development of a self-identity in which paid work assumes an integral role in a variety of social units that they (ex-offenders) function in. However, the reliance on social ties or entities also reveals the frailties in existing provision aimed at assisting ex-offenders into stable employment.

Statement of the Problem

According to Human Resources Crossing (2008) there are significant barriers such as employer discrimination, and a lack of creative and effective career advisement services that make it difficult for ex-offenders to find and maintain stable employment. Given the steady increase in the prison population and the associated growth in the number of ex-offenders returning to their communities, community organizations must be prepared to serve the needs of unemployed and unprepared ex-offenders. Between 600,000 and 700,000 offenders are released annually in which two-thirds of them will be arrested within 3 years after their release due to not knowing how or refusing to get the help they need.

Eighty-three percent of offenders in the state of New York who violated probation or parole were unemployed at the time of their offenses. In addition to financial barriers, transportation issues, and mental health issues, ex-offenders face the stigma of their

records, and employers often see them as too risky to hire. Ex-offenders have to work extra hard to convince employers that they are dependable, committed and eager to perform a job well. One of the key factors for ex-offenders to even have a slight chance of getting an employer to consider them is that, they need effective coaching on job search techniques specific to their needs and circumstances. Most incarceration systems do not have any type of contemporary career advisement services within their structures to educate inmates about the changing dynamics of the workforce that they will face (HR Crossing, 2008).

This service gap, before the inmate is released back into mainstream society, keeps the soon to be ex-offender at a disadvantage because he does not possess the skills to successfully integrate into a working community or environment. Another problem the ex-offender faces after being released from incarceration is the discrimination that they face from prospective employers. Career advisement services can educate the ex-offender, provide training opportunities, and help the ex-offender reinvent himself in terms of proper presentation when looking for employment. Unfortunately, the services have no power to influence the perceptions of employers who see ex-offenders as threats to the success of their day to day operations. The truth is that most job search materials and career advisement services on the market do not address the real concern faced by ex-offenders which is discrimination from employers (HR Crossing, 2008).

Okulicz (2007) stated that unemployment is not only about the work search, it is about you; everything that you can bring to an employer's worksite; how you dress for work, how you get there, what you do, who you are with, your likes, dislikes, and your values help secure a job for you. This type of flawed thinking offers unrealistic

expectations for the types of jobs that are available to them. Specifically, this type of approach assumes that ex-offenders have their own resources or they get them from career advisement services such as transportation, supportive family and friends, formal education, and internet access, to name a few. Many ex-offenders have none of the previously mentioned resources; therefore it can be extremely difficult for them to get a good start in their job searching activities. Ex-offenders need resources geared specifically to them that address their concerns and keep them focused on realistic goals and objectives. However, when ex-offenders receive the necessary resources from career advisement services that help them seek out employment, they still need stronger resources, employers with sensitive hearts who believe in giving men who made past mistakes another chance and new policy development from the federal government to force employers to strategically hire and place ex-offenders in appropriate work environments.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine how career advisement services relate to seeking employment by ex-offenders. This study will analyze the barriers that hinder the targeted population, the job situation in Atlanta, Georgia, and how career advisement services are designed to improve ex-offenders' chances of obtaining stable employment.

Research Question

Is there a relationship between career advisement services and employment among ex-offenders who are seeking stable employment in Atlanta, Georgia?

Hypothesis

There is no relationship between career advisement services and employment among ex-offenders who are seeking stable employment in Atlanta, Georgia.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because ex-offenders continue to be discriminated against by employers in spite of the preparation and support that they receive from career advisement services. This type of discrimination keeps them at risk of re-offending and returning to prison or jail. Other adverse effects that occur and develop are the increased recidivism rate for incarceration along with a heightened sense of fear amongst mainstream citizens who may cross paths with job seeking ex-offenders. These ex-offenders seeking employment may be frustrated and struggling with the temptation to return to a life of crime in order to survive. Any effort to increase the employment rate of ex-offenders must systematically take internal (i.e., lack of education and marketable skills) and external (i.e., strict state laws and employer discrimination) barriers into consideration. Specifically, this requires an assessment of needs by a career advisement service, the development of an action plan that is reviewed periodically and adjusted accordingly with a competent career advisor, referrals to appropriate social services and health care agencies, and consistent efforts to make policy makers aware that their intervention is needed to help put ex-offenders to work.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Historical Perspective

This review of literature examines the various ways that ex-offenders benefit from employment opportunities, career advisement services, and some of the specific difficulties they face in finding employment and how some manage to overcome them legitimately or else employ other adaptive strategies. The review highlights the degree of difficulties that ex-offenders experience in the areas of vocational training and relevant work experience to compete effectively within a labor market that is already set heavily against them.

The literature review provides insight on the impact of the barriers such as employment trends, systems that keep certain ex-offending groups at hire risk ex-offenders unemployed and underemployed. It will also analyze the methods that are currently being used by parole, probation, and other social service agencies that assist ex-offenders in their search for stable employment. Although many states have abolished discretionary release by parole boards, more than 753,000 men and women were under parole supervision on December 31, 2002, an increase of 2.8 percent from the prior year.

In the case of this particular study, parole agencies could, therefore, continue to play a critical role in the supervision of ex-offenders and, ultimately, the reduction of

recidivism rates and increased employment rates among the offenders (Bureau of Justice Statistic, 2006).

During 2002, 95 percent of all men and women released from Georgia prisons returned to communities in Georgia. Twelve percent of released offenders returned to Fulton County; no other county is home to more than seven percent of releases. Nine percent of those released returned to the city of Atlanta and were further concentrated within five zip code areas within or immediately adjacent to the city boundary. However, these five zip code areas (30336, 30303, 30310, 30314, and 30315) had the highest rates of returning offenders are characterized by increased numbers of families living in poverty, higher than average unemployment, and increased numbers of female – headed households, as compared with Fulton County and Atlanta city averages (Research Brief, 2004).

The Job Situation in Atlanta

Atlanta is the capital of Georgia and the state's largest city. It is one of the most important commercial, financial, and transportation centers of the southeastern United States. The beginning of the city's economic growth can be traced back to the return of Atlanta residents who originally fled the city due to the Confederacy's defeat at the hands of the Union army during the Civil War in 1864. The rebirth of the railroad system spurred the city's development after the war. Because of the city's important railroad development, both wholesale and retail trade increased in the post-civil war period, and by 1890, Atlanta was a clear leader in the southeast region's commercial development (Georgia Encyclopedia, 2008).

Over the next 123 years after the civil war, Atlanta experienced an industrial and business growth explosion that endured the devastating effects of the Great Depression and World War II. The emergence of a new Ford automobile assembly plant and wartime employer Lockheed-Georgia put the city on the fast track to more rapid population growth and economic success that would prevail onward into the new millennium. By 2000, Atlanta's economy was strongly connected with major corporations (i.e., Coca Cola, Home Depot, Delta Airlines, CNN, UPS, Georgia-Pacific) and government agencies (i.e., Centers of Disease Control and Prevention). The increasing movement of jobs, retail industries, and office buildings to the urban perimeter, the local, state, and federal government presence in downtown Atlanta proved to be on the of the area's stabilizing forces that continues to keep its residents employed (Georgia Encyclopedia, 2008).

The Ex-Offender Situation

According to the Chicago Reporter (2008) nearly half of Latino ex-offenders in Illinois reported having jobs in January 2008. While the numbers for white ex-offenders were slightly higher, less than one-third of African American ex-offenders said they were working. The gaps were even wider in July 2008 for ex-offenders in Cook County, Illinois: 75 percent of whites reported that they were employed, compared with 58 percent of Latinos and 35 percent of African Americans. Those numbers reflect unemployment rates for the ex-offender population in Cook County, which shows that the unemployment rate for African American ex-offenders is nearly twice the rate for Latino ex-offenders and almost four times the rate for white ex-offenders.

