



Examining Predictors of Stigmatising Attitudes Towards People Previously Convicted of
Crimes Among Healthy Adults in Ireland

Molly O'Brien

20377093

Supervisor: Dr. David Mothersill

B.A. (Hons) in Psychology

March 2023

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

Research Students Declaration Form

(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Molly O'Brien

Student Number: 20377093

Degree for which thesis is submitted: Bachelor of Arts Honours Psychology

Material submitted for award

- a) I declare that this work submitted has been composed by myself.
- b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- c) I agree to my thesis being deposited in the NCI Library online open access repository NORMA.
- d) *Either* *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award. *Or* *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of QQI BA (Honours) Degree in Psychology at level 8

Signature of research student: Molly O'Brien

Date: 13/03/2023

Acknowledgement

Firstly, I would like to thank my parents, Ruth and Gerry, and my sister, Lucy for their unwavering love and support that has been instrumental in enabling me to achieve what I have today. Without them, this accomplishment would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank my boyfriend Aaron for the constant encouragement, motivation, and faith that you had in me over the last three years of my degree.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Dr. David Mothersill, for his invaluable time, guidance, and enthusiasm that motivated me to produce the best possible thesis. I am extremely grateful for his unwavering support and prompt responses to all my queries throughout the entire process.

Abstract

Aims: The objective of this research is to recognise the magnitude of attitudes on the ex-convict population and the severity of its implications on both their quality of life and ability to reintegrate back into society. The goal of this research is to emphasise the need for proper mental health care facilities and counselling services for ex-convicts and the need for psychoeducation about convicts to the general law-abiding population. This study examined the impact that various predictor variables such as gender, beliefs about the malleability of prejudice, knowing an ex-convict and victim of a crime had on attitudes held against ex-convicts. **Method:** A questionnaire was administered to participants (n= 113) using Google Forms survey and the link was accessed through social media platforms Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp. The three sections on the questionnaire included demographics, the Theories of Prejudice Scale and a 6- item scale assessing attitudes towards ex-convicts. **Results:** The findings showed that neither gender nor group membership had any significant impact on stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts, regardless of whether the person had been victimised or knew an ex-convict. 5.4% variation in stigmatising scores can be explained by beliefs about the malleability of prejudice. **Conclusion:** The findings provide a greater understanding of the predictor variables that contribute to stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts. On a practical level, these findings have important implications regarding reintegration into society for ex- convicts.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	4
Literature Review.....	7
Methods.....	32
Participants.....	16
Measures	16
Demographics	16
Theories of prejudice scale	16
Attitudes towards ex- offenders	17
Design and analyses.....	46
Procedure	18
Results.....	46
Descriptive statistics	20
Inferential statistics	22
Discussion.....	46
Implications	28
Strengths and limitations	29
Conclusion	31
References	32
Appendices.....	468
Appendix A: Participant information sheet	38

Appendix B: Consent form	40
Appendix C: Debriefing sheet	42
Appendix D: Demographics	44
Appendix E: Attitudes towards ex- offenders	45
Appendix F: Theories of prejudice	46
Appendix G: Histograms	47
Appendix H: Proof of analysis	49

Literature Review

This research project will examine predictors of stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts among adults in Ireland using online questionnaires. The following section will introduce the issue of stigmatisation of ex-convicts and the significant influence that it has on the behavioural outcome following their release from the prison system. An ex-convict is a person who has been liberated from his/her incarceration (Pansag et al., 2016). The opinions and attitudes held by law abiding citizens affects ex-convicts' ability to reintegrate into the community (Moore et al., 2015). Discriminatory practices pose great difficulties for ex-convicts in areas such as affordable housing and employment, along with permanent restrictions such as voting rights, financial aid, employment, and involvement in communities (Pogorzelski et al., 2005b; van Tongeren, 2020). Paradoxically, the issues they face obtaining housing reinforces the stigmas associated with their imprisonment (Keene et al., 2018). Although, ex-convicts have been considered fit for reemerging back into society, the likelihood of recidivism will increase if there are barriers to fulfilling their human rights. 83% of ex-convicts were rearrested within 9 years of release, 44% of which were rearrested in the first year (Alper et al., 2018). These statistics lead to a continuous cycle of crime and poverty along with damages to societies due to the constant removal and reintegration of individuals to communities (Sydney, 2022). The Central Statistics Office (2020) released a statement that concluded that 57% of former prisoners in Ireland remained unemployed and out of education, three years after release. It was also found that only 1.2% of inmates progress to third-level education in comparison to the general population of 29.4. Moore et al. (2016) conducted a study that showed a link between perceiving stigma towards criminals and their ability to adjust to community life after release. The study found that those who held higher levels of stigma towards criminals prior to their release tended to struggle more with reintegration. This is likely due to the expectation of facing discrimination from community

members, which can impede their ability to function successfully in society. Similar results were also obtained from research conducted by (Rade et al., 2016 and Wakefield & Uggens, 2010). The results of these studies highlight the severity of the implications produced when ex-convicts face many barriers upon release from the prison system. One of the most prevalent issues being failure to reintegrate back into society, partially due to several factors that influence stigmatisation of ex-convicts. Numerous studies have been conducted to identify groups that differ on stigma levels held against ex-convicts and what impacts these scores. However, greater research has been conducted on the direct effects of stigmatising attitudes on ex-convicts' ability to reintegrate as opposed to what causes it.

Baffour et al. (2020) conducted a qualitative study exploring the experiences recorded by 20 ex-convicts transitioning back into society. The two main themes identified from the interviews were stigmatisation and mental health related issues. It was reported that the dehumanisation that resulted from ostracization, distrust and discrimination was prevalent, and this resulted in severe mental health issues from being psychologically drained. Almost all 20 participants had reported difficulties finding jobs, friends, and a romantic relationship. The perception of hostile attitudes was also recorded by all participants. Suicidal ideation and drug use was another outcome recorded by participants experiences post leaving the prison system. While the fact that all the participants in this study were recidivists is a limitation, as it highlights the negative experiences that led them to be incarcerated again, it remains important to investigate how convicts perceive the stigma they face from society, for research purposes.

An important part of understanding stigma is identifying how people differ in responses to perceived stigma, and the implications that this has on behaviour. Anticipated stigma can result in defensive responses, fear, and avoidance of situations (Moore, 2015). In research conducted by Quinn and Chaudoir (2015), the anticipated stigma of ex-convicts was

correlated with depression and anxiety levels. However, if an ex-convict perceives stigma, it does not necessarily mean that they will experience negative consequences (Moore, 2015).

Personality traits may reduce the negative impact of stigmatisation (Moore, 2015). Optimism, which is the expectation of positive outcomes for oneself, is one such trait. Optimistic individuals are likely to experience less perceived stress and anticipate less stigmatisation (Kaiser et al., 2004). Optimism can act as a protective factor, leading to adaptive planning, problem-solving, and coping strategies during the reintegration of ex-convicts into society (Moore, 2015).

Race affects ex-convicts' ability to cope with stigmatisation; racial minorities are better adapted to visible stigma due to already incorporating it into their identity (Quinn, 2006; Mall, 2011; Moore, 2015; Frable et al., 1998). It is possible that this indicates ex-convicts could face greater challenges in adjusting to stigma as there may be no visible cues that trigger discriminatory behaviour from society, and it may be not something that they incorporated into their identity from a young age. Understanding factors that influence stigma's impact on ex-convicts is essential, but researching what factors contribute to stigmatising attitudes may also be very beneficial.

