

**A Multivariate Criminological Analysis of the  
Self-Esteem of Repeat Offenders**

by

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## Summary

The correctional experience of adult offenders has largely been ignored in comparison to youth and adolescent offenders in the correctional literature and even more so in terms of repeated offending behaviour. The perspective that self-esteem is also considered an important behavioural motivator and outcome of life experiences is reflected in the high amount of inclusion it enjoys as a treatment outcome in numerous correctional rehabilitation programmes. However, the dearth of research on the level of self-esteem of repeat offenders internationally and in the South African context does not reflect the importance of this relationship and with a 95% recidivism rate in South African prisons one can understand the need for investigation into this phenomenon.

Descriptive, comparative and explanatory analyses were conducted using the self-concept theory of Carl Rogers to guide the research. A purposive sample of 73 male repeat offenders from correctional centres in the Zululand area of the KwaZulu-Natal province were included in the study. Self-esteem was assessed through the use of the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (Adult Form) and relative theoretical and empirical perspectives were utilised in the development of a questionnaire used to quantitatively assess multiple variables related to self-esteem and repeat offending behaviour. The level of self-esteem was therefore assessed in terms of the type of offence/s committed by the participants and in relation to a number of demographic (age, education, marital status, number of children and childhood socioeconomic status), psychosocial (parental closeness, parental availability, need for acceptance, familial abuse and treatment by community upon release) and correctional (exposure to correctional environment, experience of victimisation inside the correctional facility, visitations, conditions of the correctional centres and programme participation) variables. Inferential (t-tests, ANOVA and correlations) and descriptive (means, standard deviations and frequency distributions) statistical analyses were utilised to compare the self-esteem scores of the participants and provide a general description of the characteristics of the sample respectively. The reliability of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Adult Form) was also assessed producing a Cronbach alpha of .69 indicating that it was a reliable measure of self-esteem in the South African correctional context.

The results indicated that the self-esteem scores of South African repeat offenders varied significantly in terms of offence type with aggressive offenders showing significantly higher levels of self-esteem than sexual, economic, narcotic and “other” offenders. Participants from the remaining offending categories did not show significant differences in self-esteem between one another. Demographic variables (age, education, marital status, number of children and childhood socioeconomic status) were not found to have a significant effect on self-esteem scores. Psychosocial variables related to familial relations (parental closeness and parental availability) were not found to be significantly different despite clear patterns emerging indicating an increase in self-esteem when parental bonds were strong and parents were perceived as available during childhood. The analysis of data related to the need for acceptance by friends and family members indicated that despite the repeated offending nature of the sample that there was still a degree of acceptance with conventional norms and values. Self-esteem was also seen to improve with perceptions of community support and fairness of treatment by community upon release. Experiences of abuse prior to incarceration and victimisation within the correctional facility were seen to negatively affect self-esteem however time and context related variables were determined to play a mediating role due to the increased effect witnessed for experiences that were more recent. Further correctional variables analysed showed increases in self-esteem in terms of prolonged exposure to the correctional environment, and increase in the frequency of visitations and positive perceptions of satisfaction with the conditions in the correctional centres. Programme participation was however found to have no significant effect on self-esteem.

Recommendations formulated for future research included the need for a longitudinal research design and the incorporation of contextual data in the form of non-offending control groups for the establishment of cultural norms and values through the use of qualitative interviews. The generally negative life experiences of repeat offenders were concluded to increase the need for the use of psychological defences and the creation of an increasingly false reality in an attempt to maintain some form of psychological consistency.

### **Key Terms**

Self-esteem, recidivism, repeat offending behaviour, self-concept, offender victimisation, correctional treatment programmes, self-esteem and offending behaviour

# **Chapter 1**

## **General Orientation and Problem Formulation**

To explore the role of the self-esteem of repeated criminal behaviour within a psychosocial framework it is imperative to begin the study with a basic orientation to the key concepts. This will include definitions of various important terms which will be operationalised for the purposes of this study. A discussion of a historical perspective of the self will serve as a contextual basis for the presentation of the problem formulation. The rationale for the study will be presented in reference to the specific aims of the study followed by a concise outline of the research report.

### **1.1 Introduction**

How individuals perceive themselves is often an important part of how worthy they feel as human beings. However one's perception of self-worth is seldom based on internal factors alone. The role which our environment plays in our self-evaluations is also of pivotal importance. One's environment, be it either the immediate family or greater society, is where individuals as humans learn what is important and most significantly, what is valued. This value system often shaped through interactions with and responses from primary reference groups influence the manner in which individuals interact with their external environment (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:185-187). This interaction should be no different for people who display deviant or criminal behavioural patterns. The value individuals place on themselves is often reflected in their behaviour and so, self-esteem has been cited in numerous texts as an important factor in behavioural motivation (Greenwald, Banaji, Rudman, Farnham, Nosek, & Mellott, 2002; Kling, Hyde, Showers, & Buswell, 1999; Maderthaner, 2005; Van der Hoven, 2001). Despite its ever presence, it hardly commands a substantive position in behavioural explanation. This could be due to the lack of consensus present in the available research regarding the effect, low or high self-esteem has on behaviour as well as the complexity of the cognitive processes involved.



## **1.2 Conceptualisation**

For the purpose of basic orientation to the topic, as well as to provide the context in which concepts will be used, an introduction to the following terms is necessary:

### **1.2.1 Self-Esteem**

The term self-esteem refers to the evaluative aspect of self-perception. It is the subjective and introspective assessment of ones' own worth and capability (Coopersmith, 2002). Researchers influenced by the work of Carl Rogers viewed self-esteem as being based on the degree of congruence achieved between ones current perception of the self and the perception of who or what one ideally should be, which develops from early childhood through mainly parental but also societal conditions pertaining to worth (Block & Robins, 1993; Cervone & Pervin, 2008). Furthermore, self-esteem can be defined as the relationship between the self and external factors of symbolic psychological value such as people, occupations, events or interactions (Greenwald, *et al.*, 2002:5). Self-esteem can also be a reflection of fleeting or enduring self-evaluations. However the situational factors of the former tend to vary to a greater degree than the latter, thus making the more consistent self-evaluations a more reliable measure of general self-esteem (Coopersmith, 2002:5). Therefore, the definition of general self-esteem derived from the Rogerian perspective, in specific reference to the more stable presentation of self-esteem will be utilised for the purposes of this study. The terms self-evaluation, self-assessment, self-worth, self-regard and self-esteem will be used interchangeably unless otherwise indicated.

### **1.2.2 Self-Concept**

Self-concept refers to the structural component of the self. Also referred to by Rogers (1951:501) as the "self-structure", this factor develops through the symbolisation of actual and perceived experiences to form an organised pattern of perceptions that the individual would use to identify the self in the external environment in relation to other individuals, objects and events. The value placed on this structure is as a direct result of self-esteem and can therefore be interpreted as the current, subjective interpretation of the self as it exists in the past, present and future available to conscious awareness (Rogers, 1951:501).

### **1.2.3 Stability and Change**

As previously mentioned, evaluations of the self can either be fleeting assessments of specific instances or more enduring and generalisable to an individuals' perception of self. These two forms of self-assessment can also be referred to as state or trait self-esteem respectively and

are somewhat different in terms of stability and what causes them to change (Leary, 1999:33). It is said that trait self-esteem can be seen as an individuals "resting" or constant level of self-esteem which denotes their more consistent feelings of worth within society. This is in accordance to psychological theory of personality traits which defines traits as patterns of behaviour that are similar regardless of time or situational factors (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:238). Thus, once developed, this form of self-esteem is said to be stable across the individuals' lifespan and becomes more so as the individual matures (Block & Robins, 1993:919; Leary, 1999:33). State self-esteem on the other hand can be seen as the variable aspect of ones self-esteem that fluctuates when individuals perceive their relational value within society to either increase or decrease (Leary, 1999:34). However, the focus of the current study will be the effect of the more consistent and stable, trait self-esteem and its relation to repeat criminal behaviour.

### **1.2.4 Criminal Behaviour**

The term criminal behaviour is one that if unpacked to its absolute core will reveal a definition that is multidimensional, in depth and complex. The definition of the word criminal has numerous sociological implications and behaviour can be seen from equally as many different perspectives. From a psychosocial perspective, criminal behaviour could refer to actions that have not been formally judged by any organs of the criminal justice system as illegal. This would then refer to antisocial behaviour that is present, although undetected by law enforcement. However, due to its increased potential to eventually develop into behaviour that is considered criminal it can be considered a defining aspect of the criminal behaviour definition (Bartol & Bartol, 2008:35). A more legalistic approach would require the detection of such behaviour by law enforcement agencies and the participation of the offending individual in court proceedings, leading to the imposition of a sentence by criminal justice officials (Bartol & Bartol, 2008:35). Therefore, due to the socially contextual nature of the legal system and for the sake of simplicity and measurability, a more socio-legal

definition will be utilised in the current study. Criminal behaviour, will for that reason refer to physical actions that have been judged in a court of law to be in contravention of the criminal code of the country (Bartol & Bartol, 2008:1).

### **1.2.5 Recidivism**

To explore the psychosocial and criminological aspects of repeat offending it is imperative to understand the concept of recidivism. Recidivism refers to an offenders' habitual participation in actions of a criminal nature after being released from a correctional setting (Bartol & Bartol, 2008:200). The precise cause of this behaviour has not been isolated, but has been related to numerous personal, environmental and historical factors with varying degrees (Gendreau, Little, & Goggin, 1996:575). The terminology "recidivism" and "re-offending" implicitly allude to the same concept and thus, in the context of the current study will refer to the detection of further criminal activity by the criminal justice system after having been sentenced for the commission of a previous criminal offense and will be used interchangeably.

### **1.2.6 Psychosocial**

Human development does not take place in a vacuum, but within the context of a certain mediating environment. Each individual environment has its own unique set of conditions and factors that influence and are shaped by those who reside within it. The psychosocial approach refers to the impact and consequences ones' environment or society has on ones' psychological development. This is communicated through the process of socialisation from caregivers to infants and reinforced or challenged through similar or different interactions throughout the lifespan. These social factors thus encourage the development and evolution of certain behaviours (Bartol & Bartol, 2008:368).

## **1.3 Historical Perspective**

To gain an understanding of the socially dependant nature of self-esteem it is important to consider the development of the overarching concept of the self. It is here where the impact and interrelatedness of society and its expectations on the perception of the self will become

apparent. It will also be useful to take note of the changing nature of the perception of self within certain societies, with regards to the criteria individuals use to assess their own sense of self and thus establish their individual level of self-esteem within their own sociological context.

### **1.3.1 Ancient Greece (7<sup>th</sup> Century BC to 300 AD)**

Philosophers predict that early humankind's sense of self would be one firmly tied to its immediate group and would thereby be predominantly dependant on the group for decision making and thought provocation. Thereafter, in the time of ancient Greece, as the practice of introspection had not yet been realised it was believed that all thoughts and internal cognitive processes were brought about by the gods or some form of divine intervention (Wiley, 1994:534). This perception however took a drastic change in the years to follow as the Greek philosophers and academics began to question widely held beliefs and perceptions of the time. This probe brought about what Wiley terms the "Greek discovery (or invention) of the mind and self" (1994:535) and initiated the transferral of the defining factors of the self from external forces to the individual. Socrates is said to have played a defining part in making the public aware of the role which individuals, through interaction and conversation, created their own understandings of concepts. Though the self and mans' understanding thereof had not fully come into being, this revelation was a significant milestone in the practice of psychological and cognitive introspection practices (Wiley, 1994:535).

### **1.3.2 Middle Ages (1000 to 1500 AD)**

The next era to see the change in the perception of self came during the Middle Ages. During this time there was a marked shift towards Christianity and Christian principles which, for the self, meant realigning with factors exterior to the individual. The concept of the soul and its greater purpose of freedom and immortality beyond the physical life gave the self a greater sense of purpose at the cost of its autonomy (Wiley, 1994:536). The self was now viewed as belonging to both a physical community as well as a much greater metaphysical existence which could be accessed through displays of self-discipline and control in accordance with the Christian doctrines (Richardson, Rogers, & McCarroll, 1998:497-498). As this doctrine gained popularity it soon became influential in ruling structures and thereby became the influencing force in many societies, creating a sense of social cohesion amongst all those who

subscribed to it. This would however only last until the birth of the modern world or industrialised era.