Correction Today (2003) stated that in America, the poor and minorities are likely to be incarcerated. Fifty-three percent of people warehoused in the nation's prisons earned less than \$10,000 a year prior to incarceration. Although the minority population in the nation is approximately 13 percent, 66 percent of the prison population is made up of minorities. Fifty-two percent of offenders on probation were convicted of a felony while 46 percent were convicted of misdemeanors. Of those on parole, 97 percent were sentenced to more than 1 year. In addition, 72 percent of those entering state prison for the first time are nonviolent offenders. There has always been a shortage of vocational, educational and substance abuse programs in prison that can improve ex-offenders' chances of avoiding re-incarceration. Tragically, more than 100,000 inmates are being released each year without any form of community correctional supervision.

Mainstream society has seen over and over again that many ex-offenders are unable to overcome their employment barriers. As a result, they return to prison. Efforts have been made such as the implementation of the Public Safety Ex-Offender Self-Sufficiency Act of 2003 which is designed to provide structured living arrangements for ex-offenders as they return home, an arrangement that is not designed to cost taxpayers a great deal of money (Davis, 2004).

According to Davis (2004), the bill calls for the development of 100,000 units over the next 5 years, the idea being that corporations who do this will get the benefit of their resource back within a 10-year period. They must hold the facilities at least for 15 years. Individuals will then have a place to live, a place to go, where they can also receive education, job training, skill development, counseling for whatever their social or physical-medical problems may be, as well as healthcare and assistance with job

development. In 2003, the number of sentenced and re-offending inmates under state and federal jurisdiction per 100,000 population was 482 and by 2006, that number had increased to 501.

Career Advisement Services

A vocational assessment and the development of an individual action plan are the backbones of successful placement and retention efforts. This is especially true for individuals who have not developed a career plan and an inconsistent work history. The assessment process helps a job seeker understand his interests, work values and skills as well as any barriers that stand in the way of achieving career goals including housing, substance abuse and health problems, and educational deficits. It includes the development of an action plan that will guide the individual's participation in treatment, educational, and vocational programs and, ultimately, job seeking activities (Federal Probation, 2005).

According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security (2008), job readiness and pre-employment instruction is defined as candidates knowing their strengths and weaknesses in a competitive job market. Employers want to know if the candidate has good interpersonal skills, creativity, or mechanical inclination, all of which are relative to the respective employment areas. Individuals, ex-offenders in particular, who get a job matching their interests, are more likely to stay in that job. Job readiness also prepares ex-offenders how to conduct specific job search activities, develop problem-solving skills, appropriate oral communication skills, personal qualities and work ethics, and interpersonal and teamwork skills.

According to Federal Probation (2005), job readiness and pre-employment instruction should be initiated before release from prison. This would decrease the amount of time it takes to secure work following release, thus reducing any risks associated with periods of unemployment. While many prisons offer this type of instruction, parole agencies apparently see a need for providing it upon release, either directly or through another agency. Forty percent of responding agencies offered this instruction to the ex-offenders and 40 percent had contracts with outside agencies for this service.

Employment for Ex-Offenders

The Journal of Experimental Criminology (2005), the evaluation literature on employment program outcomes for those with criminal records who are not in custody has not been systematically reviewed. Other literature indicates similar patterns are developing in regards to the social science arena having data that shows the employment rate for ex-offenders is increasing.

The Federal Probation (2005) stated that only 21.8 percent of responding agencies reported that they tracked the employment rates of persons under their supervision. Where they tracked employment rates for 2003 ranged from a high of 97.5 percent to a low of 45 percent. However, the value of tracking the employment rate of ex-offenders under criminal justice supervision and using a coordinated approach to the delivery of work related services is considerable. Using this approach, the United States Pretrial Office for the Eastern District of Missouri decreased the unemployment rate of the persons under its supervised by 52 percent over the course of 4 years. Missouri's Eastern

District also reported that by the end of FY 2003, their revocation rate was 28 percent lower than the average for the federal system, despite a 54 percent increase in the number of persons under their supervision.

Afrocentric Perspective

Asante (2008) defines the Afrocentric Perspective as the quality of thought that is rooted in cultural image and human interest of African people. The Afrocentric Perspective seeks to address the ongoing social crises in African American communities by repositioning the African person and the African reality from the margins of European and White American thought, attitude, and doctrines to a centered place within the realm of science and culture. As the fight for fairness in hiring people of color for competitive jobs intensifies, the Afrocentric Perspective plays a vital role in how people of African origin learn to gain their own accountability and move to a place that is beyond existing constraints for their social, economic, political, and scientific development. With all of the challenges that this literature review presents about employment barriers for ex-offenders, the Afrocentric Perspective provides redirection for the grimmer challenges that African American ex-offenders face.

As stated earlier in this review, the Afrocentric Perspective focuses on the restructuring of culture and human interest to help people of African origin learn how to successfully navigate through a dominant and oppressive Eurocentric society. Strategic career advisement and job development plays a vital role in creating new and logical ways for African American ex-offenders to re-enter the competitive workforce and begin to make positive impacts in their own economic lives. Unfortunately, the impact of

incarceration has been and continues to be one of the largest barriers that prevent African American ex-offenders from moving out of a state of confinement to true autonomy and freedom in regards to taking care of himself and his family.

According to Harris (2003) the impact of incarceration on the African American family has devastated its family structure at its core. The number of African American men in state prisons throughout the United States exceeds their proportion among the U.S. population. Imprisonment creates serious economic, emotional, and interpersonal problems for their families. Furthermore, these problems create excessive stress on family relationships at a time when the incarcerated African American male and his family most need each other's support. Social work, as well as other human service professions, has not responded to the needs of either the incarcerated and newly released African American male or his family. Unless social service agencies and professionals begin to address the problems incarceration creates for African American men and their families, imprisonment will become the most significant factor contributing to the dissolution and breakdown of African American families during the new millennium.

The incarceration of a father, male companion, or significant male family member places a great deal of stress on family relationships and structure. In many families, the structure of the family must be modified to compensate for the loss of this significant individual. The responsibilities of individual family members frequently change or increase. Incarcerated men are far more dependent on their families than they were before they were imprisoned (i.e., in need of money, clothing, and other personal articles such as toiletries). In addition, incarcerated and recently released inmates are not able to exercise as much influence within their families as they did prior to incarceration. This

situation further illuminates their dependent and “fallen” status within their families (Harris, 2003).

Additional social work provisions from an Afrocentric perspective are needed in the form of culturally appropriate family-support groups for the incarcerated as well as the recently released inmate who is seeking an opportunity to develop a changed and positive lifestyle. These men and their families need support programs that are based upon the values, attitudes, and beliefs of their African and African American cultures. A support group developed from these cultural perspectives emphasizes the importance and strength of the extended family system, role flexibility, and harmony, balance, and responsibility within the family and among family members. Moreover, Afrocentric family support groups help families become more effective African American families, not caricatures of successful European-American families (Boyd-Franklin, 1989).

Culturally appropriate support groups can also be established for the children of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated males. Their needs are often neglected, particularly if the father did not live with the child before he was incarcerated. African American males traditionally maintain contact with their children, even when they are no longer married to or romantically involved with the child’s mother. Thus, the child and his or her relationship with the incarcerated father suffers when the father is incarcerated or if he is displaced after being released from prison with nowhere to go, which in many cases, will lead back to prison (Boyd-Franklin, 1989).

Schools of social work must not only educate students about the plight of incarcerated African American males and their families, they must provide them with the knowledge and skills required to practice effectively with this population. Social work

agencies need to help grassroots organizations in the African American community develop indigenous community-based support programs that will help ex-offenders make a smooth transition back into their communities by providing counseling, job placement, and cultural education services. These types of programs will need to be expanded and supported by professional social work associations and local social service agencies (Harris, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical basis for this study is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory. According to Schriver (2004), Maslow's theory is composed of five components or levels that explain how human needs are met. The five levels are divided into two sections known as basic needs and growth needs. Physiological, safety, and belonging needs are grouped as basic needs.