Tan et al. (2016) conducted a study which identified the contributing factors to higher levels of perceived stigmatisation of ex-convicts. Social distance, level of contact, capacity to change and moral outrage were examined. Results suggested that level of contact with an ex-convict had no impact on levels of stigmatisation. However, this study was conducted in Singapore and therefore, cross-cultural differences must be taken into consideration before drawing conclusions for policy making. In a study conducted by (Schlösser, 2006), the human orientation practices were examined in 26 countries. Human orientation refers to the “degree to which members of a society are fair, altruistic, friendly, generous, caring and kind to others” (Schlösser, 2006). Results indicated that Ireland was

ranked one of the highest scoring (4.63) countries on the scale and Singapore was ranked of the lowest (3.60). The findings of this research emphasise the variations in characteristics between the two nations, which may have an impact on stigma levels, taking into account their cross-cultural nature. Another potential cultural- difference between Ireland and Singapore is the technique used to complete questionnaires. For example, cross-cultural researchers discovered a tendency to keep away from extreme ends of a scale in several Asian cultures and a proneness to avoid the midpoint of a scale in several European cultures (Schlösser, 2006). It is also possible that because only 20% of participants had had personal contact with a convict, this study might insufficiently investigate the effect of contact on stigma. It is suggested that future studies may adopt a technique of experimentally inducing contact or imagined contact to combat this issue (Crisp & Turner, 2009). Another possible limitation to this research is the sample selection. Participants consisted of only undergraduate students and cannot be generalisable to the entire population of Singapore. Ergo, this variable may obtain different results if replicated with a sample from the Irish population. Personal familiarity and knowing an ex- convict is a variable that could potentially have a significant impact on levels of stigma. Although it has not been overly researched in relation to ex-convicts, many studies have focused on this variable in relation to other stigmatised groups such as mental health issues. Findings imply increased intimate exposure and contact to people with mental illness, or the stigmatised group have a decreased likelihood to classify them as dangerous or increase the distance from that group (Corrigan & Watson, 2002; LeBel, 2008). Numerous studies have shown that the most effective method for reducing stigma is through personal interaction, even though it may not seem as impressive as other approaches. Educational initiatives have demonstrated that the mentally ill discussing their conditions with students leads to the greatest impact (Rössler, 2016). Thus, this would be a useful research topic for examining the impact of increased exposure and

knowing an ex-convict in Ireland, as there is currently no research examining this aspect, to our knowledge.

The variable beliefs about the malleability of prejudice was investigated by Carr et al. (2012). In this research, it was explored whether beliefs about the malleability of prejudice predicted white- American individual's desire to engage in inter racial interactions. The results demonstrated that biased actions, which can have adverse effects on minority groups and intergroup relationships, may stem from individuals' beliefs about the malleability of prejudice, regardless of their racial attitudes. Our results indicate that to comprehend behaviours that may seem prejudiced, examining people's beliefs and apprehensions about prejudice beyond their inherent characteristics and attitudinal prejudices can offer valuable insights (Butz & Plant, 2009; Richeson & Trawalter, 2005). From the results of study 3, Carr et al. (2012) suggest that to drive people to take action to reduce their prejudice it might be necessary to address their beliefs about the malleability of prejudice. It may be worthwhile to explore if people's views on the malleability of prejudice impact their stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts, given that ex-convicts are also a marginalised group that encounters a significant amount of prejudice. In research conducted by Neel and Shapiro (2012), In four separate studies, it was observed that White individuals' beliefs about the malleability of prejudice had a significant impact on their choice of learning and performance strategies during challenging interracial interactions. These findings remained relevant even after accounting for related factors such as prejudice and the motivation to respond without prejudice. The initial two studies found that Whites who believed that racial bias could be modified were more likely to choose learning-oriented approaches (such as learning from mistakes and trying to understand different perspectives) during a difficult interracial interaction. Conversely, those who believed that racial bias was fixed tended to prefer performance-oriented strategies (such as being excessively friendly or avoiding the situation

altogether). The third study confirmed that these preferences were also observed during actual interracial interactions and showed that the impact of lay theories on strategy choices was stronger when the interaction was challenging rather than neutral. These results suggest that people's beliefs about the malleability of prejudice play a crucial role in determining how they navigate difficult interracial interactions and their attitudes to dealing with interracial interactions. These studies were conducted on racial prejudice, for this reason it may be beneficial to explore this variable in relation to the ex- convict population.

A study carried out by Dweck et al. (1995), investigated people's views on capacity to change. A hypothetical situation consisting of a boy with a misconduct record at the beginning of the school year was explained. Participants were asked if they thought this boy would create trouble in the future. Results found that entity theorist implied certainty that the boy would create trouble again. Whereas incremental theorists more frequently responded with no and were more concerned with the circumstances surrounding the behaviour and did not use it as a predictor for poor conduct in the future. Similar results were obtained by Maruna and King (2009). Results indicated that participants who did not believe in the ability to change, held harsher attitudes towards ex- convicts. Hirschfield and Piquero (2010), have also explored views on capacity to change. They explain that some Americans view criminals as irredeemably bad and believe that confinement to prison is the only way to keep the public safe. This can lead to the rejection of rehabilitation and support for harsh punishment. In contrast, some people show great support and may have positive attitudes towards rehabilitation. However, this does not directly result in positive attitudes towards ex-convicts themselves. People may embrace and appear open to the principal, but internally hold deep distrust and view ex-convicts as a dangerous (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010). These studies were conducted in the United States; therefore, results may differ in the context of Ireland.

Another predictor variable that has been identified is whether an individual was a victim of a crime. Surprisingly, it is observed that being a victim of a crime predicts softer attitudes towards ex-offenders (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010). This finding supports a similar finding that being a victim of a crime lessens support for the death penalty after 1989 (Unnever and Cullen, 2007). A possible reason for this unexpected finding may be that exposure to ex-offenders may produce more tolerant attitudes or are no more punitive towards ex-convicts (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010). Further research is needed to explore what impacts an individual's stigmatising attitudes that are held, and with this information a greater emphasis can be placed on psychoeducation to inform the public on information regarding reintegration for ex-convicts.

Many studies have explored the stigmatisation of ex-convicts and the perceived impact that it has on ex-convicts. However, this study intends to investigate if there are variations in the extent of stigmatising attitudes held by diverse groups of individuals with varying circumstances. The variables that I'm assessing include gender, knowing an ex-convict, victim of a crime and beliefs about the malleability of prejudice. I will also be collecting demographic information on age and levels of education for future research purposes. Gender and education levels predicted stigma in relation to depression in a study carried out by Griffiths et al. (2008). Gender, age, and education levels also notably affected perceived stigma levels related to views on mental health treatment effectiveness (Min, 2019). For this reason, it is worthy of investigating the impact these factors have regarding stigma towards ex-convicts. I believe that focusing on what influences stigmatisation in an individual will allow for further research to examine how to reduce these levels within these specific groups. Ultimately, resulting in overall reduced stigmatisation and allowing for easier reintegration for ex-convicts. Gender may have an influence on scores as males are overrepresented in the legal system. Age, the extent to which an individual has experience in

this life may also impact scores. Years of education attained may affect an individual's ability to understand the legal system along with other psychological factors associated with stigmatisation. Knowing an ex-convict could possibly influence stigmatisation scores due to exposure and first-hand experience. This has been confirmed for other stigmatised groups. Being a victim of a crime, may affect an individual's stigma levels and result in softer attitudes to the ex-convict population due to exposure (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010; Unnever and Cullen, 2007). Finally, I hold the belief that an individual's perception of the malleability of prejudice can significantly affect the stigmatization of ex-convicts, considering that their criminal record is often a primary concern. In the case where one holds low beliefs regarding the malleability of prejudice, this could have a considerable impact on the stigmatisation of an ex-convict.