### **1.3.3 Enlightenment and Industrialisation (18<sup>th</sup> Century)**

The advent of the period of enlightenment and the industrialisation of the world once again detracted from the influential position held by divine entities over the self and shifted the focus back to the individual but did not detract completely from society. This was a time of vast exploration and discovery in the fields of science and technology as well as understanding of societies and those that inhabit them (Wiley, 1994:537). The self became an autonomous entity due to the new world of possibilities and understanding where entire industries were developed around human capital and individual agency. The self was arguably at its most robust and autonomous at this point in time (Wiley, 1994:538). However, this shift from the metaphysical to the largely material focus of the self created a scenario which would call for the self to be surrendered back to society.

### **1.3.4 The Modern Era (20<sup>th</sup> Century)**

The new reality created by the emphasis on industry development was to prove detrimental to the self. Industry became more important than the people and those in power dictated the conditions of worth which ironically correlated to the expansion of industry (Wiley, 1994:539). In this era the self no longer has inherent value but rather, exchange value and is therefore only as valuable as the demand placed on it. This view of the self as a tradable commodity is said to force individuals to depart from their true self and present a more desirable, yet “false” self. Upon self-evaluation, this incongruence of the self results in an unstable form of self-esteem (Richardson et al., 1998:501).

Although this is by no means an all-encompassing history of the progression of the self it does illustrate the influence of society, and effectively those who control it, on individuals’ views of themselves and others. The oscillation between internal and external sources of self-evaluative reference points are clearly presented and can also be considered as reflective of the societal norms, values and moral convictions of the times. Thus, demonstrating that conditions of self-worth should not be taken for granted as a global norm but rather, as strongly tied to a specific social context.

## **1.4 Problem Formulation**

With the historical perspective in mind one can deduce that an individuals' perception of self within a specific social context is an important motivational factor for behaviour. The following section will outline specific problems that relate to the development of knowledge surrounding self-esteem and criminal behaviour, thus developing a rationale grounded in the available research and demonstrating why research of this nature is necessary.

### **1.4.1 Theoretical Problem Formulation**

If one is to consider the large amount of available research on self-esteem, a few patterns begin to emerge regarding what the common areas of interest are. It seems, as with a lot of research, that the common trends in the international research are a lot more extensive than the South African research and broadly include theoretical perspectives and behavioural effects (Greenwald, *et al.*, 2002; Kling *et al.*, 1999; Maderthaner, 2005; Van der Hoven, 2001), contribution to pathology (Griffiths, *et al.*, 1999; Martin *et al.*, 2005; Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004) assessment evaluations (Jose & Amparo, 1999; Lane, White, & Henson, 2002; Myhill & Lorr, 1978; Robins, Hendin, & Trzesniewski, 2001) and the effect of imprisonment on self-esteem (Greve & Enzman, 2003; Oser, 2006). However, the theoretical perspectives do not all concur on the effect of self-esteem on deviant behaviour as there is available evidence for both low and high self-esteem as contributing factors to deviant behaviour (Baumeister, Smart, & Boden, 1996:6; Bruce, 2006:34; Gendreau *et al.*, 1996:577; Oser, 2006:344). Furthermore, the international literature provides evidence for a link between types of offences and differing levels of self-esteem (Oliver *et al.*, 2007:307), an area of research which seems to be absent in the South African literature. Lastly, as with much of the available research there seems to be an overall lack of research on self-esteem assessment of adult populations in as much of the assessment focus is on children and adolescents. Therefore research of this nature can only further our understanding (both theoretically and practically) of criminal behaviour in South Africa as well as internationally.

### **1.4.2 Criminological Problem Formulation**

The current discrepancy in theoretical understandings has far reaching effects for the practical applications of self-esteem research. One such area would be in the interpretation of presentencing reports as an assessment of self-esteem may be included (Hesselink-Louw & Holtzhausen, 2003:114). A misunderstanding of the results brought upon by this theoretical discrepancy could affect sentencing decisions and lead to offenders not receiving appropriate correctional intervention. Furthermore, self-esteem is also assessed and taken into account during consideration of release on parole where an inaccurate understanding could contribute to the release of an individual who is not psychologically or emotionally prepared for the outside world. The author aims to further explore whether the abovementioned factors could contribute to being further ostracised by the community and the reinforcement of the criminal label. Also, whether this type of situation could force the individual back into a criminal lifestyle and contribute to the already high rate of recidivism in South Africa as well as internationally (Gendreau et al., 1996:576-577). Elaborating on the point of recidivism, the effect of the prison environment on self-esteem has also been documented and may also pose a threat to psychological adjustment upon release if not correctly treated, and thus research of this nature could affect sentencing trends to assist in making more effective decisions and improving the reintegration process (Oliver et al., 2007:309).

### **1.4.3 Prison Conditions**

The effectiveness of the prison structure as a tool for crime control or crime reduction has frequently been met with negative scrutiny. Often being referred to as warehouses or universities of crime, prisons are at times said to be characterised by conditions that increase the potential of an opposite, adverse effect on their occupants with many offenders who had committed minor offences leaving these institutions after a short while more bitter, violent and criminally wiser than before. Writings from over 150 years ago referred to by Lukas Muntingh (2002:21) states that imprisonment can be viewed as an indirect contributor to delinquency in society. This is because imprisonment often removes the head and sole provider of a household resulting in destitute and poverty-ridden circumstances, which, coupled with lack of education and legitimate opportunities, creates an ideal environment for the cultivation of criminality and criminal tendencies.

It was common knowledge that the condition of prisons in South Africa during the transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994 was not acceptable. With conditions not conducive to human dignity, it was seen as a reflection of the racist former governments regard for the predominantly black prison population. One of the sections of the 1993 Interim Constitution of South Africa included that prisoners be treated as citizens of the country which included dignity, detainment in humane conditions and access to adequate accommodation (Van Zyl Smit, 2004:227).

#### **1.4.4 The White Paper on Corrections**

In 1998, the South African government drafted the white paper on corrections that was adopted in 2005. This document was to change the entire ethos of the prison system by shifting the focus from punitive outcomes to those of rehabilitation and restoration (Dissel, 2008:162). It was a shift that began to recognise the inmates as individuals with unique historical and circumstantial factors that lead to their current situation, rather than simply criminals. Prisons were also referred to as correctional centres, emphasising again the aims of these facilities to address the deviant tendencies of these individuals with the aim of reintegrating them back into society where they could become contributing members.

However, despite the best intentions of legislation the implementation of the new perspective on corrections has been lacking. The estimated percentages related to incarceration and reoffending rates illustrate the reality of this situation and the need to effectively deal with it. If one is to consider that 95% of individuals who go through the correctional centres will be released and that South Africa is said to have a recidivism rate of between 85% and 94% it becomes clear that those who go through the system are not being dealt with effectively enough (Muntingh, 2002:21; Williams & Fouche, 2008:151). With 95% of offenders coming back to society after having served their sentence, the need for them to come out equipped with the correct skills and frame of mind to refrain from resorting back to criminality is of paramount importance (Mpuang 2005, in NICRO, 2009:29).



### **1.4.5 Intervention Measures**

As it has been illustrated, the theoretical discrepancy and lack of research on adult South African samples in the correctional setting appears to be contributing to the issue at hand, not only for sentencing but also for the treatment received within the correctional centres. Due to the popularity of the low self-esteem relationship to deviant behaviour, many treatment programmes assume that the clients have a low self-esteem and are thus developed with the aim of improving this (Gendreau et al., 1996:576-577; Van der Westhuizen, 2003:177). Therefore, in confirming or denying the current popular belief, steps can be implemented to assess clients of the treatment programmes and thereafter embark on treatment that is best suited for the individual in order to achieve the most effective outcome and make them contributing citizens of their community upon release.

Despite these clear and continuous findings, imprisonment still seems to be the most popular sentencing option (Giffard & Muntingh, 2006:27). Even in the presence of the white paper and a number of other legislations, the reality of the situation within correctional facilities remains that punitive approaches are favoured, basic human rights are not being upheld and prisons are overcrowded and under resourced (Dissel, 2008:162; Van Zyl Smit, 2004:229). Therefore, it becomes imperative to understand the nature and motivations of repeat offending and its related factors in order to deal with it effectively and efficiently for the sake of the criminal justice system and society as a whole.

### **1.5 Research Aims**

In considering the abovementioned problems it should become clear that there is a need for self-esteem research pertaining to criminal behaviour, especially in the South African context. In order to adequately address these problems and draw informed conclusions the following, measurable aims have been constructed:

- i. Assess the level of self-esteem of a group of repeat offenders.
- ii. Compare levels of self-esteem between different offender categories.
- iii. Perform multivariate analysis of self-esteem in relation to demographic, psychosocial and correctional variables.

## **1.6 Chapter Outline**

### **Chapter 2 - Theoretical Perspective**

This chapter examines Carl Rogers' perspective of the self which will be the main theoretical perspective that will be used in the course of the study to explore the topic. A comparative analysis of similar theories will also be conducted in order to provide a more holistic perspective of the available theoretical underpinnings.

### **Chapter 3 - Empirical Perspective**

In this chapter, the available research on the topic of self-esteem and criminal behaviour will be explored. This will provide the reader with a greater understanding of how the empirical perspectives have been applied to research studies in the past.

### **Chapter 4 - Research Hypotheses**

This chapter will present the specific, measurable hypotheses formulated to successfully achieve the research aims and objectives of the study.

### **Chapter 5 - Research Design**

An in depth description of the research methodology and various research techniques that are to be used in the study will be presented in this chapter, alongside a full explanation of the data collection instruments and the statistical techniques to be utilised.

### **Chapter 6 - Interpretation of Results**

This chapter will provide an interpretation of the results collected in light of the aims and overall objectives of the research.

### **Chapter 7 - Recommendations and Conclusion**

This final chapter will present further recommendations for future studies as well as concluding remarks on the relationship of self-esteem and its related factors with criminal behaviour.

## **Chapter 2**

### **The Self-Concept Theory of Carl Rogers: An Integrated Perspective**

As it was deduced in the previous chapter, the concept of the self and how individuals have perceived it has changed throughout human existence. Early philosophers toiled with the idea in its many forms but it was not until the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century that psychologists and sociologists such as William James and Charles Horton Cooley began to examine the self in a more scientific manner (Pajares & Schunk, 2002:5). James was also one of the first writers to refer to the concept of self-esteem. These theorists elaborated on the notion of self-evaluations and although the manifestations and influence thereof differed, both concluded that humans are significantly influenced by others in their community or society. This interest in the self made it a concept which would express itself as part of numerous psychosocial perspectives. The self, or a concept similar in definition, can be found in the writings of psychoanalytic theorists, behaviourists, humanists and numerous other personality theorists, all purporting differing views on the development, structure, behavioural influence and significance of the self as part of their theories (Andrews & Bonta, 2010; Cervone & Pervin, 2008; Friedman & Schustack, 2012; Pajares & Schunk, 2002). The current study will utilise the self-concept theory of Carl Rogers which unlike the other theories mentioned previously where the notion of the self constitutes a smaller portion of the theoretical perspective, Rogers utilises the self as his core “explanatory construct” and provides a detailed account of its structure, development and behavioural influence (Rogers, 1951:532). It is due to this understanding of the self that Rogers’ theory is generally considered to be the most comprehensive, developed and psychological of all the actualising perspectives of personality development (Maddi, 1980:90).