First, physiological needs are associated with the maintenance of the human body (i.e., health, food, water, air, and sleep). Safety needs are about putting a roof over our heads and keeping people from harm. The idea is that if we are rich, strong and powerful, or have good friends, we can make ourselves safe. Thirdly, the belonging needs introduce our tribal nature. The idea is that if we are helpful and kind to others, they will want to have us as friends. Esteem and self-actualization needs are the last two needs that are grouped as growth needs. The fourth need on the hierarchy is esteem needs, which places an emphasis on social positions within social groups. Basically, if people respect us, we have greater power. The fifth and most important need is the need to self-actualize or

become what we are capable of becoming which is our greatest achievement (Changing Minds, 2008).

As Maslow's theory relates to this study, the three basic needs (physiology, safety, and belonging) on the hierarchy are the most applicable to the reasons why ex-offenders struggle to obtain stable employment and why many of them choose to re-offend in order to survive when they are not incarcerated. Pain and discomfort that comes from not being able to feed one's self on a regular basis can range from mild to excruciating, and will have a proportionate affect on our rate of abandoning higher needs. When we predict that we are likely to be harmed, we feel unsafe, especially when we cannot control the variables that will directly affect our well-being. The threat of being ostracized by a more dominant social group will scare many people into compliance with the standards for acceptable behavior or create a fight-or-flight reaction which is the biochemical changes that occur in our brain that makes us aggressive, fighting the new idea, or make us timid, and flee from it (Changing Minds, 2008).

This review has provided data that demonstrates that ex-offenders have consistently practiced both reactions that have systematically worked against them as it relates to them obtaining stable employment.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III provides the methodologies that were used in conducting this study. This study used a quantitative approach by way of a survey to obtain the responses from the participants. The components of this study includes: research design, description of the site, sample and population, data collection, procedures, and treatment of data.

Research Design

The design for this study was an explanatory design. It was designed to discover a relationship between the identified variables. The researcher looked for three conditions in order to conclude that the predictor variable affected the criterion variable. These conditions were: (1) the variable x had to precede y in time order; (2) x and y had to consistently co-vary; and (3) all other explanations for changes in y had to be ruled out. This study also followed a quasi-experimental design pattern as well because it did not meet one of the requirements for a true experimental design. In a true experiment, there are one or more control groups that are not exposed to the independent variable. In this study, both control groups are exposed to the predictor and criterion variables (career advisement services and employment). This design accounted for alternative explanations or individual outcomes. The researcher anticipated one potential threat to the internal validity of this study and that was the individual history that each participant

experienced with the identified variables. The way that the participants experienced the two variables in conjunction together or individually threatened the internal validity.

Description of the Site

The study was conducted at the Office of Emergency and Transitional Housing facility. This facility also goes by the name of Jefferson Place. This facility serves as a homeless program for adult men. It is a part of the Fulton County Human Services Department which is located in Atlanta, Georgia. According to OETH Policies and Procedures (2006), OETH provides its clients with opportunities and services to address their personal issues from two programmatic perspectives: A) basic and immediate shelter (overnight stay) and other supportive services (i.e., Marta cards, medical attention referrals to Grady Hospital, and life skills and job readiness curriculums) through case management. Each client is given a 120-day stay in the shelter within a calendar year. When the client's time is up, he can only return to Jefferson Place after his last day from the previous stay. B) Transitional Housing is the other program within this setting. It offers the clients a highly structured support system that comes in the form of a tightly woven community of 50 adult men in which they have the opportunity to live there for 2 years.

This facility provided a good setting for this study because it was a convenient location for the participants and the researcher. The researcher conducted all surveys in a reserved conference room within the facility. No one had access to that room except for the researcher. This setting created an environment that was secure, safe, and it provided a forum for the participants to speak openly about themselves and their conditions, when

they chose to, as they related to the survey questions. The researcher anticipated that this setting would help the participants generate and provide the most accurate responses for this study.

Sample and Population

The sample population of this study consisted of fifty randomly selected clients who received services from the Supportive Services program and the Transitional Housing program within Jefferson Place and who were all ex-offenders. Twenty-five clients from one program and 25 clients from the other program participated in this study. They were randomly selected from the case management files at Jefferson Place. The commonalities that the participants shared were their desires to obtain stable employment so that they can transition from homelessness into independent living environments. Other dynamics of that sample group included a racially diverse group of adult males where the age range was from 18 to 68 years old. That sample group consisted of individuals who earned no income and those who earned fulltime income. The researcher anticipated that this study would produce an overall strong external validity because the participants' issues existed outside of their sample group and amongst other ex-offenders who lived in the Jefferson Place shelter, but chose not to engage in any of the programs and services that were available to help them.

Data Collection and Procedures

The researcher used detailed survey questions that focused on the relationship between career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders. The nominal process was employed along with closed-ended survey questions as the measurement

instrument for the study. The survey had thirty questions that the participants answered. The variables in this study that were measured for validity were career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders. A demographic profile was developed on the participants. A likert scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree) was utilized to generate frequency distributions in order to analyze participant perceptions. Cross-tabulation was utilized to calculate chi square which was used as the test statistic to determine if there was a statistically significant relationship between the main variables of the study. The researcher provided consent forms to the participants that explained the intent and purpose of this study in detail.

The procedures for this study were selecting, moderating, and some planning to provide the structure for this overall study. Data collection took place on site at the Office of Emergency and Transitional Housing (Jefferson Place). Each participant from both programs was randomly selected from six case managers' caseloads. The Transitional and the Supportive Services participants were randomly selected together. The researcher anticipated that the selection of participants was not going to be difficult because of the accessibility of the participants' files. That procedure ensured that all of the participants involved in both programs, had an equal opportunity to be selected. The researcher met individually with the participants in the designated area and explained the purpose of this study. At that time, a consent form was given to each participant.

After each participant read the consent form and choose to adhere to it, the researcher moved to the next phase of the study, which was providing the survey questions to the participants. The identity of the clients was kept confidential. Again,

each participant received an oral explanation and written documentation with details on the purpose of this study. The compiling of data took 2 weeks to compile and configure.

Treatment of Data

This study examined whether the statistical tests of chi - square will identify a relationship between career advisement services (predictor) and employment (criterion) amongst ex-offenders. This study looked at fifty ex-offenders who were seeking stable employment via the assistance of career advisement services from employment agencies in Atlanta, Georgia. The statistical analysis was performed by using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) by identifying, comparing and looking for unique patterns that existed or that were disregarded during the study. The researcher ran three types of test for validity and reliability; frequency distribution; Chi-square and Analysis of Variance. The researcher anticipated the small sample size for this study, the typical degrees of freedom (.05) would be strengthened to (.01) to increase probability.

Limitations of the Study

There was one significant limitation of the study. That limitation was the limited number of participants available to participate in the study. The researcher had some difficulty maintaining the specific number of clients needed for this study because the participants that live in the Office of Emergency and Transitional Housing had the freedom to leave and exit the programs any time they wanted to. With this type of freedom afforded to the residents, it was challenging for the researcher to identity a specific time frame with the appropriate number of participants to conduct the study.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter was to present the findings of the study outcome that focused on whether a relationship existed between career advisement services and employment by ex-offenders. This chapter presents the findings of the outcomes. The findings are organized into two sections: demographic data and research question and hypothesis.

Demographic Data

A demographic profile was developed of the study participants. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the following: age group, gender, highest education, marital status, support systems, children, occupation, ethnicity, employment, annual income, periods of unemployment, vocational services, felony time, religious beliefs, and specifics services and the benefits of utilizing career advisement services.