Although stigma has been an important concept in criminology for a long time, a theoretically based measure of stigma is necessary to understand the root causes for these biases to assist a more effective reintegration process for ex-convicts. The research questions that I intend to answer following the examination of the variables listed above are:

Hypothesis 1: Stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts differ between female and male young adults in Ireland?

Hypothesis 2: Stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts differ between young adults in Ireland who know an ex-convict compared to those who do not.

Hypothesis 3: Stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts differ between young adults in Ireland who have been victims of a crime compared to those who have never been a victim of a crime.

Hypothesis 4: An individual's beliefs about the malleability of prejudice correlates with, and predicts stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts? Although stigma has been an important concept in criminology for a long time, a theoretically based measure of stigma is

necessary to understand the root causes for these biases to assist a more effective
reintegration process for ex- convicts.

Methods

Participants

This study recruited participants using the convenience and opportunistic snowballing technique. A link to the study was made available through the social media platforms Instagram and Facebook. It was encouraged that participants would share the current study to their platforms and reach an extended selection pool of participants. In line with ethical consideration, participants were required to be at least 18 years of age to participate. The sample for the current study consisted of 113 participants (Males: $n= 27$; Females: $n= 86$), with a mean age of 27.06 ($SD=12.96$) ranging from 18 to 82. A linear regression was completed and Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) formula was used to calculate the sample size ($N > 50 + 8m$). n = number of participants and m = number of PVs. Ergo, the minimum sample sized needed in this study was 82 participants.

Measures

The questionnaire used in the present study consisted of demographics and two distinct scales that were combined using the survey builder, Google Forms.

Demographics. Participants were asked to provide their gender (male, female, other, prefer not to say). Participants were then asked to provide details on their age and level of education attained (junior certificate, leaving certificate, advanced certificate- craft, ordinary bachelor's degree, bachelors honours degree, master's degree, doctoral degree) which may be used for further research in the future. Participants were encouraged to read the next questions carefully before answering, do you currently know someone who is an ex- convict and were you ever a victim of a crime.

Theories of Prejudice Scale. The Theories of Prejudice Scale- (Carr et al., 2012), is a six-point scale that is used to assess perceptions on beliefs about the malleability of prejudice.

Participants were required to read six statements and rate them on a 6- point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 6 (very strongly agree), with 6 being the lowest possible score meaning that prejudice is fixed, and 1 (the highest possible score) meaning that prejudice being completely malleable. The following question is an example of an item on the scale “People have a certain amount of prejudice, and they can’t really change that”. Higher scores reflect lower perceptions of ability to change. The questions “People can change their level of prejudice a great deal” and “no matter who somebody is, they can always become a lot less prejudiced” was reversed scored. Previous research indicated that the theories of prejudice scale ($\alpha = .89$) has very good reliability (Carr et al., 2012). The Cronbach’s alpha for the current sample was ($\alpha = .80$), this suggests a high level of internal consistency for this scale.

Attitudes Towards Ex- Offenders. The Attitudes Towards Ex-Offenders (Hirschfield & Piquero, 20120), survey consists of a 6- item scale assessing stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts. As this set of questions does not have an official title, the measurement will be described as “stigmatising attitudes” from here on. In this survey, participants read 6 questions and rated them using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), with 5 being the lowest possible score meaning that prejudice is fixed, and 1 (the highest possible score) meaning that they possess highly stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts. Two of the questions in this scale were reverse scored “No matter who somebody is, they can always become a lot less prejudiced” and “Many people convicted of crimes in the courts are actually innocent”. The Cronbach’s alpha for the fourth question in this 6- item scale was ($\alpha = .76$) (Hirschfield & Piquero, 20120). Although this only indicated good internal consistency for one question on the scale, given the time and resources available, this was judged to be the best questionnaire for examining stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts, and provided some measure of reliability. The

Cronbach's alpha for the current sample was ($\alpha = .68$), was slightly lower than the value recommended, but that given the time and resources available, and lack of other validated measures of stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts, it was considered to be sufficient for the purposes of the current research.

Design and Analysis

The present study implemented a cross-sectional research design and is quantitative in nature, utilising a survey method to gather data. There were 4 predictor variables (PV's) including gender, knowing an ex-convict, victim of a crime and beliefs about the malleability of prejudice. The criterion variable (CV) was stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts. A standard linear regression analysis was conducted using spss software in order to assess if a person's beliefs about the malleability of prejudice correlates with, and predicts, stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts. An independent t-test and Pearson's correlation was carried out to ensure that the beliefs about malleability of prejudice did not correlate with age or gender. Due to the non-significant results, a hierarchical regression was not needed. For hypothesis 1, 2 and 3, an independent t-test was implemented to assess whether stigmatising attitudes differed between the predictor variables, gender, knowing an ex-convict and victim of a crime.

Procedures

Data was obtained through a Google Forms survey. The link used for the completion of the self-report questionnaire was distributed on the researcher's social media account (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp). Upon accessing the link, participants were provided with an information sheet that consisted of a brief overview of the current study, as well as the potential risks and benefits of participating. Consent was obtained through a consent form

(see Appendix B). Participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any point, without being penalised. This was highlighted in the consent form, which participants were required to click “yes” to consenting, upon having read and understand the terms. Participants also confirm that they are above the age of 18 years old before proceeding to the questionnaire.

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first section collected information on the demographics of the participants and consisted of 5 questions. The second section of the questionnaire was the Attitudes Towards Ex-Offenders survey (Hirschfield & Piquero, 20120), which was implemented to assess attitudes towards ex-convicts and the third section of the questionnaire was the Theories of Prejudice Scale (Carr et al., 2012), which was designed to assess beliefs about the malleability of prejudice. Upon completion of the questionnaire, participants were provided with a debriefing sheet which included the researcher’s contact email and helpline numbers in the case that the study caused distress to any individual (see Appendix C).

Ethical considerations

All data was collected within accordance with the ethical guidelines of the National College of Ireland and was approved by the NCI Ethics Committee in accordance with the Psychological Society of Ireland Code of Professional Ethics (2010). There was no intent of harm from this study and a debriefing sheet was provided to every participant in the event that they experienced distress from participation (see Appendix C).

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for the demographic variables are present in Table 1. The current data is taken from a sample consisting of 113 participants (n=113). This included 76.1% females (n= 86) and 23.9% males (N=27). A large proportion of the sample completed the leaving certificate as their highest level of education 58.4% (n= 66).