This chapter aims to present an exposition of Rogers’ self-concept theory in order to provide a more complex understanding of the self. Such an understanding is necessary to fulfil the aims of the study, as it will provide insight into the psychological and societal factors that influence the development of the self and motivate criminal behaviour. The indeterministic nature of Rogers’ approach can be said to derive mainly from his years of experience, practicing his client-centred approach in the counselling and therapeutic setting (Rogers, 1951:482). An indeterministic approach to human behaviour is important in attempts to find

solutions to problematic behaviour such as reoffending as mentioned under the aims of this study (see 1.5). Although Rogers does not make specific mention of the term “self-esteem”, he does provide an explanation of the evaluative process, which correlates significantly with the concept of “self-esteem” defined in the previous chapter. This insight into the evaluative process is evident in its influence on the development of Stanley Coopersmith’s first Self-Esteem Inventory in 1967. Coopersmith based most of the items in his inventory on the scale developed by Rogers and Dymond in 1954 (Coopersmith, 2002:6). Due to the current studies’ specific focus on the assessment and analysis of self-esteem and its related factors, the inclusion of Rogers’ theory complements the use of Coopersmith’s Self-Esteem Inventory. As Rogers utilises the self as a core concept for explaining general human behaviour it becomes imperative, for the purpose of this study, to present his theory in an integrated manner by including a number of related theoretical perspectives that share a more directed approach toward deviant or offending behaviour. This will allow the author to provide a more in-depth and wholesome perspective of the core features of the self as purported by Rogers, but in relation to recurring problematic behaviour.

Rogers’ theoretical perspective is based on a number of propositions, some of which may be regarded as assumptions and others as testable hypotheses - all based on his experience in the clinical setting (Rogers, 1951:482). It is due to these propositions that Rogers has been lauded as one of the few humanistic psychologists to render testable hypotheses to allow for empirical scrutiny of his perspective (Farber, 2007:289; Hutchison & Charlesworth, 2011:65). This chapter will be structured along a developmental continuum beginning with Rogers’ core ideologies followed by an exposition of his theoretical perspective. But firstly, an explanation of the phenomenological and humanist nature of Rogers’ theoretical approach will be provided. This will lead to an exposition of the actualising tendency of the self as purported by Rogers which will also include an integration of similar concepts pertaining to the human inclination to strive for fulfilment of inherent potentialities. With an understanding of the final state of actualisation in mind, the structural elements of the self will be presented followed by an in-depth discussion of the development process of the self in accordance with Rogers’ theory. Various aspects of the theory will be expanded upon with related theories in order to provide a more elaborate criminological explanation of offending behaviour.

## **2.1 Phenomenology and the Humanist Perspective**

As a humanist Rogers was largely interested in the inner psychological processes and personal experiences of the individual (Pajares & Schunk, 2002:10). He viewed individuals as the central role players in their lives, striving to fulfil inherent potentialities in a positive and meaningful manner. Rogers does however not deny the presence of negative attributes but proclaims that although present the individual is capable of overcoming such tendencies with others more inherently positive in nature (Larsen & Buss, 2005:377; Meyer, Moore, & Viljoen, 1997:463). As individuals are viewed as the architects of their lives and are therefore free to make their own choices, one needs to question the role of society. According to Rogers, general society simply plays a facilitating role in the individuals' quest for actualisation. Therefore, unlike Freudian theory where society is viewed as innately hostile towards the individual, Rogers acknowledges that although society may have a negative impact on the development of the self, this does not necessarily have to be detrimental but may indeed assist in the actualisation process (Maddi, 1980:99-100). Society's impact on the actualisation process is considered detrimental when it is perceived by individuals to require an alienation of their own ideologies for those considered more desirable by society. The concepts and processes related to this estrangement from the actualising tendency will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Rogers furthermore extended his perspective to include his well-known phenomenological approach to personality psychology, a novel perspective when at the time psychodynamic theorists, trait theorists and behaviourists largely negated the impact of the individual's daily experiences and interactions with the environment, on behaviour. In contrast the Rogerian approach explores the manner in which people consciously experience and interpret the world around them and their position in it. Individual's environments are not determined by factors independent to them but rather by the way in which they subjectively perceive and symbolise it (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:168). Therefore, when exploring and attempting to understand human behaviour, utilising the phenomenological approach, it remains essential not only to consider the physical environment and social interactions within it, but also to discover how these concepts and experiences are perceived by the individuals in order to create their own unique realities (Rogers, 1951:492).

## 2.2 The Actualising Tendency of Carl Rogers

Rogers theorised that all behaviour is compelled by an inherent need to maintain and positively enhance ones' life in a direction defined by self-regulation, maturation and autonomy (Rogers, 1951:488). This drive can be interpreted as a need to realise ones full potential and that, unlike the conflict model, human behaviour is not driven by a need to decrease anxiety or psychological tension but rather to adequately achieve a state of fulfilled potential despite various inevitable obstacles and struggles. He views this as a natural drive which is innate, not only in humans but in all living entities in nature as well, using the resilience of a plant to relentlessly grow against a rock face despite being constantly hampered by its' environment as an illustration. This inherent biological need or inclination is what Rogers termed the 'actualising tendency' (Maddi, 1980:96; Meyer et al., 1997:468; Rogers, 1951:490). Rogers does not identify specific tendencies present in all human beings and therefore the exact content of these potentialities are not discussed. This could stem from his years as a psychotherapist where his humanistic viewpoint of unlimited possibilities could have influenced him to develop a theory in the same vain (Maddi, 1980:94). Alfred Adler (1917) on the other hand provides an exposition of the content of what he terms "the great upward drive", a concept similar to the actualisation tendency which alternatively focuses on an inherent need for superiority. Adler purports that individuals strive for perfection in their lives and are therefore motivated towards ideal growth by the need to compensate for feelings of inferiority (cited in Maddi, 1980:116). The concepts of compensation and feelings of superiority have been linked to violent and often criminal behaviour in the writings of Kernis, Grannemann and Barclay (1989) as well as Baumeister, Smart and Boden (1996). The authors purported that an unstable high self-esteem, which manifests as a grandiose expression of the self, can lead to expressions of aggression if perceived to be threatened, in order to validate or magnify this superior self-perception. Support for this perspective is discussed in the subsequent empirical chapter (see 3.2.5).

The concept of actualisation was also used by Abraham Maslow in his "self-actualisation" theory whereby human nature is perceived to be inherently good or at the very least neutral. However, Maslow places equal importance on a survival tendency that needs to be satisfied before self-actualisation can be achieved. It is maintained that basic physiological necessities need to be satisfied and take precedence over psychological needs before the individual can

ascend the “hierarchy of needs” and eventually become self-actualised (Maddi, 1980:105). Though similar, it is worthwhile to note that unlike Maslow, who views self-actualisation as the pinnacle of his hierarchy and thereby ultimate goal of human development, Rogers views self-actualisation as only a part of the greater concept of the actualising tendency but which without, complete actualisation cannot occur (Meyer et al., 1997:468). This differentiation becomes clear if one is to consider the explanation provided by Maddi (1980:97) who speaks of Rogers’ actualising tendency in humans as being comprised of physiological as well as psychological processes. It is the physiological aspect, as shared by all living organisms, which drives individuals to maintain and enhance their potential on a biological level. However, unlike other living organisms in nature, humans are believed to have an additional tendency toward self-actualisation, which refers to more complex psychological level functioning, is influenced by both personal and perceived social expectations and develops in conjunction with the physiological aspects. It is here that Rogers (1951:488) purports self-actualisation as being largely influenced by the socialisation process that emphasises its uniquely human characteristic. The associative nature of socialisation is what, in this case, links it to an increase in the propensity for criminal behaviour. This may be due to its role in the acquisition of societal norms, values, coping mechanisms and accompanying expectations through interaction with various social role players. Therefore, if such role players promote the use of criminal or deviant norms and values and are influential enough in the individual’s life, it increases the possibility of the individual subscribing to such worldviews and thereby displaying an increased propensity for criminal behaviour.

It stands to reason that the need to satisfy these physiological and psychological drives will, in some capacity, illicit a behavioural response. For example, the physical contractions of the stomach will create a consciously perceived experience of hunger, motivating the organism to actively seek out food. Likewise, in a more complex expression, the psychological need for social acceptance may influence individuals to act out aggressively and resort to physical violence when insulted or challenged, if this is the perception of its representation in the social environment. Although both these instances are illustrations of tension reduction and need satisfaction, the role of perception must be emphasised at this point as well as its consciously experienced nature. Rogers (1951:492) purports that on a psychological level it is the perception of the satisfaction of a need rather than the actual satisfaction that is essential in influencing behaviour. Additionally, that all the “effective elements” that motivate behaviour exist in the present and that past experiences cannot *cause* behaviour *per se* but

rather play a role in shaping the significance of present actions to the individual. Here Rogers also provides an explanation for the presence of emotions that may accompany certain behaviour. Emotions assist in motivating behaviour in either an encouraging or a consequential manner and vary according to the degree in which the behaviour will or has influenced the organism's capacity to fully achieve actualisation (Rogers, 1951:493). Therefore, if an individual has a desire to be a successful, honest businessperson but engages in fraudulent business practices because of the influence of significant others who consider illegal activities the 'only' option to being financially successful, the individual will be in the process of self-actualising to the detriment of the potential of complete actualisation. Therefore, in order for complete actualisation to be realised the individual is required to achieve his actual potentialities and not solely conform to the standards of society.

Erik Erikson refers to this over reliance on external approval as identity diffusion. Individuals who are identity diffused are said to lack direction and stability in their lives and struggle to accept themselves independently of the evaluations of others. Further research on individuals with diffused identities has also shown a positive correlation with problematic behaviour in order for the individual to ease the anxiety that stems from this lack of stable identity (Peacock, 2006:40). This dynamic between one's perception of self and of how others perceive you refers to the concept of congruence, which will be discussed in the sections to follow.

Actualisation requires individuals to incorporate experiences into a perceived reality without the need for alteration or adjustment. However, this ability is not inherent and necessitates according to Rogers, a number of conditions and factors prevalent within the individual's developmental life span. Thus with the knowledge of the proposed goal of Rogers' theory, it now becomes crucial to consider the personality structure of the individual as well as the developmental process in which this structure is formed.

## **2.3 Structural Elements of Personality**

Before looking into how the self develops in its quest for actualisation it is important to first consider the structural features of the personality as purported by Rogers. There are essentially four structural elements present in Rogers' perspective of the self, namely the



*outside world* or *physical environment*, the *organism*, the *self-concept* and the *phenomenal field*. The *physical environment* refers to the individual's immediate environment and consists of people, objects and events. This structure exists independently of the individual but is experienced in a manner subjectively interpreted by the individual (Meyer et al., 1997:467).

The *organism* refers to the individual as a whole on a physical and psychological level. It is the central entity that occupies and interacts with the physical environment, motivated by subjective perceptions and meanings. The *phenomenal field* consists of two parts relating to the perceptions and meanings attached to factors external to the individual and those directly related to the individual (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:170). The factors within the phenomenal field related to the individual are collectively known as the *self* or *self-concept* and consist of patterns of perceptions that the individual would refer to as "me" or "I". These perceptions are comprised of objects and experiences external to the individual, but within the phenomenal field, that the individual attaches meaning. The perceptions then create an image of the individual that is constantly evaluated in terms of criteria developed, from various significant sources, over the lifespan to strive for that, which is perceived to be ideal and good by the individual (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:170). The self-concept is not an independent or unconscious entity that controls individual's behaviour but rather a conscious and dynamic perception of individuals within their specific contexts. Therefore, changes in one aspect of the self will have an effect on the entire self (see also 1.2.2).

The self-concept can be further divided into two subcategories, namely the real and ideal self. The real or actual self is the current image individuals have of themselves. It is the present state of the self and a product of individual's self-perceptions and evaluations within their current contexts. The other subcategory is the aspirational perception of the future self or alternatively known as the ideal self. This ideal self is a representation of what individuals are striving to become as it encapsulates all the aspects necessary to be perceived as 'good' and 'desirable' by others and thereby the self. Needless to say, it is the nature of the discrepancy between these two concepts that forms the basis of much of Rogers' explanation of pathologies and undesirable behaviour (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:171; Meyer et al., 1997:467).