Table 1

Demographic Profile of Study Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age Group		
Under 25	2	4.0
25-30	6	12.0
31-36	7	14.0
37-42	8	16.0
43-48	12	24.0
49-54	11	22.0
55 and up	4	8.0
Highest level of education		
Elementary	2	4.0
High School	35	70.0
Vocational	1	2.0
Some College	9	18.0
College Grad	3	6.0
Marital Status		
Married	7	14.0
Never Married	27	54.0
Divorced	14	28.0
Widowed	2	4.0
Support Systems		
Family supports me	29	58.0
Does not support me	21	42.0
Children		
0-None	18	36.0
1-3	26	52.0
4-6	2	4.0
7 and up	4	8.0

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Occupation		
Construction	12	24.0
Cook	9	18.0
Delivery	1	2.0
Warehouse	11	22.0
Laborer	2	4.0
Clerk	2	4.0
Mechanic	4	8.0
Other	9	18.0
Ethnicity		
African American	43	86.0
White	7	14.0
Employment		
Unemployed	38	76.0
Employed	4	8.0
Part-time	3	6.0
Temporary	5	10.0
Annual Income		
Under \$1,000	30	60.0
\$1,000 – 4,999	6	12.0
\$5,000 – 9,999	2	4.0
\$10,000 and up	12	24.0
Longest period of being unemployed		
Less than 1 month	4	8.0
1 month	3	6.0
2 month	6	12.0
6 months	10	20.0
1 year	7	14.0
More than 1 year	20	40.0

Table 1 (continued)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Received Vocational-Empl. Services		
No	20	40.0
Yes	30	60.0
Felony Time		
Less than one year	20	40.0
More than one year	30	60.0
Religious Beliefs		
Some encouragement	31	62.0
No encouragement	14	28.0
No religious beliefs	5	10.0

Table 1 is a profile of the study participants. It presents the frequency distributions of the demographic variables.

The study population was composed of fifty (50) males between the ages of 18 to 68 years old who indicated that their highest educational levels were high school (70%), vocational training (2%), and college (24%), and high school dropouts (4%). Participants indicated that they were married (14%), never married (54%), divorced (28%), and widowed (4%). The ethnicities of the participants were African American (86%) and White (14%).

The majority (60%) of the participants indicated that they have more than 1 year of felony time and (60%) stated that they had received vocational-employment services

after being released from jail or prison. In addition, (76%) of the participants stated that they were unemployed.

As indicated in Table 1, the typical respondent of the study was an African American male who was never married, between the ages of 43 and 54 years old, a high school graduate, unmarried, and a (40%) chance of being unemployed.

Table 2

I have full time employment – 40 hours per week

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	42	84.0
Agree	8	16.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 2 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that they had full time employment (40 hours per week). As shown in Table 2, the survey participants indicated that they knew the difference between full time employment and part time or temporary employment. Of the fifty respondents, only 16% indicated that they had full time employment at the time of this survey and 84% did not have full time employment at the time of this survey.

Table 3

On my job, I earn at least \$9.00 or more per hour

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	36	72.0
Agree	14	28.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 3 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that they earned at least \$9 or more per hour. As shown in Table 3, 28% of the participants agreed that they do earn more than \$9 or more per hour. Of the fifty respondents, 72% indicated that they do not earn more than \$9 or more per hour.

Table 4

My job provides benefits

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	39	78.0
Agree	11	22.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 4 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagree or agree that their jobs provide benefits. As shown in Table 4, most of the participants reported that they do not have benefits on their jobs. Of the fifty respondents, 22% agreed that they have benefits on their jobs.

Table 5

When I am unemployed, I look for a job everyday

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	13	26.0
Agree	37	74.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 5 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagree or agree that when they are unemployed, they look for jobs every day. As shown in Table 5, the majority of the participants (74%) agreed that when they are unemployed, they look for jobs every day. Of the fifty respondents, only 26% of them disagreed that they do not look for jobs everyday when they are unemployed.

Table 6

When trying to find a job, I read newspapers and follow job leads

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	12	24.0
Agree	38	76.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 6 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagree or agree when they are trying to find a job, they read newspapers and follow the job leads. As shown in Table 6, most of the participants (76%) agree that they read newspapers and follow jobs. Only 24% of the participants reported that they do not follow job leads when reading newspapers while job searching.

Table 7

Employment websites help me find stable employment

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	19	38.0
Agree	31	62.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 7 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that employment websites help them find stable employment. As shown in Table 7, the majority of participants (62%) agreed about employment websites helping them find stable employment. Only 38% of the participants disagreed that employment websites help them find stable employment.

Table 8

When job searching, I have adequate transportation

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	21	42.0
Agree	29	58.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 8 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that when job searching, they have adequate transportation. As shown in Table 8, 42% of the participants disagreed and 58% of the participants agreed on whether they had adequate transportation when job searching.

Table 9

I am federally bonded by the Georgia Department of Labor

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	23	46.0
Agree	27	54.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 9 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that they were federally bonded by the Georgia Department of Labor. As shown in Table 9, a little of a half of the participants agreed that they were federally bonded by the Georgia Department of Labor. Almost half of the participants (46%) disagreed that they were not bonded by the Georgia Department of Labor.

Table 10

I have received a career assessment to identify my strengths and weaknesses

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	18	36.0
Agree	32	64.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 10 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that they received a career assessment to identify their strengths and weaknesses. As shown in Table 10, the majority of the participants (64%) agreed that they received a career assessment to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Only (36%) disagreed that they received a career assessment to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Table 11

My family supports my employment search efforts

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	23	46.0
Agree	27	54.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 11 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that their family supports their employment search efforts. As shown in Table 11, just over half of the participants (54%) agreed that their family supports their employment search efforts. Only (46%) disagreed that their family supports their employment search efforts.

Table 12

I have a marketable résumé to present to employers

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	13	26.0
Agree	37	74.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 12 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that they had marketable résumés to present to employers. As shown in Table 12, the majority of the participants (74%) agreed that they had marketable résumés to present to employers. Only 26% of the participants disagreed that they had marketable résumés to present to employers.

Table 13

I meet with a career advisor every week to discuss my employment plans

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	23	46.0
Agree	27	54.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 13 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that they meet with a career advisor every week to discuss their employment plans. As shown in Table 13, just over half of the participants (54%) agreed that they meet with a career advisor every week to discuss their employment plans. Only (46%) disagreed that they meet with a career advisor every week to discuss their employment plans.

Table 14

I submit a job search form to my career advisor every week

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	18	36.0
Agree	32	64.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 14 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that they submit a job search form to their career advisor every week. As shown in Table 14, the majority of the participants (64%) agreed that they submit a job search form to their career advisor every week. Only (36%) disagreed that they submit a job search form to their career advisor every week.

Table 15

When unemployed, I seek out re-training programs to upgrade my skills

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	24	48.0
Agree	26	52.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 15 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that when unemployed, they seek out re-training programs to upgrade their skills. As shown in Table 15, just over half of the participants (52%) agreed that when unemployed, they seek out re-training programs to upgrade their skills. Only (48%) disagreed that when unemployed, they seek out re-training programs to upgrade their skills.

Table 16

I attend job fairs on a weekly basis and discuss the outcomes with my advisor

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	29	58.0
Agree	21	42.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 16 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that they attend job fairs on a weekly basis and discuss the outcomes with their advisors. As shown in Table 16, the majority of the participants (58%) disagreed that they attend job fairs on a weekly basis and discuss the outcomes with their advisors. Only (42%) of the participants agreed that they attend job fairs on a weekly basis and discuss the outcomes with their advisors.

Table 17

When I received career advisement services my employability increased

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	19	38.0
Agree	31	62.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 17 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that when they received career advisement services, their employability increased. As shown in Table 17, the majority of the participants (62%) agreed that when they received career advisement services, their employability increased. Only (38%) disagreed that when they received career advisement services, their employability increased.