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for all categorical variables

Variable	Frequency	Valid %
Gender		
Males	27	23.9
Female	86	76.1
Victim of a crime		
Yes	43	38.1
No	70	61.9
Knowing an ex- convict		
Yes	35	31
No	78	69
Level of education completed		
Junior certificate (NFQ level 3)	4	3.5
Leaving certificate (NFQ level 4 and 5)	66	58.4
Advanced certificate- craft/ higher certificate (NFQ level 6)	11	9.7
Ordinary bachelor's degree (NFQ level 8)	9	8.0

Honours bachelor's degree/ higher diploma (NFQ level 8)	20	17.7
Master's degree (NFQ level 9)	3	2.7

Means (M), standard deviations (SD) and range (R) for all the continuous variables are presented in Table 2. Participants had a mean age of 27.06 years (SD=12.96), ranging from 18 to 82 years. A significant result ($p > .05$) of the Kolmogorov statistic was found for the continuous variable stigmatising attitudes indicating that the data is non- normally distributed. Although, the data was considered non-normally distributed, it was nevertheless assumed that the sample approximated a normal distribution, due to the relatively large sample size collected, and due to the central limit theorem. The variable beliefs about the malleability of prejudice produced a sig value of 0.09 in the Kolmogorov- Smirnov, indicating a normal distribution of data. Histograms were also obtained and indicated that the data was normally distributed. Histograms for all continuous variables are presented in Appendix G.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics of all continuous variables (N=113)

Variable	<i>M [95% CI]</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Beliefs about the Malleability of Prejudice	18.58 (17.56-19.59)	5.44	24
Stigmatising attitudes	17.67 (16.92-18.43)	4.04	22
Age	27.06 (24.65-29.48)	12.96	64

Inferential Statistics

Hypothesis 1

To determine whether stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts differed between females and male young adults, an independent t-test was conducted. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Levene's test for equality of variance was significant for stigmatising attitudes ($p = .207$); and therefore, the data does not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variance. A non- significant result ($p > .05$) of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov was found for this variable indicating that the data was not normally distributed. However, it is assumed that the data is normally distributed due to the relatively large sample size collected, and due to the Central Limit Theorem. The results of the t-test revealed that there was not a significant difference in scores, with males ($M = 17.89, SD = 4.48$) and females ($M = 17.60, SD = 3.92$), $t(113) = -.318, p = .751$, two-tailed. The magnitude in the differences in the means (mean difference = $-.284$, 95% CI: -2.06 to 1.49) was very small (eta squared = $.0009$). There was a

non- significant difference in scores between males and females with respect to stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts.

Hypothesis 2

An independent t-test was performed to compare stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts between those who know an ex-convict and those who do not. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure that assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity were not violated. Although the results of Levene's test for equality of variance were significant ($p=.78$), indicating that the assumption of homogeneity of variance was not violated. A non-significant result ($p>.05$) of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov was found for this variable indicating that the data was not normally distributed, however, it was nevertheless assumed that the sample approximated a normal distribution, due to the relatively large sample size collected, and due to the Central Limit Theorem. The t-test results showed that there was no significant difference in scores between individuals who know an ex-convict ($M=16.63$, $SD=4.11$) and those who do not know an ex-convict ($M=18.14$, $SD=3.95$), $t(113)=-1.86$, $p=.066$ (two-tailed). The difference in means was small (mean difference= -1.51 , 95% CI: -3.12 to $.10$; eta squared= $.030$). Therefore, there was no significant difference in stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts between those who know an ex-convict and those who do not.

Hypothesis 3

To determine whether stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts differ between those who have been a victim of a crime and those who have never been a victim of a crime, an independent t-test was conducted. Preliminary analyses were conducted to ensure no violations of the assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Levene's test for equality of variance was not significant for stigmatising attitudes ($p= .009$); and therefore, the

data does violate the assumption of homogeneity of variance, but the t-value was examined which compensates for the fact that the variances were not the same.

A non- significant result of the ($p>.05$) Kolmogorov-Smirnov was found for this variable indicating that the data was not normally distributed, however, it is assumed that the data is normally distributed due to the relatively large sample size collected, and due to the Central Limit Theorem. The results of the t-test revealed that there was not a significant difference in scores, with individuals who were a victim of a crime ($M= 16.81, SD= 4.46$) and those who were not ever a victim of a crime ($M= 18.20, SD= 3.69$), $t(113) = -1.79, p=.077$, two-tailed. The magnitude in the differences in the means (mean difference = -1.39 , 95% CI: -2.92 to $.15$) was small ($\eta^2 = .028$). There was a non- significant difference between being a victim of a crime and not being a victim of a crime with respect to stigmatising attitudes towards an ex- convict.

Hypothesis 4

A standard linear regression analysis was performed to determine whether an individual's beliefs about malleability of prejudice correlates with, and predicts, stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts.

The relationship between beliefs about malleability of prejudice and stigmatising attitudes was investigated using Pearson product- moment correlation coefficient. Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a small, positive correlation between the two variables, $r=.23$, $n=113$, $p=.01$, with low levels of high levels of beliefs about malleability of prejudice associated with higher levels of stigmatising attitudes.

A significant regression equation was found ($F(1,111)= 6.353, P<.013$), with an R squared of 0.54. 5.4% variation in stigmatising scores can be explained by beliefs about the

malleability of prejudice. Participants predicted stigmatising attitudes is equal to 14.465 + .173 when beliefs about the malleability of prejudice is measured on a scale. Participants attitude scores increased .173 for every one point on the malleability of prejudice scale (see table 3 below for full details).

Table 3

Standard linear regression model to predict stigmatising attitudes based on beliefs about the malleability of prejudice

Variable	R ²	B	SE	β	t	p
Model	.054					.013
Stigmatising Attitudes		14.465	1.326		10.910	.000
Beliefs about the Malleability of Prejudice		.173	.069	.233	2.520	.013

Note: R² = R-squared; β = standardized beta value; B = unstandardized beta value; SE = Standard errors of B; N = 113; Statistical significance: *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Discussion

Stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts has been shown to be prevalent cross-culturally (Tan et al., 2016; Hirschfield and Piquero, 2010; Cullen, 2007). The current study sought to control for four variables that the literature has identified as being associated with stigmatising attitudes - those of gender, beliefs about the malleability of prejudice, knowing an ex-convict and being a victim of crime. The first hypothesis aimed to investigate whether stigmatising attitudes differed between males and females.

It was hypothesised, from previous literature, that (H1) stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts differ between males and females. Gender differences were explored using an independent t-test. The results indicated no significant differences in scores between males and females on the Attitudes Towards Ex- Offenders scale and the differences in mean scores was very small. This suggests that neither gender is more likely to possess stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts. This finding conflicts with prior research (eg. Griffiths et al., 2008; Min, 2019) that found that gender notably affected perceived stigmatising attitudes in other mental health related groups such as depression and mental health treatment effectiveness. It is possible that the disproportionate ratio of males (N=27) to females (N=86) may be responsible for the non-significant results obtained. Gender differences were observed in various studies exploring stigmatising attitudes towards acts of suicide (Pereira & Cardoso, 2019) and in groups of people with HIV status (Mugoya & Ernst, 2014).