Another influential psychological theorist who identified the presence of a real and ideal self is Karen Horney. Horney's understanding of these factors is similar in definition to Rogers,

with the real self representing perceptions of individuals current states which include the potential for “self-realisation” and the ideal self characterised by perceptions of perfection which individuals strive for (Friedman & Schustack, 2012:123). However, the definitions do differ in certain regards. The ideal self as purported by Horney is developed through the identification of perceived inadequacies or “shoulds”. It therefore acts as a constant reminder to the individuals of what they should have done, but did not. Horney furthermore includes another category known as the despised self that, through the negative evaluations of others and parental negligence, creates a perception of personal inadequacy and helplessness. This estrangement from the real self is believed to result in the manifestation of neurotic tendencies (Friedman & Schustack, 2012:123). These neurotic tendencies are characterised by an over identification with either the ideal or despised self, or a need to overcome the despised self without the personal belief of ever achieving the ideal self. These tendencies manifest in behaviour similar to individuals with overly high or low levels of self-esteem and can thereby be linked to offending behaviour (see 3.2.5).

The criminological implications of this discrepancy between ‘real’ and ‘ideal’ factors can be deduced from consideration of the structural or process approach of integrated criminological theory. This approach is defined by the integration of theories purporting a link between the development of criminality due to factors related to strain, social structures and social learning (Bernard & Snipes, 1996:332). Offenders are seen as being as ‘normal’ as non-offenders in terms of their behavioural motives and that behaviour is learned by both parties in the same way, thus denying individual differences as causal attributes of deviant behaviour. Criminality is therefore seen as a response to the accepted and available means of goal attainment prescribed by the immediate environment that reflects the structural features of social organisation (Bernard & Snipes, 1996:333). Among other structural theories, reference is made to Robert Merton’s version of the anomie theory to illustrate society’s role in influencing criminal behaviour.

Merton states that when society places emphasis on certain goals, it often also prescribes the acceptable means for achieving them. This creates a potentially difficult situation as the goals and acceptable means are often generalised throughout society regardless of individual circumstance. These goals are then considered the ideal outcome for peoples’ lives but the acceptable means are not always provided resulting in individuals having to find their own means to achieve them. Although this behaviour is not necessarily criminal, Merton states

that due to its difference to what is considered the norm, such behaviour is often considered deviant (Bartol & Bartol, 2008:3; Williams & McShane, 2010:79). Much like Rogers' concept of the real and ideal self, Merton illustrates the role of society in prescribing to its inhabitants that which is considered good or ideal as well as the behavioural implications associated with the inability to achieve this ideal state.

Now that the general personality structure as purported by Rogers has been outlined and placed into the context of the current study, it becomes important to consider how this structure develops from birth and continuously develops throughout the lifetime of the individual.

## **2.4 Development of the Self**

The process of personality development as maintained by Rogers is not a stage theory such as those purported by Freud, Erikson or Piaget where certain milestones or challenges are experienced at various intervals throughout the lifetime, but rather a process of the development of general principles related to the self-concept (Maddi, 1980:347). The phenomenological nature of the theory in turn places emphasis on the interaction between the individuals' own experiences and the way they view themselves, which then motivates or directs behaviour. This approach draws similarities to Viktor Frankl's existential approach in the sense that he too does not subscribe to the stage theory approach. More importantly though, Frankl views the person as a spiritual being with free will and therefore considers personality development to be a series of choices made by responsible beings interacting with their environment (Meyer et al., 1997:540). Although Rogers' theory is not a formal stage theory there are certain secondary needs that tend to be more influential at certain stages of the lifetime. Thus, it would make chronological sense to begin with the influences first encountered by humans in their lives, the primary caregivers or parents.

### **2.4.1 Role of Significant Others**

Throughout the lifetime, individuals attach meanings to certain experiences and interactions and consciously symbolise them as specific characteristics of their own self-concept. However, not all experiences are integrated into the organism's self-concept as they occur.

Some experiences are ignored due to their irrelevance to the self-concept and others denied or distorted due to their conflicting nature with the self (Rogers, 1951:504). The most significant criteria for experiences to become internalised is derived from the source of the experience as well as its compatibility with the individuals' current self-concept. Experiences involving physiological processes as well as those who are closely connected to the individual, known as significant others, tend to be more influential in the process of self-concept development (Rogers, 1951:499). The role of these significant others in influencing criminal behaviour has also been widely recognised and will be integrated in the discussion to follow.

#### **2.4.1.1 The Parent-Child Relationships**

During infancy and early childhood the role of the significant other tends to be dominated by the parents or primary caregivers and it is at this primary level that the individual learns about societal norms and values through the process of socialisation. It is here where the infant begins to learn what is considered attractive and socially appealing in terms of societal goals and aspirations (Haralambos & Holborn, 2004:ix). However, the adoption of these norms and values as guides for appropriate behaviour may have an inverse effect and lead to the expression of behaviour deemed deviant or criminal by the law. This seemingly contradictory perspective is found in the writings of Thorsten Sellin in reference to the culture conflict perspective originally drawn from the Chicago School. Sellin purported that the cultural backgrounds of the primary caregivers influence the norms and values taught during the socialisation process and may thereby vary between different cultures (Williams & McShane, 2010:53). The "conduct norms" of the dominant culture are what determine appropriate behaviour within the given society and influence law. Therefore, the differences in norms and values between individuals of different cultures living in the same space can lead to conflict and the interpretation of culturally 'normal' behaviour as criminal (Williams & McShane, 2010:53).

Returning to Rogers' perspective, it is said that at this early stage of life the organisms or individuals have not yet developed a sense of self and thus do not differentiate between themselves and their phenomenal field. It is only once infants begin to identify and experience certain needs and the satisfaction of those needs such as hunger or pain and the reception of food or comfort that they begin to differentiate between themselves and their environment (Meyer et al., 1997:475). The reception of love from the primary caregivers is

essential in later development for children to view themselves as lovable and worthy of affection. As these experiences increase, children become aware of the reactions of others to their behaviour, which may or may not correlate with their feelings. If children's evaluations about their actions differ from the evaluations of the significant others, the children must change the way they perceive the behaviour in order to maintain the positive relationship with the significant others whilst also striving to preserve a state of congruence (Rogers, 1951:500). Walter Reckless also highlights this early stage of life as the time when individuals develop their self-concept and with it their ability to overcome negative external influences (Williams & McShane, 2010:152). This ability, along with Rogers' state of congruence has further behavioural consequences that will be discussed later.

In addition to other personality theorists, Freud and Erikson also place emphasis on the importance of the primary care givers in the early developmental phases. Freud found the role of parents to be important on an overall level in the development of personality. However, Freud highlights this role in the development of the *superego*, the part of our personality linked to societal morals, values and ideals, as it is purported to be directly influenced by individual's level of identification with their primary caregivers (Larsen & Buss, 2005:297). Erikson on the other hand pays specific attention to the role of the mother. It is said that mothers play an important part in the regulation of children's needs as well as the development of autonomy and responsible behaviour. To Erikson, the concepts of "hope" and "time perspective" play an important role in the behaviour of an individual later in life and purports that if these factors are not well developed the individual could develop a tendency toward erratic behaviour, increasing their chance of criminality (Peacock, 2006:33). In a related perspective, Walter Miller mentioned the effect of absent fathers in single mother households in lower class communities on children's behaviour. The tendency of mothers from this economic stratum to engage in multiple short term relationships with men deprives (specifically male) children the opportunity to witness and learn appropriate forms of masculine behaviour. This missing source of appropriate masculine behaviour is then seen to be replaced by involvement in street gangs that often thrive on extreme aggressive masculinity that increases the individual's propensity for deviance (Brown, Esbensen, & Geis, 1998:321; Williams & McShane, 2010:100).

#### **2.4.1.2 Societal and Peer Group Influence**

As the individual grows older and begins to interact socially in a more independent manner and develop new relationships the frame of reference shifts from the parents to friends, siblings, co-workers and partners, all of which come with varying degrees of difference in terms of what personal characteristics are deemed attractive or appealing (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:187).

In Rogers' theory interaction with the environment continually facilitates the development of perceptions of the self, the environment and the relationship between the self and the environment. These experiences and need satisfactions are closely correlated to the development of an internal valuing system that can be said to be highly important when considering behavioural understanding throughout the lifetime (Rogers, 1951:498). The evaluations of certain situations and individuals in the phenomenal field as positive or negative for the maintenance and enhancement of the self also shapes one's own sense of self. Likewise, the evaluation of the self by others, which is also evident from an early stage of development, plays an important part of the individuals' perceptual field (Rogers, 1951:499).

The significance of the peer group as a reference point for personal development has been highlighted in the idea of "chumship" purported by Harry Stack Sullivan. Sullivan is of the opinion that preadolescent individuals develop their sense of self or identity through a process of continuous comparison with their peers. Inspired by George Herbert Mead's concept of the "social self", Sullivan furthermore claimed that individuals develop a number of different personalities to suit different social situations and that individuals therefore behave according to how they believe society expects them to (Friedman & Schustack, 2012:321-322). This indicates that the evaluative process is present from an early age and becomes more complex throughout the lifetime as the focus shifts solely from the individual to include others in society.

The increasing complexity of the evaluative process as individual's age can be likened to the process aspects of the cognitive development theories, more particularly those of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. Piaget's focus was on the process of how children acquire knowledge and how that knowledge develops and becomes more complex over the lifespan.

Knowledge of the world is said to be broken up into schema which are defined as the building blocks of intelligence and consist of basic patterns of behaviour and thought that allow individuals to adapt to their environment. As individuals gain more experience these schemas can either be assimilated if the experience bears similarity to a past experience or accommodated if the experience is new (Bernstein, Penner, Clarke-Stewart, & Roy, 2006:460; Friedman & Schustack, 2012:219). Hence on a more advanced level of development, individuals are able to differentiate between different contexts and behave in manners appropriate for each. Kohlberg focused more on the development of moral reasoning characterised by the increasing capacity to incorporate and comprehend abstract ideas of goodness and justice (Bernstein et al., 2006:491). Both theorists purport that cognitive development occurs in stages with the early stages being characterised by egocentric and sensory motivations, similar to the early years of personality development purported by Rogers. Kohlbergs' stages are however not as strictly linked to age as Piaget's stages and are not always completed. As the individual in Piaget's perspective ages and schema develop and become more complex, the individual begins to develop abstract thought, logical understanding and the capacity to reflect and evaluate ideas. Kohlberg specifically highlights the development of an awareness of others, their experiences in relation to the self as well as their evaluations of the self. Offending behaviour can thus be linked to stagnation in the development of moral reasoning, where behavioural motivators are not advanced enough to include utilitarian concepts of universality and collective good but are rather defined by a comparatively primitive dependence on social approval and hedonistic motivators (Andrews & Bonta, 2010:235; Bernstein et al., 2006:460).

Although the source or conditions of the approval may change, Rogers purports that in order to become actualised humans need approval, both from their significant others as well as themselves. This need for approval often forms part of explanations of problematic behaviour in a number of criminological theories due to the negative impact on behaviour when the need for approval from others is allowed to super cede the need for personal approval. This perspective is supported by Erikson's concept of identity diffusion mentioned earlier in the chapter.

### **2.4.2 Need for Positive Regard**

Rogers refers to the evaluations of the self, by the self and others, “regard” and states that positive regard and positive self-regard are vital elements of the self-actualisation process and as a result the actualisation process as a whole. As previously mentioned, although the successful attainment of self-actualisation cannot solely result in individuals being fully actualised it is capable of obstructing the actualisation process if not achieved. On a semantic level, it should be noted that regard is a synonym for esteem and if one is to consider the definitions of self-esteem and self-regard it would become apparent that both concepts refer to the same self-evaluative process (Coopersmith, 1981:5; Maddi, 1980:98). Therefore, although Rogers does not mention the term self-esteem, he is in fact referring to the same concept when speaking about positive self-regard.

The role of self evaluations in the manifestation of deviant behaviour can be illustrated by considering the containment theory of Walter Reckless. This theory also utilises concepts similar to those of Rogers relating to the self and purports that an individual’s behaviour is moderated by inner and outer controls. Reckless provides an extensive list of inner controls but those that correlate with Rogers include factors relating to the self as well as self-concept and goal orientation. Furthermore, similar outer controls are also presented such as family, social norms and values and opportunities for acceptance (Williams & McShane, 2010:152). To Reckless, deviant behaviour is more influenced by the inner controls than those external to individuals as it is the strength of these inner controls that maintain the individuals’ self-concept. Therefore it is said that individuals who have negative perceptions of themselves are less likely to adhere to external controls whereas a positive perception of the self would result in a lesser need for external controls as the individuals would already possess a greater resistance to deviant influences (Williams & McShane, 2010:152). This seems similar to Rogers’ perspective in the sense that a strong sense of positive self-regard and ability to incorporate all experiences into the self will result in a more stable self-concept and thus individuals more probable to fulfil their potentialities, who will become actualised and avoid involvement in deviant behaviour.