Table 18

Career advisement services are a reliable resource for ex-offenders seeking employment

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	17	34.0
Agree	33	66.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 18 is a frequency distribution of 50 ex-offenders indicating whether they disagreed or agreed that career advisement services are a reliable resource for ex-offenders seeking employment. As shown in Table 18, the majority of the participants (66%) agreed that career advisement services are a reliable resource for ex-offenders seeking employment. Only (34%) disagreed that career advisement services are a reliable resource for ex-offenders seeking employment.

Research Question and Hypothesis

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders who are seeking employment in Atlanta, Georgia?

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders who are seeking employment in Atlanta, Georgia.

Table 19

Cross-tabulation between Basic and Intensive Services

Basic		
Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	29	58.0
Agree	21	42.0
Total	50	100.0

Intensive		
Variable	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	31	62.0
Agree	19	38.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 19 is a cross-tabulation of basic career advisement services and intensive career advisement services that are used by ex-offenders seeking employment in Atlanta, Georgia. The following table will show the frequency and percent of the participants that agreed and disagreed on how well basic career advisement services were more helpful than intensive career advisement services. As shown in Table 18, the majority of the participants disagreed (58%) that basic services are related to them obtaining

employment versus (42%) that agreed. The table also showed that 62% of the participants disagreed that intensive services are related to them obtaining employment versus (38%) that agreed.

Table 20

Cross-tabulation basic career advisement services and question 10 that stated “Longest period I have ever been unemployed.”

	Basic Crosstab				Total	
	Disagree		Agree			
Sustaining						
Less than 1 month	1	2.0	3	6.0	4	8.0
1 month	3	6.0	0	0.0	3	6.0
2 months	3	6.0	3	6.0	6	12.0
6 months	7	14.0	3	6.0	10	20.0
1 year	6	12.0	1	2.0	7	14.0
> 1 year	9	18.0	11	22.0	20	40.0
Total	29	58.0	21	42.0	50	100.0

Table 20 is a cross-tabulation of basic career advisement services and question that stated “Longest period I have ever been unemployed.” As shown in the table, there was no statistical significance between basic career service and ex-offenders obtaining employment, but there is a relationship (not significant, > 1year) as evidenced by the Pearson Chi Square test that was ran. The result was (.140) as shown in Table 21.

Table 21

Chi Square Test Results for Cross-tabulation basic career advisement services and question 10 that stated "Longest period I have ever been unemployed."

Value	df	Asymp. Significance (2-sided)	
Pearson Chi-Square	8.304	5	.140
Likelihood Ratio	9.728	5	.083
Linear-by-Linear Association	.005	1	.814
N of Valid Cases	50		

a. 9 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.26

Table 22

Cross-tabulation intensive career advisement services and question 10 that stated "Longest period I have ever been unemployed."

	Basic Crosstab				Total	
	Disagree		Agree			
Sustaining						
Less than 1 month	1	2.0	3	6.0	4	8.0
1 month	3	6.0	0	0.0	3	6.0
2 months	3	6.0	3	6.0	6	12.0
6 months	8	16.0	2	4.0	10	20.0
1 year	6	12.0	1	2.0	7	14.0
> 1 year	10	20.0	10	20.0	20	40.0
Total	31	62.0	19	38.0	50	100.0

Table 22 is a cross-tabulation of intensive career advisement services and question that stated “Longest period I have ever been unemployed.” As shown in Table 23, there was no statistical significance or relationship between basic career service and ex-offenders obtaining employment as evidenced by the Pearson Chi Square test that was ran. The result was (.117).

Table 23

Chi Square Test Results for Cross-tabulation intensive career advisement services and question 10 that stated “Longest period I have ever been unemployed.”

	Value	df	Asymp. Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.798	5	.117
Likelihood Ratio	10.114	5	.072
Linear-by-Linear Association	.002	1	.963
N of Valid Cases	50.0		

a. 9 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.14.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Summary of the Study

This study was designed to explain the relationship between career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders in Atlanta, Georgia. The study analyzed the targeted population and answered the research question about the relationship between employment for ex-offenders and career advisement services. The conclusions and recommendations of the research findings are presented in this chapter. The research question is presented in order to summarize the significant findings of interest.

Research Question 1: Is there a relationship between career advisement services and employment among ex-offenders who are seeking stable employment in Atlanta, Georgia?

In order to determine if there was a relationship between career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders, a cross-tabulation was conducted. The cross-tabulation included the variable type of career advisement service and the computed variable that asked how long was the participant's longest period of being unemployed.

The analysis indicated that out of 50 participants, only 42 % agree that basic services have related to their activities of seeking and obtaining stable employment, and 58% disagreed that their activities of seeking and obtaining stable employment were related to career advisement services.

The analysis further indicated that there is a relationship between basic career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders. When the test statistic (chi-square) was applied the results indicated that there was no statistical significance (.140) at the .05 level of probability between the two variables.

In order to determine if there was a relationship between intensive career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders a cross-tabulation was conducted. A cross-tabulation which included the responses to the survey question, “What’s the longest period I have ever been unemployed?” by the computed variable intensive career advisement services. The analysis indicated that out of the 50 participants that utilize intensive services the greatest impact was made when the participants were unemployed for periods 6 months. It indicated that 16% disagreed and 4% agreed of the total 20% of the participants that were unemployed for 6 months. It also indicated that 12% disagreed and 2% agreed of the total 14% of the participants that were unemployed for 1 year. It showed that 20% disagreed and 20% agreed of the total 40% of the participants that were unemployed for more than a year.

The statistical measurement chi-squared was employed to test the relationship between intensive services and the same question; the results indicated no statistical significance (.117) at the .05 level of probability between the two variables, which also showed no relationship.

As a result of the findings of this study, the researcher is recommending the following:

1. Social workers should engage in further research to see why unemployed ex-offenders are not taking advantage of the intensive career advisement services;
2. Intervention on the state and federal level of policy implementation needs to be increased to assistance ex-offenders; and
3. More research needs to be conducted to see what ex-offenders interpret as needs as they attempt to get back into the workforce.

Implication for Social Work Practice

The relationship between career advisement services and employment for ex-offenders has been significantly examined for the last twenty years. This is further highlighted by the impact that gaps in the employment rates for various groups of ex-offenders are widening. Several implications for social work from the literature and data suggest that four areas of social work be closely examined and they are theory, research, policy, and practice.

In regards to theory, the General Systems Theory is a relevant theory that illustrates how individual systems can work together to function as a whole entity. The role or challenge for the social worker would be to make this theory practical by finding ways to help individual systems (ex-offenders) learn how to engage and interact with and within organizational systems (workforce development agencies, state labor departments, and non-profit organizations) that provide direct services that are designed to assist ex-offenders reenter the workforce. Social workers will need to learn to become stronger

advocates in the arena of networking with organizations that give ex-offenders an advantage that is needed for workforce re-entry. Specifically, services through the use of memorandums of understandings, which are contractual agreements between agencies that afford designated populations exceptions when seeking specific services, will present more choices for the ex-offenders to choose from in regards to finding employment or engaging in retraining opportunities.

Social workers will need to function as educators when they operationalize the General Systems Theory in the sense that they will have to teach ex-offenders via life skills and job readiness curriculums how to observe, learn, and mimic the inputs (behaviors of ex-offenders who successfully transitioned back into the workforce) and the outputs (styles of communication used to receive and give information when interacting with employers) that will generate success in obtaining employment.