For (H2), an independent t- test was conducted to investigate if stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts differ between those who know an ex-convict and those who do not know an ex- convict. Surprisingly, results from the t- test indicated a non- significant result. Demonstrating no differences in stigmatising attitude possessed by participants who would know an ex- convict. Although this finding is consistent with prior research (Tan et al.,

2016), this result was surprising as it was hypothesised that the cross-cultural differences would have affected the results from this variable in relation to stigmatising attitudes. The study conducted by Tan et al. (2016) also may have insufficiently investigate the effect of contact on stigmatising attitudes due to only 20% of participants have prior contact with an ex- convict. In the sample obtained for the current study, only 31% of participants know an ex- convict. For this reason, there may be a limited generalisability of results and future studies may benefit from availing of a technique that experimentally induces contact or imagined contact to combat this issue (Crisp & Turner, 2009). A study carried out by King et al. (2009) contradicts the finding of the current study and demonstrated that knowing a transgender person and having greater contact resulted in more positive attitudes held by them, although effect sizes were small.

(H3) stated that stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts differ between victims of a crime, and people who have never been victims of a crime. Similarly, to (H) and (H2), an independent t-test was conducted to test this hypothesis. The results produced a non-significant result and therefore no differences were observed between the two groups. This result is inconsistent with previous research which suggested that being a victim of a crime lead to a decrease in stigmatising attitudes towards ex- convicts (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010; Unnever and Cullen, 2007). The absence of a significant difference in (H2), which pertains to whether one knows an ex-convict or not, may have contributed to the lack of discernible distinctions between the groups. According to Hirschfield and Piquero's (2012) hypothesis, interacting with an ex-convict may lead to more lenient attitudes towards individuals with a criminal history. Nevertheless, if the study's findings failed to confirm hypothesis 2, it could explain why there were no significant differences observed in this hypothesis either.

The last hypothesis (H4) investigates whether a person's perception beliefs about the malleability of prejudice correlates with, and predicts, stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts. The results indicated that 5.4% variation in stigmatising scores can be explained by beliefs about the malleability of prejudice. Therefore, beliefs about the malleability of prejudice did predict variation in stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts. It was also found that there was a small, positive correlation between the two variables, with low levels of beliefs about malleability of prejudice associated with higher levels of stigmatising attitudes. This finding is consistent and supports the findings from Carr et al. (2012), that demonstrates that fixed beliefs about prejudice predicts negative consequences for the minority- group members.

Implications

Researching the predictor variables that can lead to stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts can have practical implications for the development of effective interventions, informing policy decisions, reducing discrimination, and increasing public awareness.

Through identifying the predictor variables that cause stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts, researchers can develop interventions that target these variables. This can lead to the development of more effective programs and policies aimed at reducing stigma and promoting social inclusion for ex-convicts. It can inform policy decisions related to ex-convicts. For instance, policies that address the causes of stigma, such as fear and misinformation, can be developed and implemented to promote social inclusion and reduce recidivism rates. Additionally, it can help reduce discrimination and prejudice. This can lead to improved employment opportunities, reduced social exclusion, and improved mental health outcomes for ex-convicts. Lastly, it can increase public awareness of the underlying

causes of stigma. This can help create a more informed and empathetic public discourse around ex-convicts, leading to reduced stigma and improved social outcomes.

Although the variables gender, being a victim of a crime and knowing an ex-convict did not predict variation in stigmatising attitudes, variation was demonstrated in the variable beliefs about the malleability of prejudice. These results are noteworthy and contribute to negative stigmatisation of ex-convicts. Resulting in difficulties reintegrating into society following release from prison (Moore et al., 2015; Pogorzelski et al., 2005b; van Tongeren, 2020).

Strengths and Limitations

One of the strengths of the present study is that it attempts to identify variables that may be predictors of stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts. This study is unique in the sense that no other study has researched these predictor variables within the Irish population.

This study identifies several limitations. Firstly, the scales used may have had limitations in accurately measuring the variables they were intended to assess as they could have due to response set bias, lack of granularity and the limited response options. Both scales, contained 6 items (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2012; Carr et al., 2012). For this reason, it may not have been in-depth and sensitive enough to properly assess the malleability of prejudice and the stigmatising attitudes that the participants possess. The limited response options may not capture the complexity or nuances of stigmatising attitudes and beliefs about the malleability of prejudice. The attitudes towards ex-offender's scale fails to discriminate between attitudes towards specific crimes. For this reason, the results may not capture the differences in attitudes towards ex-convicts depending on the crimes committed. Similarly with two of the demographic questions, dichotomous questions were utilised. The limitations with this style of questions can be the lack of variability, binary thinking and forced choice.

The stigmatising attitudes scale Cronbach's alpha was ($\alpha=.68$) which was lower than recommended (Pallant, 2020). Results obtained in the current study should be interpreted with caution, given the slightly lower than recommended Cronbach's alpha previously reported, until more research is conducted, possibly using more reliable measures of stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts.

Secondly, this scale implements a self- report measure. This limitation can make the data collected prone to self- selecting bias and social desirability bias. Although the study is completely anonymous, participants may still find it uncomfortable to answer the questions assessing prejudice honestly. This threatens the reliability of the measures used. However, measures were taken to reduce the potential effects of these bias. Participants were informed of anonymity and questions were made concise and in a non -leading manner. It may be that this study could improve its reliability by implementing an experimental design completed in a controlled laboratory. An implicit association test (IAT) may have been an appropriate measure to employ to investigate the association between stigmatizing attitudes and the ex-convict population.

Thirdly, this study employs a cross- sectional design which prevents any causality to be inferred. This is not viewed as a major limitation in the present study due to there being no statistically significant results found. For this reason, and the limitation listed secondly, this study could strongly benefit from an experimental or longitudinal design in the future to better infer causation. If a longitudinal research design were to be implemented in a similar study, results may demonstrate differences in stigmatising attitudes as participants may have increased exposure to ex- convicts or being victimised.

Conclusion

The existing body of research consistently demonstrates that stigmatising attitudes hinder the successful reintegration of ex-convicts into society. To expand upon this knowledge, the current study sought to explore the predictor variables that may contribute to increased stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts. In future studies, researchers may consider using experimental designs rather than relying on self-reported data obtained through cross-sectional designs to examine attitudes. Additionally, it would be valuable to investigate how attitudes towards ex-convicts vary based on the type of crime committed. This information could shed light on groups of individuals who face particularly severe discrimination and prejudice and could help inform the development of preventive measures aimed at mitigating the negative consequences associated with stigmatizing attitudes.

Our findings suggest that beliefs about the malleability showed variation in stigmatising attitudes. However, surprisingly, no differences in stigmatising attitudes were observed between genders, being a victim of a crime or knowing an ex-convict. This finding highlights the need to replicate the study with a more generalisable population sample and using scales that have greater psychometric properties. Policymakers interested in reducing stigma towards ex-convicts may want to focus on public education and strategies to mitigate negative emotions associated with this population. Overall, this Irish research contributes to a growing international body of research examining the predictors of stigmatising attitudes towards ex-convicts; in the future, this larger body of research may help identify targets for interventions aimed at reducing stigma.