Positive regard can also be considered a form of psychological reinforcement. The concept of reinforcement refers to an event that strengthens a behavioural response that increases the probability of the behaviour being presented again. Early behaviourists such as Ivan Pavlov



and B.F. Skinner applied this principle to the conditioning of animals. Many of the inferences made through animal studies were similarly applied to humans as Skinner defined personality as simply a collection of behaviours facilitated by the environment, therefore all organisms could have a “personality” (Friedman & Schustack, 2012:193). This position along with Skinners radically deterministic view is in stark contrast to Rogers’ person-centred approach. Therefore, it becomes necessary when considering perspectives on reinforcement to include Albert Bandura’s perspective on this idea, as there are a number of similar assumptions present.

Classified as a social learning theory, Bandura explains three pathways through which appropriate behaviour is learned. Direct, vicarious and self reinforcement are the three methods purported by Bandura through which individuals learn how to behave. This perspective views individuals as active participants in the learning process with the ability to choose and differentiate between what is internalised and what is not (Friedman & Schustack, 2012:193; Meyer et al., 1997:337). This approach to the role of the individual is in accordance with Rogers as it acknowledges the active, rather than simply passive role of individuals in their development. The direct and vicarious learning processes relate to the concept of positive regard as they refer to the process of gaining knowledge about socially acceptable behaviour through receiving, or witnessing someone else receive some form of reinforcement from an external source respectively. Self-reinforcement on the other hand can be linked to self-regard or self-esteem as it relates to the rewarding or punishment of the self, by the self after a personal evaluation of certain behaviour (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:467; Meyer et al., 1997:337).

Another perspective that utilises the social learning process in its explanation of problematic behaviour is Cloward and Ohlins differential opportunity theory. This theory contains elements of both Merton’s anomie theory (see 2.3) and Sutherland’s differential association perspective (see 2.4.2.3) around crime and deviance. However, these theorists added that in addition to the legitimate means of achieving socially accepted goals, illegitimate means are often also present. Similar to the legitimate means, this perspective purports that the illegitimate means are equally as limited and require involvement in deviant social groups to gain access (Williams & McShane, 2010:95). The social learning aspect of this theory thereby comes into play by considering the “apprenticeship” phase of many young individuals who watch and learn from the older individuals in the criminal subgroups and

may even get involved to a small degree. This perspective does however require an integrated society where both criminal and noncriminal entities share social spaces and goals but where the means to achieving those goals differ. These societies are characterised by low levels of intergroup violence and the offending behaviour is based around economic gains (Williams & McShane, 2010:96).

Therefore, as an example of the abovementioned perspectives, a child who grows up in a rural area, whose parents are attempting to earn an honest living may at times go without food and experience average to poor living conditions, observes a group of individuals who live in the same neighbourhood and who are known offenders. These individuals will be perceived to be in a comparatively better financial and social standing and may even command a substantial amount of respect in their neighbourhood. The comparison between the consistently poor conditions provided by the child's honest parents and the comparatively lavish life lived by the offenders may motivate the child to pursue a life of criminality due to its perceived positive outcome both socially and personally. Therefore, all three forms of reinforcement presented by Bandura allow the individual to gain an understanding about socially appealing behaviour that will elicit a positive response from others. This understanding, according to Rogers, will have a significant influence as a behavioural motivator.

Due to the importance of this need for positive regard it stands to reason that Rogers considers this a strong behavioural motivator as it has the capacity to influence individuals to behave in a manner they deem necessary to attain that positive regard (Rogers, 1951:499). This need for positive regard also has the ability to create a potentially damaging scenario whereby the values of others are internalised in replacement of one's own resulting in a maladjusted sense of self. A similar perspective can be seen in Jung's explanation of the "public self" which he refers to as the "persona". Also known as the *masks of Jung*, the persona is the part of the personality that develops from what individuals perceive their expected role in society to be and is therefore not a reflection of the real self but rather an interpretation of societal expectations in various situations. According to Jung, neurosis and pathology is therefore as a result of individuals identifying too strongly with their persona, thereby becoming estranged from their true selves (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:139; Meyer et al., 1997:108).

Furthermore it is theorised that positive self-regard is often dependent on the positive regard of others, hence individuals are more likely to view themselves in a positive light if they are viewed that way by their significant others (Meyer et al., 1997:469). If however the significant group is characterised by deviance and anti-societal ideologies, the individual becomes at risk of developing what Erikson termed a “negative identity” which refers to the adoption of norms and values that are in direct opposition to those of conventional society (Peacock, 2006:42). This perspective also bears similarities to the subculture perspectives of criminality discussed later in the chapter (see 2.4.3.2). Rogers terms the criteria used by individuals to make value judgements about others, *conditions of worth* and explains how it can play an integral role in the development of the self-concept.

#### **2.4.2.1 Unconditional Positive Regard**

There are two specific types of positive regard that may play an important role in the development of the self-concept, namely unconditional positive regard and conditional positive regard (Meyer et al., 1997:476). Unconditional positive regard refers to the acceptance of the individual by the significant others without the inclusion of prerequisites. Individuals are free to behave in a manner that will allow for the expression of their full potential. The environment in which unconditional positive regard is present is not necessarily defined by complete, boundary-less freedom but rather by healthy appreciation for all experiences (Meyer et al., 1997:476). This openness to experience allows the individual to acknowledge a wider variety of circumstances in their phenomenal field without the potentially limiting judgements. However, this does not mean that the individual should be allowed to behave in a destructive manner and any behaviour that deviates dangerously from the acceptable norms should be addressed. In an ideal situation, the individual must be made aware, especially in the earlier years of development, that it is the behaviour that is being disapproved of and not the person. This, according to Rogers will allow for the individual to continue on the path to actualisation with their feelings of worth intact. However, it must be noted that the effect on the self-concept will be linked to the individuals’ perception of the response and not necessarily, the response itself as reality, in accordance to this theory, is a subjective experience (Maddi, 1980:100; Meyer et al., 1997:476). In the case of repeat offenders who have spent a large portion of their lives in correctional centres, the opportunity to experience a wide variety of circumstances becomes a difficult, if not impossible task due to the restrictive nature of the prison system. The conditions of the

prisons and the punitive orientation of the prison officials together with the lack of regard for human dignity can be seen to exacerbate the negative impacts of a deprivation of unconditional positive regard (see 1.4.3).

#### **2.4.2.2 Conditional Positive Regard**

On the other hand conditional positive regard seems to reflect the reality of most individuals' environments more accurately as it states that people do not tend to accept others unless they have adhered to or fulfilled certain criteria or conditions of worth, a common criteria for acceptance into both street and prison gang structures (Meyer et al., 1997:477). The focus on conditional positive regard which, may increase ones level of self-esteem, can prevent the individual from fulfilling their actualising potential. This is due to the incorporation of the conditions of worth of others at the expense of one's own true needs and potentialities, leaving the individual in a state of incongruity which then necessitates the use of psychological defences (see 2.4.4). These defences can then manifest behaviourally in numerous ways, such as substance abuse, risk taking behaviour or aggression. All of which are characteristic of what Rogers would consider to be a maladjusted individual (Maddi, 1980:99; Meyer et al., 1997:482).

Erikson similarly refers to the use of information received from others, by individuals to recognise how they are perceived and thus, will behave in a manner consistent with the perceptions of others. It is also required, for the development of a strong ego identity that the individual experience positive and consistent feedback for behaviour that is positively valued. Therefore, it is assumed that this process of reflection and observation has sustained behavioural implications, as individuals who partake in criminal behaviour may feel obliged to continue due to negative societal expectations (Muuss, Velder, & Porton, 1996:43; Peacock, 2006:27).

Similar tenets can be found in the perspectives of the labeling theory. Though this theory may not explain the initial criminal event it may provide an accurate explanation behind the possible motivations for repeat offending. Labeling theory is said to have its foundation in the ideas of the symbolic interactionist perspectives of sociologists Charles Horton Cooley and George Herbert Mead that emphasised the role of society as a reference point for how individuals view themselves (Brown et al., 1998:345; Haralambos & Holborn, 2004:962). In

the criminological literature, the crux of labeling theory can be traced back to the work of Frank Tannenbaum where the “dramatization of evil” is used to refer to the process through which society places certain labels on individuals found to be involved in deviant behaviour. Society is thus seen to treat these individuals not according to their natural or inherent qualities but in accordance with the label that they have been assigned (Williams & McShane, 2010:111). In the case of deviant or problematic acts, a label could be assigned to an individual after only behaving in such a manner on a single occasion. This label then has the ability to evoke certain stereotypical reactions from members of the society. After repeated exposure to evaluations based on the label the individual may internalise the label and the accompanying characteristics as a part of their own self-concept thereby altering their behaviour (Williams & McShane, 2010:113).

In reference to repeated offending behaviour, Edwin Lemert’s perspective of secondary deviation can be considered. Lemert purports that labeling does not happen after just one single instance of deviance but is rather the result of a continuous interplay between deviant behaviour and societal response. Secondary deviance is described in a process of eight actions and reactions (Brown et al., 1998:348). First, there is the primary deviant act followed by a negative social reaction. Thereafter the deviant behaviour continues resulting in stronger reactions from society. This may lead to feelings of resentment towards those responsible for the continued punishment but not a cessation in deviant behaviour. This continuous interplay between deviant behaviour and negative social reaction eventually results in the internalising of deviant stigmas and acceptance of the associated label as a core identity (Brown et al., 1998:348; Williams & McShane, 2010:115).

The similarity can be seen in the role of societal perception as an influencing factor of behaviour. Labeling theory maintains that the individual will begin to behave in a manner that is in accordance with the label that society had branded them with, whereas Rogers’ theory purports that it is because of a need to be accepted by society that behaviour is altered. Though different in their motivations for behaviour, both theories have the same perspective on the total acceptance of societies’ evaluations as personal perceptions.

### **2.4.3 Congruence**

The concept of congruence describes the psychological state of individuals in terms of the degree of integration achieved between their real and ideal selves, how they perceive themselves in relation to how they are perceived by their significant others and in terms of their interaction with their environment (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:177). As it has been indicated in the preceding discussion, a state of congruence needs to exist for the actualisation tendency to be fulfilled. Erikson speaks of being identity conscious which is essentially an awareness of the discrepancies between the ideal view of oneself and how society views the individual (Peacock, 2006:38). Rogers presents only two alternative states within this concept, referring either to a state of incorporation of all experiences or the inability to achieve such incorporation namely the congruent or incongruent self, respectively.

#### **2.4.3.1 The Congruent Self**

Congruence refers to the outcome of an individual being in a position to incorporate all their experiences in their phenomenal field into their self-concept. Thus, there should be no distortion between their real and ideal selves. However, the real life application of such a perspective creates a difficult landscape for this theory to exist, as the conditions to fulfil the actualising tendency require not only those of personal experience but also the esteem of others (Meyer et al., 1997:470).

According to Rogers (1951:502), the healthy development of the self requires an environment where individuals have been afforded the opportunity to incorporate both positive and negative experiences into their own self-concepts. It is imperative that individuals perceive themselves as being worthy of love. These individuals will also need to experience unconditional positive regard from significant others, allowing them to consciously experience feelings that may be deemed unacceptable by general society. This will allow the individuals to be comfortable with themselves resulting in a situation whereby they are open to accepting others as themselves as well. If all these criteria have been met, it is believed that a process of “conscious balancing” will determine the individual’s behaviour. This involves weighing up the strength of the urge to act, the level of satisfaction that would be gained from the action and the satisfaction it would bring to the significant others (Rogers, 1951:502).

Therefore, if individuals in a state of congruence experience strong feelings of aggression, they will only directly act on this urge if the satisfaction of assaulting the other person outweighs the perceived satisfaction they would gain from significant others. Additionally, the behaviour will also need to be consistent with their self-concept as well as deemed necessary to fulfil their actualising tendency.