The implication for research will be of the utmost importance because social workers need empirical data to give credibility to their work, claims, and recommendations. Data proves what the past trends, success rates, and current practices are to key power players on the local, state, and possibly the federal levels, who have the influence to bring about change in ineffective systems that have historically and unfairly disqualified a labor force that has untapped potential. Social workers must use their research findings as the building blocks for them to have any viable opportunity to develop policy proposals. In regards to the findings of this study, any future evidence-based recommendations will need to reflect how harmful it is for society and the workforce to continue to shut out ex-offenders from obtaining employment. This study has provided an abundance of evidence that shows how and why ex-offenders

engage in old behaviors when all of their efforts to live crime-free lifestyles have been rejected. Social workers have a duty to inform society of the impending troubles that unemployed and desperate ex-offenders could create for mainstream society if these service gaps are not addressed.

The last implications for social work that have been revealed from this study focus on policy and practice. Social workers must find ways to use their research findings to propose policies that will guide new hiring practices. An example would be a policy proposal that can mandate certain employers to hire ex-offenders on a probationary period. This would allow the employers to carefully evaluate the ex-offenders' work ethics and job performance to determine appropriateness. Naturally, all ex-offenders will not be able to benefit from this proposal if it were to be passed because the proposal would conflict with other established federal laws (i.e., ex-offenders that have been released from prison are federally mandated to stay away from children under any and all circumstances). However, the overall empirical data that has been provided in this study, supports the researcher's belief that strong federal intervention is needed to integrate and reintegrate ex-offenders back into the workforce just as it (federal intervention) was needed to give minorities (particularly African Americans) an equitable chance to compete for the best jobs in the U.S. workforce that started in the 1970's and continues into the 21st century.

Certain types of employment such as culinary arts and the constructive trades have traditionally been the avenues that ex-offenders reenter the workforce. Social workers have the added responsibility to drive policy efforts in other areas of the workforce that focus on white collar types of employment as well. This study proposes

that new policies will eradicate the employer discrimination that subjectively focuses on perceived threats in the workplace. These policies will also avoid conflict with established fair hiring practices that the private and public sectors are aware of and utilize to bring aboard the best applicants. This presents opportunities for new practices to be created in which social workers can educate employers on the risks of sacrificing viable workers that can help increase their organizations' productivity on a day to day basis.

It is imperative that social workers use their expert knowledge of theory, research, policy, and practice to move policy makers and their constituents out of their apathetic positions to strengthen career advisement entities' resources. Policy makers will need to impose new laws that will give ex-offenders the opportunity to work for a living which will ultimately benefit the policy maker, the ex-offender, and the average working citizen. The researcher believes that if this strategy is implemented correctly and consistently, it will slowly eradicate poverty, chronic unemployment, and marginalization that corrode our societal values in terms of who is deemed important enough to engage in respectable and honest work and who is not.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
PERMISSION LETTER

October 24, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in reference to the permission granted to Tildon Wright to conduct his (thesis) research project (collect data and conduct interviews) here at the Office of Emergency and Transitional Housing (Jefferson Place). I am confident that Tildon, who is an intern here at Jefferson Place, will take the appropriate measures to obtain the necessary information that he needs without breaking client confidentiality and preventing any major risk development that could be harmful to those clients who will be selected to participate in this upcoming research project.

If you have any questions or concerns about my approval of this (thesis) research project, please feel free to contact me at 404-874-0412.

Thank you,

Andre Danzy
Client Services Manager
Fulton County Human Services Department
Office of Emergency and Transitional Housing
1135 Jefferson Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30318
404-874-0412
Andre.Danzy@fultoncountyga.gov

APPENDIX B

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

AN EXPLANATORY STUDY OF HOW CAREER ADVISEMENT SERVICES ARE RELATED TO SEEKING EMPLOYMENT BY EX-OFFENDERS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Section I: Demographic Information

Place a mark (X) next to the appropriate item. Choose only one answer for each statement

1. My age group 1) ____ Under 25 2) ____ 25- 30 3) ____ 31-36 4) ____ 37- 42
5) ____ 43- 48 6) ____ 49 -54 7) ____ 55 & up
2. Highest level of education: 1) ____ Elementary 2) ____ High school/GED
3) ____ Vocational 4) ____ Some college 5) ____ College grad
3. Marital Status: 1) ____ Married 2) ____ Never married 3) ____ Divorced
4) ____ Widowed
4. Support Systems: 1) ____ Family supports me 2) ____ Family does not support me
5. Children: 1) ____ 0 2) ____ 1-3 3) ____ 4-6 4) ____ 7 and above
6. Occupation: 1) ____ Construction 2) ____ Cook 3) ____ Delivery 4) ____ Warehouse
5) ____ Medical 6) ____ Laborer 7) ____ Clerk 8) ____ Mechanic 9) ____ Other
7. My ethnicity: 1) ____ African American/Black 2) ____ White 3) ____ Hispanic
4) ____ Asian 5) ____ Other
8. Employment: 1) ____ Unemployed 2) ____ Employed 3) ____ Part-time
4) ____ Temporary
9. My annual income: 1) ____ Under \$1,000 2) ____ \$1,000 - \$4,999 3) ____ \$5,000 – 9,999
4) ____ \$10,000 & up

APPENDIX B

(continued)

10. Longest period I have ever been unemployed: 1) _____ less than 1 month 2) _____ 1 month

3) _____ 2 months 4) _____ 6 months 5) _____ 1 year 6) _____ more than 1 year

11. I receive vocational/employment services: 1) _____ No 2) _____ Yes

12. Felony Time: 1) _____ Less than one year 2) _____ More than one year

13. Religious Beliefs: 1) _____ Gives you a lot of encouragement while job searching

2) _____ Gives you some encouragement while job searching 3) _____ Gives you no
encouragement while job searching 4) _____ I do not have any religious beliefs

Section II: Instrument

The following statements are designed to get your opinion about your unemployment experience. Write the appropriate number (1 thru 4) in the blank space in front of each statement on the questionnaire. Please respond to all questions

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Agree 4 = Strongly Agree

Stable Employment

_____ 14. I have full time employment – 40 hours per week

_____ 15. On my job, I earn at least \$9.00 or more per hour

_____ 16. My job provides benefits

Seeking Employment

_____ 17. When I am unemployed, I look for a job everyday

_____ 18. When trying to find a job, I read the newspapers and follow
any kind of job lead

APPENDIX B

(continued)

- _____ 19. Employment websites help me find stable employment
- _____ 20. When job searching, I have adequate transportation to travel around the city

Basic Career Advisement Services

- _____ 21. I am federally bonded by the Georgia Department of Labor
- _____ 22. I have received a career assessment to identify my strengths and weaknesses
- _____ 23. My family supports my employment search efforts
- _____ 24. I have a marketable résumé to present to employers

Intensive Career Advisement Services

- _____ 25. I meet with a career advisor every week to discuss my employment plans
- _____ 26. I submit a job search form to my career advisor every week
- _____ 27. When unemployed, I seek out re-training programs to upgrade my skills
- _____ 28. I attend job fairs on a weekly basis and discuss the outcomes with my career advisor

Impact of Career Advisement Services

- _____ 29. When I received career advisement services, my employability increased
- _____ 30. Career advisement services are a reliable resource for ex-offenders who are seeking stable employment

Thanks for your cooperation in this survey!

APPENDIX C



IRB APPROVAL LETTER
CLARK ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
Institutional Review Board
Office of Sponsored Programs

November 6, 2008

Tildon J. Wright <tildon6wright@yahoo.com>
School of Social Works
Clark Atlanta University
Atlanta, GA 30314

RE: An Exploratory Study of How Career Advisement Services are Related to Seeking Employment by Ex-Offenders in Atlanta, GA.