References

- Alper, M., Durose, M. R., & Markman, J. (2018). *2018 update on prisoner recidivism: A 9-year follow-up period (2005-2014)*. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Baffour, F. D., Francis, A. P., Chong, M. D., Harris, N., & Baffour, P. D. (2020). Perpetrators at First, Victims at Last: Exploring the Consequences of Stigmatization on Ex-Convicts' Mental Well-Being. *Criminal Justice Review*, *46*(3), 304–325.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0734016820960785>
- Butz, D. A., & Plant, E. A. (2009). Prejudice Control and Interracial Relations: The Role of Motivation to Respond Without Prejudice. *Journal of Personality*, *77*(5), 1311–1342.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2009.00583.x>
- Carr, P. B., Dweck, C. S., & Pauker, K. (2012). “Prejudiced” behavior without prejudice? Beliefs about the malleability of prejudice affect interracial interactions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *103*(3), 452–471.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028849>
- Corrigan, P. W., & Watson, A. C. (2002). Understanding the impact of stigma on people with mental illness. *World Psychiatry*, *1*(1), 16–20.

- Crisp, R. J., & Turner, R. N. (2009). Can imagined interactions produce positive perceptions?: Reducing prejudice through simulated social contact. *American Psychologist*, 64(4), 231–240. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0014718>
- Dweck, C. S., Chiu, C. Y., & Hong, Y. Y. (1995). Implicit Theories and Their Role in Judgments and Reactions: A Word From Two Perspectives. *Psychological Inquiry*, 6(4), 267–285. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli0604_1
- Frable, D. E. S., Platt, L., & Hoey, S. (1998). Concealable stigmas and positive self-perceptions: Feeling better around similar others. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(4), 909–922. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.4.909>
- Griffiths, K. M., Christensen, H., & Jorm, A. F. (2008). Predictors of depression stigma. *BMC Psychiatry*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244x-8-25>
- Hirschfield, P. J., & Piquero, A. R. (2010). Normalization and Legitimation: Modeling Stigmatizing Attitudes toward Ex-Offenders. *Criminology*, 48(1), 27-56.
- Kaiser, C. R., Major, B., & McCoy, S. K. (2004). Expectations about the Future and the Emotional Consequences of Perceiving Prejudice. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 30(2), 173–184. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203259927>

Keene, D. E., Smoyer, A. B., & Blankenship, K. M. (2018). Stigma, housing and identity after prison. *The Sociological Review*, 66(4), 799–815.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038026118777447>

King, M. J., Winter, S., & Webster, B. (2009). Contact Reduces Transprejudice: A Study on Attitudes towards Transgenderism and Transgender Civil Rights in Hong Kong.

International Journal of Sexual Health, 21(1), 17–34.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/19317610802434609>

LeBel, T. P. (2008). Perceptions of and Responses to Stigma. *Sociology Compass*, 2(2), 409–

432. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00081.x>

Maruna, S., & King, A. (2009). Once a Criminal, Always a Criminal?: ‘Redeemability’ and the Psychology of Punitive Public Attitudes. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 15(1–2), 7–24.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-008-9088-1>

Min, J. W. (2019). The Influence of Stigma and Views on Mental Health Treatment

Effectiveness on Service Use by Age and Ethnicity: Evidence From the CDC BRFSS

2007, 2009, and 2012. *SAGE Open*, 9(3), 215824401987627.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019876277>

Moore, K. E., Stuewig, J. B., & Tangney, J. P. (2015). The Effect of Stigma on Criminal

Offenders’ Functioning: A Longitudinal Mediation Model. *Deviant Behavior*, 37(2),

196–218. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639625.2014.1004035>

Mosser, Sydney, "Factors Influencing Attitudes Towards Ex-Offenders" (2022). *All*

NMU Master's Theses. 710.

<https://commons.nmu.edu/theses/710>

Mugoya, G. C. T., & Ernst, K. C. (2014). Gender differences in HIV-related stigma in Kenya.

Aids Care-Psychological and Socio-Medical Aspects of Aids/Hiv, 26(2), 206–213.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09540121.2013.808733>

Neel, R., & Shapiro, J. R. (2012). Is racial bias malleable? Whites' lay theories of racial bias

predict divergent strategies for interracial interactions. *Journal of Personality and*

Social Psychology, 103(1), 101–120. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028237>

Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS Survival Manual: A Step by Step Guide to Data Analysis using IBM*

SPSS. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Pansag, F., Rosaroso, R. C., Paradiang, L. A., Labasano, F., & Lasala, G. (2016). Journey of

an Ex-convict: From Conviction to Liberation. *Asia Pacific Journal of*

Multidisciplinary Research, 4(2), 21–28.

<https://doaj.org/article/83dba2e44d68489d8dbf831470a00abc>

Pereira, A. J. C., & Cardoso, F. (2019). Stigmatising attitudes towards suicide by gender and

age. *Revista CES Psicologia*, 12(1), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.21615/cesp.12.1.1>

- Pogorzelski, W., Wolff, N., Pan, K. Y., & Blitz, C. L. (2005b). Behavioral Health Problems, Ex-Offender Reentry Policies, and the “Second Chance Act.” *American Journal of Public Health, 95*(10), 1718–1724. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2005.065805>
- Quinn, D. M., & Chaudoir, S. R. (2015). Living with a concealable stigmatized identity: The impact of anticipated stigma, centrality, salience, and cultural stigma on psychological distress and health. *Stigma and Health, 1*(S), 35–59. <https://doi.org/10.1037/2376-6972.1.s.35>
- Rade, C. B., Desmarais, S. L., & Mitchell, R. E. (2016). A Meta-Analysis of Public Attitudes Toward Ex-Offenders. *Criminal Justice and Behavior, 43*(9), 1260–1280. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093854816655837>
- Richeson, J. A., & Trawalter, S. (2005). Why do interracial interactions impair executive function? A resource depletion account. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 88*(6), 934–947. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.88.6.934>
- Rössler, W. (2016). The stigma of mental disorders. *EMBO Reports, 17*(9), 1250–1253. <https://doi.org/10.15252/embr.201643041>
- Schlösser, O., & Frese, M. (2006). Humane Orientation - A cross-cultural study in 26 countries. [Unpublished Diploma Thesis]. *Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen*.
- Stigma and Group Inequality: Social Psychological Perspectives*. (n.d.).

Unnever, J. D., Cullen, F. T., & Fisher, B. S. (2007). "A Liberal Is Someone Who Has Not Been Mugged": Criminal Victimization and Political Beliefs. *Justice Quarterly*, 24(2), 309–334. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418820701294862>

van Tongeren, J. H. S. (2020). Housing Ex-Offenders in the Netherlands: Balancing Neighbourhood Safety and Human Rights. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 28(1), 57–77. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-020-09443-6>

Appendix A

Participant Information Sheet

Factors influencing Stigma Towards ex-Convicts Among Healthy Adults in Ireland

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Please spare a moment to read this document, which explains the purpose of the research and your role in participating, before deciding whether you wish to participate. Please feel free to contact me with the details provided below, if you have any further question regarding the information provided or about the study in general.

What is this study about?

I am a final year student in the BA in Psychology programme at National College of Ireland. As part of the completion of my degree, I must conduct a final year research project. I have chosen to examine factors that influence stigma held against ex-convicts by the healthy adult population in Ireland.

What will taking part in the study involve?

Taking part in the study will involve the completion of a survey consisting of a 17- item scale assessing stigma towards ex-convicts and answer six statements using a six-point scale to assess perceptions on offenders' ability to change.

Who can take part?