If one were to provide a criminological interpretation for this phenomenon, an association with the rational choice ideologies of the classical school of thought could be made. Dating back to the eighteenth century this perspective was purported by theorists such as Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham and claimed that criminal behaviour occurred out of a process of rational choice. Individuals are said to consciously weigh up the potential for pleasure and pain and would therefore display deviant behaviour if the pleasure gained from committing the act outweighed the pain of punishment or the likelihood thereof (Williams & McShane, 2010:17). This perspective emphasises the role of free will and therefore does not highlight the influence of environment and societal factors on behaviour.

This perspective could be applied as a behavioural explanation when considering Rogers' congruent individual, as society is said to have less direct influence on their behaviour because they are accepted for who they are without condition and therefore do not tend to conform to societal norms and values that are inconsistent with their sense of self. It stands to reason that both perspectives are seen as idealistic explanations of human behaviour. However, taking into consideration one of the primary aspects of Rogers' view of human nature, that people are seen as having an inherent tendency to act in a positive manner, it would be difficult to find an explanation for a congruent individual partaking in criminal activities (Meyer et al., 1997:463). Therefore, it is more likely that if a congruent individual were to show problematic behaviour, they would not perceive it as such and the context of the behaviour would be an important factor and it is therefore also likely that the type of offense will be of a less serious nature. The context of deviant behaviour and the associated justifications therefore available to the individual can be seen in the neutralisation techniques of Sykes and Matza purported in their drift theory (see 2.4.4). Thus, in order to fully achieve actualisation individuals need to successfully acknowledge the views of others without allowing them to dominate their own self-concept.

#### **2.4.3.2 The Incongruent Self**

However, not all experiences are as easily internalised as others. When a certain experience cannot be internalised due to its opposing nature with the self-concept, individuals are said to experience anxiety and be in a state of incongruence. The state of incongruence leads to maladjustment, which refers to the outward, behavioural aspects of individuals (Maddi, 1980:92; Meyer et al., 1997:482).

Although Rogers does not speak directly of criminal behaviour, he does extensively mention the behavioural effects or expressions of incongruence. Maddi (1980:92) explains the manifestation of destructive behaviour from a Rogerian perspective as the outward expression of inner experiences. That is to say that outward destructive behaviour will be indicative or stem from inner conflict or incongruence. Peacock (2006:35) comes to a similar conclusion expressing the opinion of Bartollas (1985) which states that the suppression of feelings due to an overdeveloped superego may lead to possible (violent) criminal behaviour.

The core tendencies of the concept of incongruence are somewhat similar to the concept of “cognitive dissonance”, a term coined by Leon Festinger in 1957 that refers to the psychological discomfort experienced by an individual as a result of disequilibrium between ones beliefs or knowledge of a situation and the actual reality of that situation. This then results in a need to reduce the aforementioned discomfort to maintain psychological wellbeing (Festinger, 1962:93; Theissen, 1997). Thus, if an individual who generally subscribes to the norms and values of a society behaves in a manner that contradicts those values, cognitive dissonance is said to occur.

The concept of peer influence and the adoption of attitudes and beliefs consistent with those of the social environment is present in a number of criminological and psychological theories as the preceding information would come to illustrate. This idea is further continued in the writings of Edwin Sutherland, Albert Cohen and Travis Hirschi as they all emphasise the influence of different social relations on self-perceptions and thereby behaviour. Rooted in the tenets of the social learning perspective, Sutherland’s differential association theory also views deviance or maladjusted behaviour as a result of the discrepancy between value systems. The role of significant others and the importance the individual places on the norms and values of these others, is also key in this perspective and therefore purports that



problematic behaviour manifests when individuals behave in a manner which is viewed as accepting by a deviant social group or “significant others” whilst being in contradiction with the norms and values of larger society (Bartol & Bartol, 2008:4; Williams & McShane, 2010:68).

Another perspective that was influenced by Sutherlands work and therefore bares a number of similarities is the subculture theory of Cohen. Here it is purported that criminal behaviour is motivated by frustration and competition born out of the inability of individuals from lower social class backgrounds to achieve high social status as prescribed by the dominant middle class. It is then due to this perceived discrepancy between dominant middle class values and the ability to achieve them that an opposing mentality can occur and create a subculture where similar values, contradictory to the dominant system are respected. Once internalised the new values of the subculture are said to motivate behaviour against the dominant culture which can therefore often be classified as deviant or criminal (Williams & McShane, 2010:93).

Furthermore, the role of attachment to, and investment in significant others and the associated value systems is closely investigated by Hirschi from a social control or more accurately social bonding perspective. Hirschi states that individuals are driven by a desire for approval, conscience and the influential nature of an internalised value system to behave in a conventional manner. From this perspective criminal behaviour is viewed in terms of weak bonds to the conventional norms and value system and will thus depend on the amount of time, emotion and belief the individual has invested in these values to build up such bonds (Williams & McShane, 2010:155).

Much like that, which is purported by Rogers, behaviour is said to be motivated by a need for approval by those who are deemed closest to individuals. It is thus the nature of these external actors that increase the possibility of behaving in a manner that can be considered criminal. It also indirectly reinforces the concept of the driven nature of individuals to behave in a manner considered positive by the self and become all they perceive they can be, whether to those on the outside it may seem constructive or destructive. Therefore, if a state of incongruence does exist within an individual due to their inability to incorporate conditions of worth into their self-concept it would theoretically go against Rogers’ assumptions about the actualising tendency for the individual to simply accept this state. In order to deal with

this state of incongruence and decrease the accompanying anxiety the experience must be ignored, denied or distorted (Meyer et al., 1997:470; Rogers, 1951:504).

#### **2.4.4 Defensive Mechanisms**

In order to deal with the anxiety caused by the state of incongruence, it is imperative for the sake of psychological wellbeing to protect the self-concept by dealing with certain experiences in different ways. These processes are not only necessary for experiences that have entered into the conscious mind of the individual but also largely for those that have been denied access to consciousness due to their incongruity with the individuals self-concept (Meyer et al., 1997:473). The process of becoming aware of a situation that is incongruent with ones' own self-concept and thereby denying it access to one's own consciousness is called *subception* (Rogers, 1951:507).

Rogers identifies two defensive mechanisms that assist the individual in maintaining their congruent sense of self. Experiences that are perceived as not to fit the individuals self-concept can either be *distorted* or *denied*. Distortion is present when dealing with both conscious and unconscious incongruence. Conscious distortion involves the process of providing alternate explanations for the experience by discrediting the source of the experience or rendering it nonsensical with the provision of justifications and excuses. However, if the source of the contradicting information is a significant other, the individual may opt to internalise this opposing view and symbolise it as if it were directly experienced by the individual (Rogers, 1951:500). For example, young individuals who find pleasure and congruence in always behaving in a law abiding manner perceive their peer group as being unsatisfied with such "boring" behaviour will be more likely to distort their perception of such behaviour as unsatisfying (or "boring") as well.

Unconscious distortion also occurs when an experience is in contradiction with the individuals' self-concept but cannot be brought to consciousness. This is more often seen when an individual has been requested or has a desire to illicit certain behaviour such as the completion of a task or the expression of an emotion. If the required or desired experience is inconsistent with the self-concept, it may not be allowed into consciousness, which can cause the individual to perceive a serious fault with the execution of the request or even develop a physiological ailment rendering them incapable of interacting with the experience (Rogers,

1951:508). An example of this would be of a child brought up in a very authoritarian household, experiencing severe headaches every time he or she is requested to perform a task, which could be as a result of the denial of feelings of rebellion against the rules his or her parents have enforced and so strictly maintained. One can therefore view conscious distortion as a reaction to incongruence whereas unconscious distortion would be more proactive in nature, avoiding the possibility of exposing the incongruity.

Denial on the other hand involves the complete blocking of the incongruent experience from consciousness such as an accused individual not arriving for his or her court date due to complete disbelief in the need for them to be there (Rogers, 1951:505). The avoidance of such incongruent experiences has far-reaching effects for the individuals psychological functioning as well as behavioural expressions. The act of denying or distorting the experience does not eradicate its presence but merely decreases the accompanying level of anxiety and thus its perceived threat to the individual, thereby denying it the ability to affect the self-concept. This could relate to an increase in criminality as the lack of self-condemnation and thereby decreased self-control could result in repeated use of these defences allowing the motivation to manifest into a purposive goal. As a result, many people who lack adequate integrative skills begin to build an increasingly large, yet fictitious reality in order to maintain their self-concept. This inability to integrate both positive and negative experiences into the self manifests in behaviour that is in complete opposition to the realisation of an actualised self as it is based on distorted perceptions of experiences (Meyer et al., 1997:482; Rogers, 1951:500-501). These experiential distortions are common in cases of offenders with antisocial personality disorder, psychopathology or related tendencies as they tend to show a complete lack of remorse for their offences and often fail to take responsibility for their behaviour. This often results in the commission of brutally violent offences with little remorse due to the process of dehumanising victims allowing the offenders to perceive their victims as objects and therefore more readily decrease any possible anxiety related to the negative social reactions associated with the offence (Bartol & Bartol, 2008:191; Gough, 1948:362; Turvey, 2009:575).

In consideration of the core tenets of Rogers' theory, this false reality would undoubtedly create a less than ideal climate for actualisation to be realised. If defensive mechanisms are present it must be noted that the individual cannot be entirely actualised as the use of defensive mechanisms implies the lack of incorporation of experiences into the self-concept,

an important part of self-actualisation and thus the greater actualisation process (Maddi, 1980:100). The concept of psychological defences is by no means unique to Rogers' theory. Theorists such as Freud as well as Sykes and Matza also make use of psychological defence techniques similar to Rogers'.

From the psychoanalytic perspective, Freud outlines six different defence mechanisms namely denial, projection, isolation, rationalisation, reaction formation, sublimation and repression (Kring, Johnson, Davidson, & Neale, 2010:18). Freud's denial defence is in essence identical to Rogers' version as they both involve complete and utter denial of facts without further justification regardless of evidentiary support. This is considered as one of Freud's more primitive defence mechanisms (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:88-89; Kring et al., 2010:18). Other Freudian defence mechanisms that have similarities to Rogers' distortion mechanism are rationalisation, sublimation and reaction formation. Rationalisation is the process whereby the problematic behaviour is not ignored, as in denial, but acknowledged. However, the underlying motivation of the behaviour is manipulated in a manner to which it becomes expressed differently to reflect reason and acceptability. Sublimation alters the expression of deviant thoughts and feelings in a manner which reflect goals that command high standing in society. Reaction formation only allows the individual to express behaviour that is the opposite of their seemingly inappropriate impulses due to the inability to accept the presence of such impulses (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:91; Kring et al., 2010:18). Much like Rogers' distortion, rationalisation, sublimation and reaction formation all require the individual to alter certain experiences to make them more acceptable or appropriate to fit into their self-concept although as one can deduce from the above information Rogers' defence mechanisms are not as in-depth, encompassing or complex as Freud's.

On a theoretical level, the source of these defences may not be the same. However, there is evidence to suggest that the outcome of over reliance on such defences may lead, as both Freud and Rogers mention to a situation whereby not dealing with the inappropriate thoughts could result in an outburst of seemingly uncharacteristic behaviour (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:91; Meyer et al., 1997:475). This can be illustrated by considering examples such as the quiet neighbour who embarks on a killing spree or the highly conservative teacher caught behaving in a sexually inappropriate manner with minors. Rogers (1951:510) further purports that this is due to the individual's lack of incorporation of organic needs into the self. The tension which is build up due to this lack of incorporation is said to be able to essentially

force the individual to succumb to the need and satisfy itself with no regard for societal principles. Such behaviour is however not said to be owned by the individual and responsibility for the actions will therefore not be taken by the individual.

The techniques of neutralisation as purported by Sykes and Matza are not identified as defensive mechanisms but essentially serve the same purpose as reactive cognitive mechanisms with a distinct purpose of maintaining psychological equilibrium. There are five such techniques proposed by Sykes and Matza that like Freud's defensive mechanisms tend to be more elaborate and complex than the mechanisms proposed by Rogers. Similarly though, these techniques also emphasise the role of society as the source of the information needed to make the neutralisations effective. The five techniques include: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the victim, condemnation of the condemners and appeal to higher loyalties (Sykes & Matza, 1957:667-669).