Principal Investigator(s): Tildon J. Wright

Human Subjects Code Number: HR2008-10-281-1

Dear Tildon J. Wright:

The Human Subjects Committee of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your study protocol as an expedited (45 CFR 46.116(c) review and approved of it in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101b.5. **However, the IRB requires that Dr. Hattie Mitchell, your advisor or your department should keep signed consent forms.**

Your Protocol Approval Code is HR2008-10-281-1/A

Please note the new approval code for your study. This permit will therefore expire on November 5, 2009. Thereafter, continued approval is contingent upon the annual submission of a renewal form to this office. Any reaction or problems resulting from this investigation should be reported immediately to the IRB, the Department Chairperson and any sponsoring agency. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Georgianna Bolden at the Office of Sponsored Programs (404) 880-6979 or Dr. Paul I. Musey, (404) 880-6829.

Sincerely:

Paul I. Musey, Ph.D.
Chair
IRB: Human Subjects Committee

cc. "Dr. Hattie Mitchell" <hmittell@cau.edu>
Office of Sponsored Programs, "Dr. Georgianna Bolden" <gbolden@cau.edu>

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to participate in a thesis study titled “AN EXPLANATORY STUDY OF HOW CAREER ADVISEMENT SERVICES ARE RELATED TO SEEKING EMPLOYMENT BY EX-OFFENDERS IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA,” conducted by Tildon Wright, a master’s degree student from the Whitney M. Young, Jr. School of Social Work (WMYJSSW) at Clark Atlanta University, under the direction of Professor Hattie Mitchell, MSW (404-880-6616), WMYJSSW, Clark Atlanta University. I understand that I will not receive any compensation for my participation in this thesis study, and that my participation is strictly voluntary. I may refuse to participate or voluntarily withdraw my participation at any point in the study, without consequence.

I understand that the purpose of this thesis study is to explore how career advisement services are related to seeking employment by ex-offenders in Atlanta, Georgia.

By agreeing to participate in this research study, I understand that:

- I. I will participate in a survey/interview that will last approximately one hour
- II. The researcher will not ask me personal information such as my date of birth, social security number, name, or other information by which I could be identified
- III. The researcher will ask me for detailed information about myself, such as my experiences with career advisement services and the difficulties that I experience seeking employment as an ex-offender.
- IV. The information I provide will be kept confidential and will only be available to the researcher and/or research advisor at Clark Atlanta University who are associated with this study.

I understand that no risk to me is expected as a result of my participation in this study. As a result of my participation, I understand that I will receive the benefit of a resource list that gives the names, telephone numbers, and services available to homeless persons at area agencies. I also understand that I may speak with my direct case manager or another designated staff person immediately upon my request at any point in the study.

I understand that this research study has been reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board -Human Subjects in Research, Clark Atlanta University. For research-related problems or questions regarding subjects’ rights, I can contact the Institutional Review Board through Dr. Georgianna Bolden, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at 404.880.6979.

I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. The investigator will answer any further questions that I may have about the research now or during the course of the project. The investigator can be contacted at (770.355.1240) and by email (tildon6wright@yahoo.com). I understand that by signing this consent form, I am

APPENDIX D

(continued)

agreeing to voluntarily participate in this study. I understand that I will receive a signed copy of this consent form for my records.

Please sign both copies of this form, return one to the researcher, and keep one for your records.

Thank you for your participation.

Signature of Participant

Date

Tildon Wright

(Investigator)

Date

770.355.1240
tildon6wright@yahoo.com

APPENDIX E

SPSS PROGRAM ANALYSIS

TITLE 'CAREER ADVISEMENT SERVICES AND EMPLOYMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS'.
SUBTITLE ' Tildon Wright MSW Program'.

DATA LIST FIXED/

ID	1-3
AGEGRP	4
EDUC	5
MARITAL	6
SUPPORT	7
CHILDREN	8
OCCUPAT	9
ETHNIC	10
EMPLOY	11
INCOME	12
LONGEST	13
RECEIVE	14
FELONY	15
BELIEFS	16
EMPLOY14	17
EMPLOY15	18
EMPLOY16	19
SEEK17	20
SEEK18	21
SEEK19	22
SEEK20	23
BASIC21	24
BASIC22	25
BASIC23	26
BASIC24	27
CAREER25	28
CAREER26	29
CAREER27	30
CAREER28	31
IMPACT29	32
IMPACT30	33.

COMPUTE INTENS =

(CAREER25+CAREER26+CAREER27+CAREER28+IMPACT29+IMPACT30)/6.

COMPUTE BASIC = (BASIC21+BASIC22+BASIC23+BASIC24)/4.

APPENDIX E

(continued)

VARIABLE LABELS

ID	'Case Number'
AGEGRP	'Q1 My age group'
EDUC	'Q2 Highest level of education'
MARITAL	'Q3 Marital Status'
SUPPORT	'Q4 Support Systems'
CHILDREN	'Q5 Children'
OCCUPAT	'Q6 Occupation'
ETHNIC	'Q7 My ethnicity'
EMPLOY	'Q8 Employment'
INCOME	'Q9 My Annual income'
LONGEST	'Q10 Longest period I have ever been unemployed'
RECEIVE	'Q11 I receive vocational-employment services'
FELONY	'Q12 Felony time'
BELIEFS	'Q13 Religious beliefs'
EMPLOY14	'Q14 I have full time employment - 40 hours per week'
EMPLOY15	'Q15 On my job, I earn at least \$9 or more per hour'
EMPLOY16	'Q16 My job provides benefits'
SEEK17	'Q17 When I am unemployed, I look for a job everyday'
SEEK18	'Q18 When trying to find a job, I read newspapers and follow job leads'
SEEK19	'Q19 Employ websites help me find stable employment'
SEEK20	'Q20 When job searching, I have adequate transportation'
BASIC21	'Q21 I am federally bonded by the Georgia Department of Labor'
BASIC22	'Q22 I have received a career assessment to identify my strengths and weaknesses'
BASIC23	'Q23 My family supports my employment search efforts'
BASIC24	'Q24 I have a marketable resume to present to employers'
CAREER25	'Q25 I meet with a career advisor every week to discuss my employment plans'
CAREER26	'Q26 I submit a job search form to my career advisor every week'
CAREER27	'Q27 When unemployed, I seek out re-training programs to upgrade my skills'
CAREER28	'Q28 I attend job fairs on a weekly basis and discuss the outcomes with my advisor'
IMPACT29	'Q29 When I received career advisement services my employability increased'
IMPACT30	'Q30 Career advisement services are a reliable resources for ex-offenders seeking employment'.

APPENDIX E

(continued)

VALUE LABELS

AGEGRP

- 1 'Under 25'
- 2 '25-30'
- 3 '31-36'
- 4 '37-42'
- 5 '43-48'
- 6 '49-54'
- 7 '55 up'/'

EDUC

- 1 'Elementary'
- 2 'HiSchool-GED'
- 3 'Vocational'
- 4 'Some College'
- 5 'College grad'/'

MARITAL

- 1 'Married'
- 2 'Never Married'
- 3 'Divorced'
- 4 'Widowed'/'

SUPPORT

- 1 'Family supports me'
- 2 'Does not support me'/'

CHILDREN

- 1 '0-None'
- 2 '1-3'
- 3 '4-6'
- 4 '7 up'/'

OCCUPAT

- 1 'Construction'
- 2 'Cook'
- 3 'Delivery'
- 4 'Warehouse'
- 5 'Medical'
- 6 'Laborer'
- 7 'Clerk'
- 8 'Mechanic'
- 9 'Other'/'

ETHNIC

- 1 'AfricanAmerican'
- 2 'White'
- 3 'Hispanic'
- 4 'Asian'
- 5 'Other'/'

EMPLOY

- 1 'Unemployed'
- 2 'Employed'
- 3 'Part-time'
- 4 'Temporary'/'

APPENDIX E

(continued)

INCOME

- 1 'Under \$1,000'
- 2 '\$1,000 - 4,999'
- 3 '\$5,000 - 9,999'
- 4 '\$10,000 up'/'

LONGEST

- 1 'Less than 1 Month'
- 2 '1 Month'
- 3 '2 Months'
- 4 '6 Months'
- 5 '1 Year'
- 6 'More than 1 year'/'