This study will include participants that are over the age of 18 years and have access to the internet to complete an online survey. Participants will be required to understand written and spoken English.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this research is voluntary, it is not compulsory and decision not to take part will have no consequences for you. Withdrawal from the study is allowed at any stage throughout is permitted and the data stored belonging to you will be erased.

What are the possible risks and benefits of taking part?

The research being conducted in this study involves a sensitive topic that could potentially distress participants. However, the benefits of this study include the opportunity to be a part of research that is intending to add knowledge to this area. It also facilitates participants to witness the conduction of a final year project which may benefit students who aim to complete on in the future.

Will taking part be confidential and what will happen to my data?

The results of this study will be confidential and will remain anonymous. There will be no identifiable way to recognise individual participant's results. Information regarding participants course, gender and year of study will be encrypted and stored in a password protected file. All data obtained from the survey will be stored under Id codes instead of by name. Data stored on SPSS for analysis will also be encrypted and password protected to ensure protection of the participants identity.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of this study will be presented in my final dissertation, which will then be submitted to National College of Ireland for examination.

Who should you contact for further information?

For further information, please contact Molly O'Brien, the researcher of this project via
student email: X20377093@student.ncirl.ie.

Appendix B

Consent form

Survey on factors that influence stigma towards ex-convicts

Consent to take part in research

· I..... voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

· I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

· I understand that I cannot withdraw permission to use data from the questionnaires after completion, in which case the material will be fully anonymised.

· I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

· I understand that participation involves the completion of survey consisting of a 17-item scale and a 6-point scale assessing perceptions on offenders' ability to change.

· I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

· I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities – they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

· I understand that signed consent forms and results from the tests will be retained in SPSS until the exam board confirms the results of their dissertation.

- I understand that my data will be retained and managed in accordance with the NCI data retention policy, and that my anonymised data may be archived on an online data repository

and may be used for secondary data analysis. No participants data will be identifiable at any point.

· I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information. Moly O'Brien, final year student of Psychology at National College of Ireland.

Required Questions*

- Please tick this box if you have read and agree with all of the above information.
- Verify that I am over 18 years of age and voluntarily consent to take part in this study.

Appendix C

Debriefing Sheet

Thank you for participating in this study to expand our knowledge on stigmas held by individuals. The information from this study will have various implications that will help educate mental health practitioners and those providing psychoeducation to the general public in regard to the stigmatisation of ex-convicts and the reintegration into society.

As previously stated, your right to withdraw from this study is still optional. If you decide to withdraw, the data collected will be removed from the data base. It is important to note that all data currently stored is confidential and your anonymity is protected. Your information will not be identifiable to the public.

Thank you again, the voluntary of your time is greatly appreciated. I have provided some contact details in case you may have found the content of the study distressing.

Crime Victims Helpline

Number: call 116 006 or text 085 133 7711

Web page: <https://www.crimevictimshelpline.ie/>

Samaritans

Number: 116 123

Web page: <https://www.samaritans.org/ireland/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/>

My details will be provided below. Do not hesitate to contact me with any further questions or queries regarding the study.

Many thanks,

Molly O'Brien

Email: X20377093@student.ncirl.ie

Appendix D

Demographics

Age

Your answer

Gender:

Male

Female

Other

Highest Level of Education Completed:

Junior certificate (NFQ level 3)

Leaving Certificate (NFQ Level 4 and 5)

Advanced Certificate- Craft/ Higher Certificate (NFQ Level 6)

Ordinary Bachelor Degree (NFQ Level 7)

Honours Bachelor Degree/ Higher Diploma (NFQ Level 8)

Masters Degree (NFQ Level 9)

Doctoral Degree (NFQ Level 10)

Do you currently know someone who is an ex-convict:

yes

No

Were you ever a victim of a crime:

Yes

No

Appendix E

Table 1: Overview of survey questions measuring public stigma towards people with criminal records designed by Shi et al. (2022).

[Hirschfield and Piquero \(2010, pp. 38–39\): Attitudes Toward Ex-Offenders](#)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Most people who have been incarcerated are dangerous.” (DD) • “Most people who have been incarcerated are dishonest.” (DD) • “I would avoid associating with anyone who has recently been incarcerated.” (SD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It would be a big deal if one of my neighbors was incarcerated.” (NE) • “Many people who are incarcerated do not deserve to be there”. (Other) • “Many people convicted of crimes in the courts are actually innocent.” (Other)
--	--

Appendix F

Theories of Prejudice Scale

Theories of Prejudice Scale The following questions ask you about prejudice, for example racial prejudice. How much do you agree or disagree with the following thoughts? Please circle your response.

1. People have a certain amount of prejudice and they can't really change that. 1 2 3 4 5 6 very strongly disagree strongly disagree disagree disagree strongly disagree very strongly disagree

2. People's level of prejudice is something very basic about them that they can't change very much. 1 2 3 4 5 6 very strongly disagree strongly disagree disagree disagree strongly disagree very strongly disagree

3. No matter who somebody is, they can always become a lot less prejudiced. 1 2 3 4 5 6 very strongly disagree strongly disagree disagree disagree strongly disagree very strongly disagree

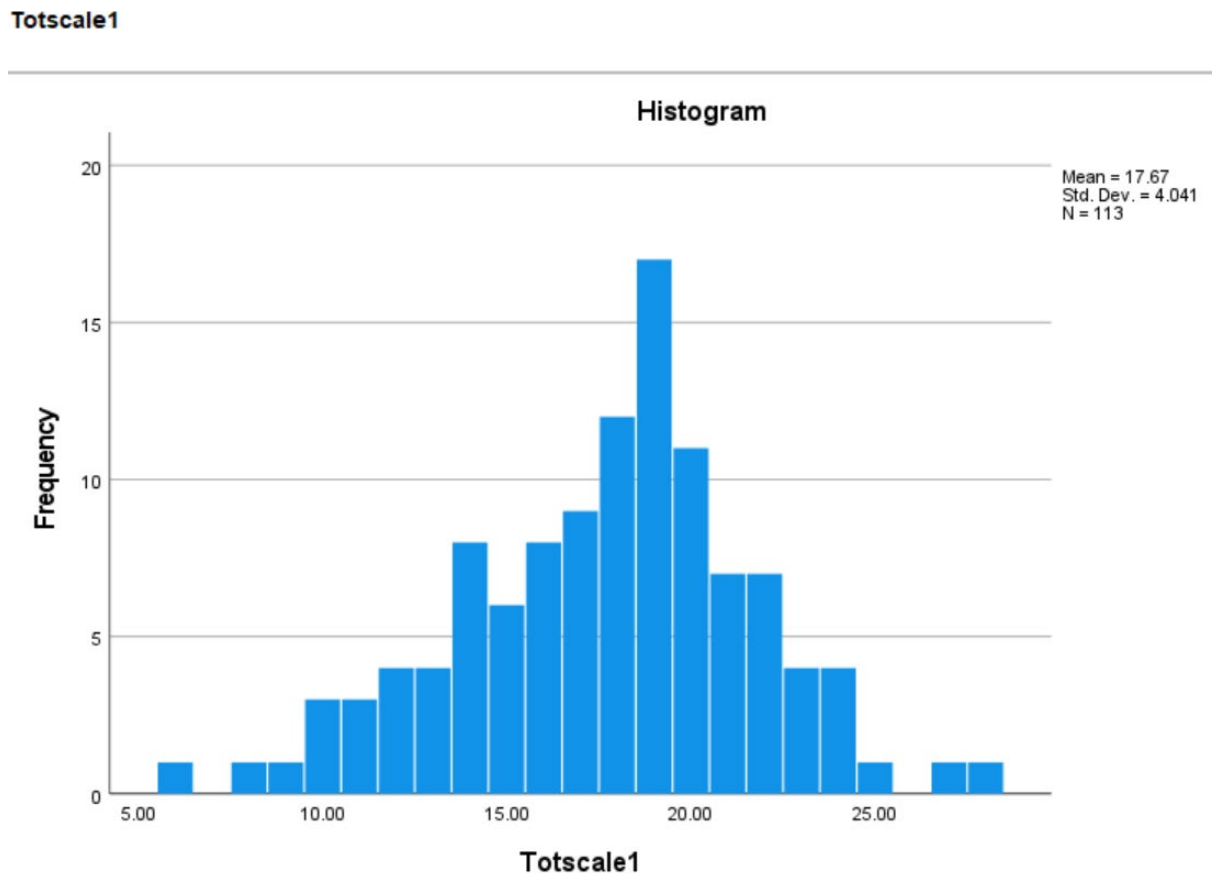
4. People can change their level of prejudice a great deal. 1 2 3 4 5 6 very strongly disagree strongly disagree disagree disagree strongly disagree very strongly disagree