The element of denial is common in most of the neutralisation techniques purported by Sykes and Matza although it is of a more complex nature. Whereas Rogerian denial has no further justification, neutralisation techniques base the denial of responsibility, victim and injury on evidence derived from personal experience and perception at the very least. This is evident in all of the neutralisation techniques as the behaviour is justified in a manner that makes it acceptable within the context in which it occurs.

The concept of distortion as purported by Rogers can furthermore be said to be present in all five neutralisation techniques including condemnation of the condemners and appeal to higher loyalties. This interpretation can be validated by considering that both condemnation of the condemners and appeal to higher loyalties involve the shifting of responsibility from the individual to an external entity, thus distancing the actor from the action (Sykes & Matza, 1957:668). With that said it is important to note that although there are similarities between the previously mentioned perspectives, there is one key difference. Whilst Freud as well as Sykes and Matza view defensive techniques as necessary for normal functioning, Rogers views the succumbing to conditions of worth and therefore the need for the use of defensive techniques as destructive for the actualising tendency. Therefore, unlike the other two perspectives defence mechanisms are not necessary for the healthy development of the individual but rather an obstacle impeding the actualising tendency (Maddi, 1980:100).

## **2.5 Conclusion**

In consideration of the information presented in this chapter, the role of society and how it is perceived by the individual in the development of the self should become apparent. The view of the self in terms of its structure and developmental process as purported by Rogers can hereby be said to provide a comprehensive illustration of the key elements necessary to understand the evaluative process of the self and its influence on behaviour. As with many psychological theories, problematic behaviour is seen as a symptom of an underlying mental issue which in the case of Rogers' theory is anxiety caused by the incongruence between one's experience of the self and the perception of how society views the self. However the integration of additional theory which often complimented and supported the views of Rogers by expanding on certain explanations and providing details of specific behaviours allowed for a more criminological account of the role of self-esteem in influencing both problematic behaviour as well as the reoccurrence thereof. It hereby becomes necessary to explore the use of self-esteem theory in research to gain an appreciation of the current applications and subsequent understandings of the influence of self-esteem and its related factors on behaviour from an applied perspective.

## **Chapter 3**

### **An Empirical Perspective on the Relationship between Self-Esteem and Recidivism**

With an understanding of the integrated theoretical perspectives provided in the previous chapter, it becomes necessary to present an empirical perspective on self-esteem and repeated offending behaviour in order to demonstrate and analyse previous research related to the aims of this study (see 1.5). The relationship between theory and research can be defined as a mutual dynamic, as theory is inclined to encourage and direct research and research can be used to validate or create theory or inspire further research (Wu & Volker, 2009:2720). These relationships refer to the core tenets of deductive and inductive reasoning respectively. Though these are two recognisable approaches to research, they are not the only ways to approach the research process. It is also possible to use theory to primarily provide context to a specific study without fully applying it, likewise individual empirical findings may be used in isolation to support certain theoretical perspectives. These less integrated approaches do however affect the ability to generalise the research findings and therefore limit the application of the results. The generalisation of results may however not always be the aim of a study as per the case of research that is descriptive in nature. This type of research does not necessarily require theory, as the aim is often to observe and possibly develop new perspectives. One could therefore say that the possibility of finding new, conflicting or supporting information is one commonality that drives researchers to investigate and further expand their fields of interest in various manners (Babbie, 2007:55).

The approach of the current study is deductive in nature, thus requiring a strong integrated theoretical foundation that can be applied to relevant empirical findings that will influence and guide the data collection process. This approach could allow for a more in-depth understanding of the relationship between self-esteem and repeated offending behaviour that could in turn have practical applications within the correctional environment. Theories related to criminal justice that have been validated by sound, empirical research can be used as a basis for the effective execution of the functions of the criminal justice system ranging from arrest and sentencing decisions through to offender rehabilitation (Dantzker & Hunter, 2006:8). Therefore, this chapter builds on the theoretical chapter by presenting research conducted primarily in the correctional environment, demonstrating previous undertakings by

researchers to identify and assess factors related to self-esteem and reoffending behaviour using some of the theoretical underpinnings previously discussed as well as other related perspectives. Evaluations of the various theoretical explanations are also provided in light of the research findings considered, along with alternate perspectives on self-esteem and repeat offending behaviour.

The chapter will begin with a presentation of research identifying the factors related to recidivism in order to gain an understanding of the preceding factors related to the phenomenon in question. The role of self-esteem will then be explored in terms of its relation to different types of offences. This will allow for the presentation of empirical support for the differing perspectives of the relationship between level of self-esteem and its effect on offending behaviour. The effect of incarceration on individual self-esteem will then be considered followed by an exploration of the prevalence of family related factors on self-esteem and recidivism in the literature. Lastly, the effect of self-esteem literature on the development of treatment programmes will be considered as well as the effectiveness of such programmes in dealing with self-esteem related issues and its resultant effect on recidivism rates.

### **3.1 Factors Related to Recidivism**

In light of the information provided in the first chapter about the current state of South African prisons and the public perception of ineffectiveness of correctional programmes illustrated by the high recidivism rate (see 1.4.3 & 1.4.4), it becomes necessary to consider the range of available research identifying the factors that promote and facilitate reoffending behaviour. By identifying these factors and applying explanations grounded in the theoretical perspectives of the previous chapter, the effect of self-esteem on the current understandings of reoffending behaviour can be established. An article written by Gendreau, Little and Goggin (1996) takes a meta analytical look at recidivism literature with the intent of identifying factors most commonly attributed as predictors or risk factors of recidivism. The varying and often contradictory nature of the findings of numerous studies are identified as a core issue in establishing the validity of the findings in recidivism research (Gendreau et al., 1996:576). Throughout the literature, the factors related to reoffending are categorised into two classifications namely risk assessment or needs assessment factors or static and dynamic



factors respectively (Benda, 2001:713; Gendreau et al., 1996:575). The static or risk assessment factors include variables that are immutable and therefore unable to change such as age, sex, criminal history or parental involvement in crime which act as indicators of future offending behaviour (Benda, 2001:713). Conversely, the dynamic or needs assessment factors include those that are more susceptible to change and are therefore often the targets of treatment programmes such as drug use, deviant associations, unemployment, and numerous psychological factors such as personality traits and personal values and beliefs (Gendreau et al., 1996:576). Self-esteem has also been identified as a dynamic factor, however its relationship to offending behaviour has not always been found to be as direct as those factors previously mentioned, because if one is to consider self-esteem theory, it could be argued that self-esteem can relate to each of those factors individually as well. These individual relations will therefore be explored to a greater degree in the discussion to follow.

### **3.1.1 Demographic Variables**

The least disputed risk factors of future offending behaviour are demographic variables that are static in nature due to their inability to be changed. Age of first involvement in crime has been cited in recidivism literature as one of the most prominent factors to consider when assessing individual risk of future reoffending (Benda, Corwyn & Toombs, 2001:604; Gendreau et al., 1996:588; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997:49). Comparative research between offending and non-offending youth populations has produced results that show an earlier introduction to criminal behaviour by offenders who are recidivists than non-recidivists (Benda, 2001:723). A possible explanation of this finding may be provided by taking into account the role of societal and environmental factors in the development of the self as purported by Rogers (see 2.4.1) whereby at this early stage in the lifetime individuals are beginning to gain awareness of and integrate the evaluative criteria used by significant others and society. This early interaction with the correctional facilities could result in the young individuals forming significant relationships with other offenders and incorporating the norms and values of the correctional environment into their own self-concept. Such an investment into a system characterised by a lack of independence, poor conditions and deviant peers could lead to the acceptance of evaluative criteria congruent with these factors. This, Rogers purported, would create a need to strive to fulfil such criteria through physical displays of deviant behaviour to receive positive regard and thereby improve self-esteem.

Unlike other demographic variables, factors such as marital status and number of own children have been varied across studies and in relation to different offences. These factors are most commonly used as descriptive factors of the sample and have not been sufficiently linked to level of self-esteem (Foster, 2011:10; Williams & Fouche, 2008:151). Gender differences have also been associated with offending and reoffending behaviour (Benda et al., 2001:604; Gendreau et al., 1996:588). With literature specifically from the feminist perspective in criminology such as Hubbard (2007:40) citing a number of researchers identifying low self-esteem as a common factor in female offending populations. These gender based discrepancies between male and female offenders have been said to be attributed to a lack of representation of female samples in corrections research as well as the comparatively large difference in terms of representation in general offender populations (Hubbard, 2007:40; Oser, 2006:345). For male samples, the relationship has been identified to be somewhat nonlinear in nature as there is varied support for a relationship between both high and low levels of self-esteem and offending behaviour (the literature outlining this will be discussed later in the chapter).

The level of education has also been found to be an important risk factor to repeat offending for both practical and cognitive reasons. A common view, evident in some research dating back to 1920's has asserted that there is a link between Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores and criminal behaviour. Continued research has repeatedly shown similar results (Gendreau et al., 1996:577). However, caution must be taken in the interpretation of such results as evidence of this nature could be attributed to the lack of education rather than an inherent lack of intelligence. Individual level of education has also been positively correlated with self-esteem particularly in communities where education is perceived to be held in high regard, although the nature of the relationship is varied (Harris, 2009:13). Some researchers argue that a high self-esteem is developed as a result of good academic performance whereas others believe self-esteem to play a more causal role in academic achievement. In disadvantaged communities characterised by a lack of resources and comparatively substandard levels of education, this factor can become devalued in exchange for emphasising goals perceived to be more readily achievable, which according to subculture theory are often considered deviant by conventional society (Harris, 2009:13-14).

Repeated exposure to the correctional facilities from a young age could result in the disruption of formal education programmes. This is evident in information gathered from

adult prison populations that indicate a generally low level of education and formal school attendance (Dissel, 2008:158). A deficit in vocational and educational training can be linked to the difficulty experienced by offenders in finding sustainable employment upon release and thereby resorting to survival crime (Dissel, 2012:30). These variables can also be considered when classifying the individuals' socioeconomic statuses.

### **3.1.2 Socioeconomic Variables**

Variables related to socioeconomic status (SES) might be influential as behavioural motivators and can be separated into family background variables as well as personal variables. Family background variables are referred to in some literature as "social class of origin" and often include factors such as parental occupation and education whereas personal variables relate more directly to the individual such as personal employment (Gendreau et al., 1996:577). As a predictor of offending behaviour and recidivism, SES has however been met with varied support empirically (Gendreau et al., 1996:577).

Similarly, the SES and self-esteem link has been equally diverse in the literature with results varying from moderate to non-existent. A study conducted by Rosenberg and Pearlin (1978) found a changing relationship in the form of a positive correlation with age. It was found that SES only began to influence self-esteem modestly from adolescence and more moderately into adulthood (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978:57). The explanation provided refers to the comparative nature of self-esteem (see 2.4.1.2) in the sense that young children are less aware of economic differences between themselves and their peers as their social environments (schools) tend to be homogenous in terms of SES. This however changes as individuals become more aware of the relative economic differences and inequalities through a widening of their social situations, especially in the working environment where occupational position often correlates with income and thereby SES (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978:57).

In the correctional literature, it has been found that a large number of offenders are unemployed at the time of incarceration. However, for those who are employed, imprisonment inevitably results in the forfeiture of these positions thus making it more difficult, if not impossible, to reintegrate into the workforce upon release due to their criminal record (Dissel, 2008:158; Dissel, 2012:30). Therefore, socioeconomic variables can be considered factors that directly or indirectly attribute to level of income and social standing

and would thus influence SES within the community. The apparent relation between SES, social location and the availability of opportunities has provided support for its linkage to offending behaviour through Merton's anomie theory, Sutherland's differential association theory and Cohen's subculture theory alike (see 2.3 & 2.4.3.2). However, researchers such as Tittle and Meier (1990:294) claimed to have found evidence to suggest a very weak linkage between SES and offending behaviour and recidivism. The argument is however grounded in critical perspectives pertaining to the definition and conceptualisation of SES and the actual influence of related factors such as relative subjective deprivation as opposed to SES directly.