RECEIVE

- 1 'No'
- 2 'Yes'/'

FELONY

- 1 'Less than one year'
- 2 'More than one year'/'

BELIEFS

- 1 'Some encouragement'
- 2 'No encouragement'
- 3 'No religious beliefs'/'

EMPLOY14

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

EMPLOY15

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

EMPLOY16

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

SEEK17

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

SEEK18

- 1 'Strongly Disagree'
- 2 'Disagree'
- 3 'Agree'
- 4 'Strongly Agree'/'

APPENDIX E

(continued)

SEEK19
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

SEEK20
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

BASIC21
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

BASIC22
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

BASIC23
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

BASIC24
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

CAREER25
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

CAREER26
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

CAREER27
1 'Strongly Disagree'
2 'Disagree'
3 'Agree'
4 'Strongly Agree'/

APPENDIX E

(continued)

```

CAREER28
    1 'Strongly Disagree'
    2 'Disagree'
    3 'Agree'
    4 'Strongly Agree' /
IMPACT29
    1 'Strongly Disagree'
    2 'Disagree'
    3 'Agree'
    4 'Strongly Agree' /
IMPACT30
    1 'Strongly Disagree'
    2 'Disagree'
    3 'Agree'
    4 'Strongly Agree' /
BASIC
    1 'Strongly Disagree'
    2 'Disagree'
    3 'Agree'
    4 'Strongly Agree' /
INTENS
    1 'Strongly Disagree'
    2 'Disagree'
    3 'Agree'
    4 'Strongly Agree' /.

RECODE EMPLOY14 EMPLOY15 EMPLOY16 SEEK17 SEEK18 SEEK19 (1 THRU 2.99=2) (3
THRU 4.99=3) .
RECODE SEEK20 BASIC21 BASIC22 BASIC23 BASIC24 CAREER25 CAREER26 (1 THRU
2.99=2) (3 THRU 4.99=3) .
RECODE CAREER27 CAREER28 IMPACT29 IMPACT30 (1 THRU 2.99=2) (3 THRU
4.99=3) .

MISSING VALUES
    AGEGRP EDUC MARITAL SUPPORT CHILDREN OCCUPAT ETHNIC
    EMPLOY INCOME LONGEST RECEIVE FELONY BELIEFS EMPLOY14 EMPLOY15 EMPLOY16

SEEK17 SEEK18 SEEK19 SEEK20 BASIC21 BASIC22 BASIC23 BASIC24 CAREER25
CAREER26
CAREER27 CAREER28 IMPACT29 IMPACT30 (0) .

BEGIN DATA
001332114244321123231232233222223
002323114113611122111331344313131
003622226142311222233333423332233
004741129234221122234432233222222
00552212111161233333333332233323
006421129111611222224432223333223
007322124114612222244443333333333

```

APPENDIX E

(continued)

00844212211461212221111111211111
009122119111412111144211114141413
010222132141321111144114334243434
011423124111622122244444444444444
012222112111521122233233344232333
013222216211612223133324132111243
014222129113611114123311241331134
01512211111111122123414414433243
01622211313162122233333333333333
017222122112611114311323131111111
01872321811151112223332232322222
019522124111121222111121122212212
020711212244622211211121311111212
021522244112211222211112222224422
022723141111622122244444444444444
02332221211142222233323222222222
02464322911152232223332223322323
025642124111522113333231333323223
02652321111131111134224412222221
027553121124611144433224442432144
028344222111422111134144424131332
029642117132612121133343333233233
030622227111622122133232313332442
03142212212252222222333223333333
032623211211122211114421444444244
0335222211114221222323223232233
034523111111122111214444333333333
035522221144622144244343414343433
036613224111612243433333414444334
037542228111422122233323323233333
038423128111322122244221343443143
039623118211622211144244144344211
040522241111222111441244421122211
041624219111422311141444444444144
042521229111611121124141224124444
04332211121432114444444444444434
044443229111421333333222323333344
045351129111411211134332223333233
046641132112512122231211243231131
04762322412452213423332233332234
048421224114422323333433114111111
049422141114422122233323333232222
050552114124622134444443443444434
END DATA.

APPENDIX E

(continued)

FREQUENCIES

/VARIABLES AGEGRP EDUC MARITAL SUPPORT CHILDREN OCCUPAT ETHNIC
EMPLOY INCOME LONGEST RECEIVE FELONY BELIEFS EMPLOY14 EMPLOY15 EMPLOY16

SEEK17 SEEK18 SEEK19 SEEK20 BASIC21 BASIC22 BASIC23 BASIC24 CAREER25
CAREER26

CAREER27 CAREER28 IMPACT29 IMPACT30
BASIC INTENS
/STATISTICS=.

REFERENCES

- Asante. (2008). *Afrocentricity*. Retrieved July 8, 2008, from http://www.worldagearchive.com/Reference_Links/Afrocentricity.htm.
- Boyd-Franklin, N. (1989). *Black families in therapy: A multisystems approach*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2006). *Key facts at a glance, incarceration rate, 1980-2006*. Retrieved from July 3, 2008, <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance/tables/incrttab.htm>.
- Burris, D. (2004). *The correlation between employment, education, and recidivism*. News and Views. Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Pretrial and Probation Services. Administrative Division of the United States Courts.
- Changing Minds. (2008). *Maslow's Hierarchy*. Retrieved July 14, 2008, from <http://changingminds.org/explanations/needs/maslow.htm>.
- Chicago Reporter. (2008). *Family ties*. Retrieved August 17, 2008, from http://www.Chicagoreporter.com/index.php/c/cover_stories/d/Family_Ties.
- Correction Today. (2003). *Released and no place to go*. Vol.65, Issue 5; pg. 16.
- Davis, B. (2004). *Congressman Bobby Davis talks about the public safety ex-offender self sufficiency act*. Retrieved from July 3, 2008, <http://www.house.gov/davis/offender.htm>

Farrall, S. (2002). *Rethinking what works with offenders: Probation, social context and desistance from crime*. Devon: Willan Publishing.

Federal Probation. (2005). *Bridging the gap between theory and practice--A call to action*. Retrieved July 2, 2008, from <http://www.uscourts.gov/fedprob/jun2005/references.html>.

Georgia Encyclopedia. (2008). *Cities and counties*. Retrieved August 13, 2008, from <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-2207>.

Harris, O., & Miller, R. (2003). *Impacts of incarceration on the African American family*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Human Resources Crossing. (2008). *Working to reduce recidivism: Employment as the key to offender reintegration*. Retrieved June 23, 2008, from <http://www.hrcrossing.com/article/lcprintarticles.php?Printerflag=P&id=27012>.

Illinois Department of Employment Security. (2008). *Job readiness*. Retrieved July 7, 2008, from <http://www.ides.state.il.us/ExOffenders/readiness.shtml>.

Internet Journal of Criminology. (2008). *Ex-Offenders, social ties and the routes into employment*. Retrieved June 23, 2008, <http://www.internetjournalofcriminology.com>.

National Criminal Justice Reference Service. (2003). *Reducing recidivism through work: Barriers and opportunities for employment of ex-offenders*. Retrieved June 23, 2008, from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/App/publications/Abstract.aspx?id=202837>.

Office of Emergency and Transitional Housing. (2006, July). *Policies and Procedures Manual: Referral and Intake* (Section No: V-73). Atlanta, GA: Richardson, G.

Okulicz, K. (2007). *Try! A Survival Guide to Unemployment*. New Jersey: K-Slaw, Inc.

Research Brief. (2004). *Prisoner reentry in Georgia*. Retrieved July 3, 2008, from
<http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/REENTRYGAREPORT.PDF>.

Schrive, J. (2004). *Human behavior and the social environment: Shifting paradigms in essential knowledge for social work practice*, (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Publishing