5. People can learn how to act like they're not prejudiced, but they can't really change their prejudice deep down. 1 2 3 4 5 6 very strongly disagree strongly disagree disagree disagree strongly disagree very strongly disagree

6. As much as I hate to admit it, you can't teach an old dog new tricks. People can't really change how prejudiced they are. 1 2 3 4 5 6 very strongly disagree strongly disagree disagree disagree strongly disagree very strongly disagree

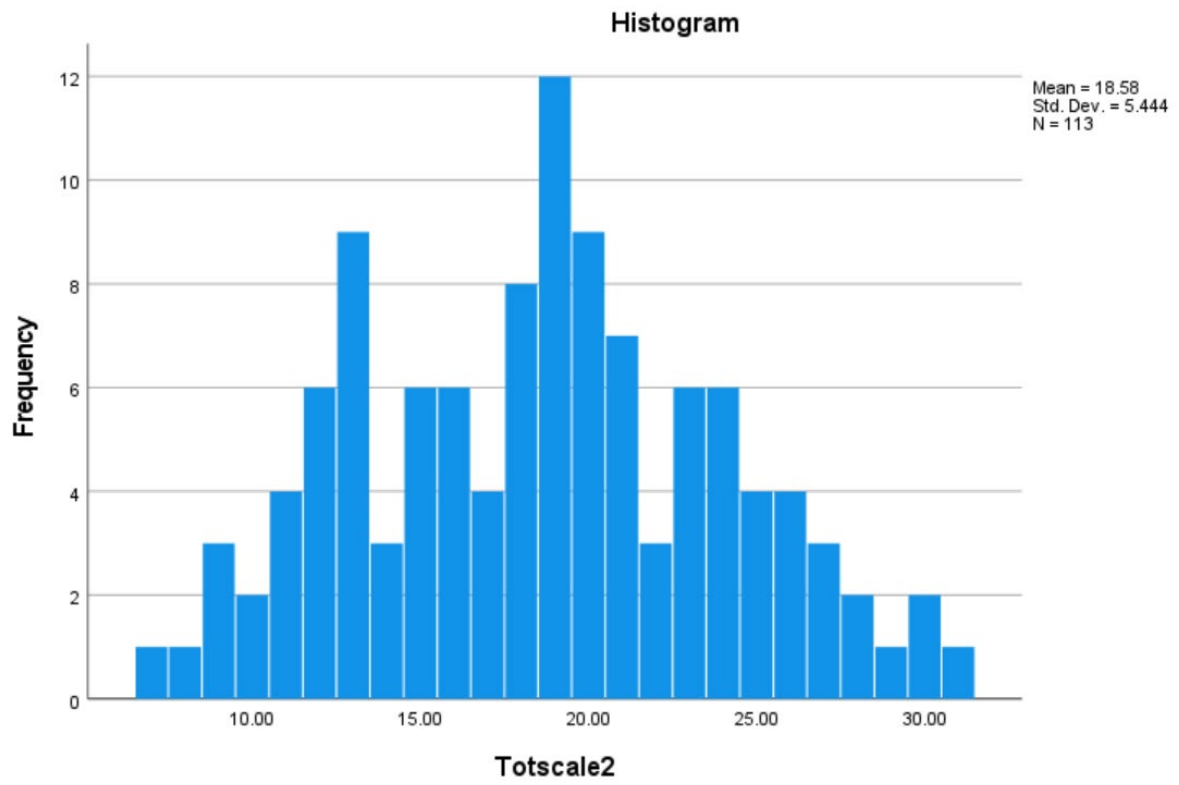
Appendix G:

Histogram for Stigmatising attitudes



Histogram for Beliefs about the malleability of prejudice

Totscale2



Appendix H

Proof of Analysis (Full data file is available upon request)

SPSS data file

	Age	Gender	Education	Year	S1_Q1	S1_Q2	S1_Q3	S1_Q4	S1_Q5	
1	45	1		6	1	1	2	5	3	4
2	21	2		2	1	2	2		4	4
3	20	1		2	2	2	5	4	5	4
4	21	2		2	2	1	1	1	4	4
5	57	1		1	1	1	2	2	1	3
6	37	1		2	2	2	3	3	2	3
7	20	1		2	2	2	4	2	4	3
8	21	1		2	2	2	3	4	3	4
9	21	1		2	2	2	2	4	4	3
10	22	1		2	2	2	2	2	2	5
11	20	1		2	2	2	2	2	4	3
12	20	1		2	1	2	2	3	2	2
13	21	1		4	1	2	1	1	1	2
14	18	1		2	2	2	2	2	3	3
15	20	1		5	2	2	3	2	2	2
16	20	1		2	1	1	1	1	1	1
17	43	1		3	1	2	1	2	3	3
18	22	1		5	2	2	3	2	3	2
19	22	1		4	2	1	3	4	3	4
20	21	1		2	2	1	3	3	4	4
21	20	2		5	1	1	2	3	4	4
22	53	1		3	2	2	2	1	2	2

SPSS Output

Frequencies

		Statistics									
		Please select your gender which you identify by.	Highest level of education completed	Do you currently know someone who is an ex-convict	Were you ever a victim of a crime	Most people who have been incarcerated are dangerous	Most people who have been incarcerated are dishonest	I would avoid associating with anyone who has recently been incarcerated	It would be a big deal if one of my neighbors were incarcerated	Many people who are incarcerated do not deserve to be there	Many convicted criminals are dangerous
N	Valid	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113	113
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		1.24	2.86	1.69	1.62	2.61	2.60	2.78	2.88	3.27	
Std. Deviation		.428	1.322	.464	.488	1.039	1.082	1.215	1.193	.964	
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Maximum		2	6	2	2	5	5	5	5	5	

Frequency Table

Please select your gender which you identify by.

	N	%
Female	86	76.1%
Male	27	23.9%