### **3.1.3 Psychosocial Variables**

In consideration of Rogers' theoretical perspective presented in the previous chapter, the psychosocial influence of peer group, family and community related variables on the general development and maintenance of what Rogers considered a functional individual is significant. The effects of these significant entities on reoffending behaviour is often found to be no different, as recidivists are commonly found to associate more frequently with deviant peers and are more easily influenced by them (Benda, 2001:723; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997:49). Taking into consideration the role of the community in the reintegration process of offenders as well as their facilitating influence on the labeling process (see 2.4.2.2) the importance of the inclusion of the community in criminal justice proceedings cannot be ignored. It has been found that including the victim and community members into the criminal justice process has a positive effect on offender reintegration and is therefore necessary as it could decrease recidivism if it is executed correctly (Goodey 2000 as cited in Norton, 2007:64).

The direct family unit also plays a crucial role in preventing recidivism. Depending on the nature of the offence and the availability of resources to the family, numerous individuals become alienated from their families upon incarceration. The bond between the offender and his family becomes strained either due to personal factors related to forgiveness for the offence or for logistical and financial reasons prohibiting the family from making visits (Dissel, 2008:158). This strain has been shown to leave the inmate with no support structure to rely on upon release whilst the individual attempts to find the means to become a contributing member of society. The importance of these entities as support structures have been presented however, the psychosocial influence of the peer group, family and community

have also been shown to have a more direct influence on self-esteem and recidivism due to their importance as sources of evaluative criteria to the offending individual. This perspective will be elaborated upon later in the chapter (see 3.4).

### **3.1.4 Criminological Variables**

Much like the early influences of friends and family, criminal history has also been found to be a significant predictor of recidivism (Benda et al., 2001:604; Gendreau et al., 1996:588). This could be attributed to factors related to age of first involvement with criminality and the process of deviant labeling by society (see 2.4.2.2). This deviant label may, after repeated exposure, become so internalised the individual becomes incapable of behaving in a pro-social manner due to the high level of stigmatisation and lack of community support. In consideration of the available research, it could be argued that certain offence types, particularly sexual and violent offences, tend to create a higher risk of recidivism than others due to the large amount of representation these types of offences have in the literature. Furthermore, criminogenic needs of recidivists have been said to be the most appropriate target areas for treatment due to their causal influence in terms of reoffending behaviour (Davies, 2007:98; Hollway, Mawhinney, & Sheehy, 2007:110; Williams & Fouche, 2008:151).

One such criminogenic need in particular is early substance use and future abuse (Andrews & Bonta, 2010:283; Benda et al., 2001:604; Gendreau et al., 1996:588). Comparative research has shown that recidivists tend to get involved in drug use at an earlier age than non-recidivists (Benda, 2001:723). A study by the Social Exclusion Unit in the United Kingdom similarly found that 60% to 70% of the offenders in their centres had been drug users prior to incarceration (Dissel, 2008:158). The relationship between substance use and self-esteem in the literature has also shown mixed results with research purporting that individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to engage in substance use to cope with various anxiety related issues. Individuals may also partake in substance use if they feel the behaviour is considered normal within their social groups and may boost their social standing and thereby their own level of self-esteem (see 2.4.2.2). On the other hand, those with a high self-esteem are also considered more likely to partake in risk taking behaviour such as substance use (Hubbard, 2007:42; Leary, Schreindorfer, & Haupt, 1995:297).

### **3.1.5 Psychological Variables**

In an attempt to understand offending behaviour researchers in the social sciences included psychological concepts into their studies as it provided insight into the development and influence of core behavioural motivations. If one is to consider the emphasis placed on targeting psychological factors in treatment programmes it can be deduced that these variables have been acknowledged and are believed to be influencing factors of offending behaviour. However, as with all research involving human dynamics, researchers such as Andrews, Bonta and Hoge (cited in Gendreau et al., 1996:577) are of the opinion that these personal distress variables are not significant risk factors and therefore not suitable targets for treatment. Support for this perspective is however limited and does not seem to be reflected in the correctional environment due to the large amount of emphasis placed on dealing with variables such as anxiety, depression and self-esteem. Furthermore, the literature on the psychological explanations of offending behaviour focuses predominantly on general offending and not necessarily recidivism alone. These two factors can however be closely linked if one is to consider the variables previously mentioned such as criminal history, substance use and deviant peer associations, all of which have psychological explanations and have been associated with recidivism. Recidivism is also more often used as a measure of success for treatment programmes than an outcome variable on its own.

There is no scarcity of studies exploring the psychology of inmates available in the prison research literature. Research out of the United Kingdom established the prevalence rate of mental health issues in correctional centres to range from 25% to 81%. These psychological issues are furthermore said to include conditions ranging from stress related disorders to more serious personality and conduct disorders (Dissel, 2008:158). This could however be created or exacerbated by the poor living conditions and the overwhelming level of institutionalisation, stress and trauma many inmates experience inside the prison. The effect of institutionalisation can hinder the inmate's ability for independent thought and action, making it difficult to reintegrate back into society upon release (Dissel, 2008:158). Other variables such as a predominantly external locus of control has been found to be a significant factor related to treatment effectiveness and thereby recidivism. The concept of locus of control refers to the level of control individuals feel they have over their own behaviour (Fisher, Beech & Browne, 1998:2). In an article focusing on the related factors of locus of control and sexual offenders Fisher, Beech and Browne (1998) refer to research that states

that a variety of offenders including violent and sexual offenders had an external locus of control. This would mean that the offenders perceived life-events as being out of their control and therefore due to “chance, fate, luck or powerful others” (Fisher et al., 1998:2). This external perception of behavioural control has also been linked to increased levels of impulsiveness, a factor also associated with violent or aggressive behaviour (Deming & Lochman, 2008; Fisher et al., 1998:2). This may be explained by considering the relationship between internal or external locus of control and level of self-control, whereby individuals with an external locus of control would be more inclined to displays of aggression following anger arousal due to a lower sense of self-control and increased impulsivity than those with an internal locus of control (Deming & Lochman, 2008). Fisher et al. (1998:7) additionally established from the study that self-esteem was also correlated positively to treatment success, as individuals with higher self-esteem scores were also found to be more receptive to treatment (Fisher et al., 1998:7). This finding will however be further explored in the section on treatment programmes in correctional centres later in the chapter (see 3.6).

Self-esteem has appeared as a variable in numerous studies with varying results. Based on the findings of past research that claimed that a majority of adolescents committed minor criminal acts that would largely go undetected but for which they could have been imprisoned, Gudjonsson and Sigurdsson (2004:71) conducted a study on students at a college and at a university in Iceland to discover what factors influenced their deviant behaviour. The results directly related to self-esteem only showed a correlation between self-esteem scores and financial or excitement motives. This indicates that individuals with lower self-esteem were more likely to commit criminal acts for monetary gain or for enjoyment and pleasure (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2004:78). Other relevant results indicated that 73% of the participants were in the company of their peers during the commission of their most serious offences. This could be an indication of the effect of peer pressure for the individual to be perceived as conforming to behaviour evaluated positively by the peer group thereby increasing self-esteem (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2004:79). This finding can be related to a perspective found in the research of Peacock (2006:49) which established that negative peer relations could hinder personal development if a fear of peer group rejection exists. This fear could culminate in the alienation of personal needs in favour of group needs resulting in what Erikson termed identity diffusion (see 2.2).

However, a number of studies exist that refute self-esteem as a predictor of recidivism and ascertain instead that factors related to antisocial personality disorder provide a better explanation. This perspective may not be as contradictory to the self-esteem explanation as first perceived, as factors related to antisocial personality disorder are also associated with level of self-esteem such as grandiose feelings, neuroticism, depression and anxiety (Thornton, Beech, & Marshall, 2004:590). This one-dimensional approach to the analysis of the relationship between self-esteem and repeat offending behaviour is considered a general shortcoming of self-esteem research. The conceptualisation of self-esteem as a test variable differs between studies and thereby affects the results of these studies (Baumeister et al., 1996:5; Bonta & Gendreau, 1990:348). Due to the complex nature of human behaviour, acknowledgement of the possible role of additional variables should be included in the interpretation of research findings as these variables may outweigh the normally positive effect of a stable self-esteem (Thornton et al., 2004:596).

In their study on self-control Tangney, Baumeister and Boone (2004:299) found a significant correlation between high self-esteem and high levels of self-control. The stability of self-esteem was additionally assessed and similarly found to correlate positively with self-control. In a study on boot-camp graduates, Benda (2001:723) found that non-recidivists had a higher level of self-esteem and self-efficacy than recidivists did. Thornton et al., (2004:596) found in a sample of sexual reoffenders that self-esteem prior to treatment was inversely linked to number of re-offences. The results of their study indicated that an increase in self-esteem was correlated to a decrease in reoffending. It was furthermore found that the entire sample of reoffenders still had a lower level of self-esteem than the normative data for non-offenders, therefore indicating that as self-esteem approached normative levels, number of re-offences approached zero. Parker, Morton, Lingefelt and Johnson (2005:414) found in a study of violent and non-violent youth offenders that low self-esteem along with a number of other personality characteristics such as unstable emotionality and increased anxiety predicted future violent reoffending whereas number of previous criminal offences predicted future non-violent offending. Findings of this nature illustrate the view that research including psychological variables produce mixed results as predictors of recidivism and therefore may benefit from a more inclusive approach in terms of acknowledging the possible role of additional variables when analysing data and developing explanations.



In consideration of the South African and international research presented and that which is to follow, one could find evidence to support the notion that a low level of self-esteem is related to offending behaviour. This is the most commonly accepted perspective which has however been challenged by a perspective advocated by Baumeister et al., (1996) linking an unstable high self-esteem to an increase in aggression and therewith the likelihood of deviant behaviour (Oser, 2006:344). Popular understandings of the relationship between offending behaviour and self-esteem purport that individual displays of aggression act as a means to enhance self-esteem. This is due to the individuals' perceptions that aggression is a socially desirable response and will thus increase their perceived social standing. It is here where the linkage to deviant subcultures becomes apparent due to the replacement of traditional ideologies of socially desirable behaviour by those of a smaller non-conforming or deviant subgroup (Jordan & O'Hare, 2007:126; Kernis, Grannemann, & Barclay, 1989:1013; Oser, 2006:347; Parker et al., 2005:414). The contrasting explanation however purports that the aggressive response is in actual fact due to an over inflated self-esteem. The explanation provided is largely similar to Rogers' state of incongruence (see 2.4.3.2) as it views aggression as a response to external appraisals of the self that are in contrast with the individuals highly exaggerated and thus unrealistic positive self-perception (Oser, 2006:347). Baumeister et al., (1996:8) refer to "threatened egotism" as the cause of this aggressive reaction and state that if a positive view of the self is to be maintained in light of a negative appraisal, the negative response needs to be diverted away from the self and toward the source of the evaluation. Internalising the negative appraisal would however result in a decrease in self-evaluation and may thus prompt a withdrawn reaction. Similar explanations and interpretations of this perspective refer to "defensive (narcissistic) self-esteem" (Salmivalli, 2001:390), "unstable high self-esteem" (Kernis et al., 1989:1019) or a "disguised low self-esteem" (Bruce, 2006:34).

Thus in light of the above mentioned perspectives one can conclude that another variable may need to be included to gain an understanding of the relationship between self-esteem and reoffending behaviour, as it seems that varying levels of self-esteem can furthermore be correlated with different types of offences. In the next section, the link between self-esteem and offence type will be explored.

## **3.2 Self-Esteem and Offence Type**

The available research on self-esteem and the differing theoretical explanations of its effect on behaviour seems to provide little congruent evidence of whether or not self-esteem truly can be considered a substantive predictive factor for deviant behaviour. The available research in South Africa and internationally on self-esteem and offence type seems however to focus largely on aggressive and sexual offenders. The focus on aggressive offences could be due to the extensive, yet vacillating, perspective of violence as an expression of level of self-esteem. Whereas the prevalence of sexual offenders in the self-esteem research may be attributed to the high level of recidivism of sexual offenders and the often deep-seated psychological irregularities related to psychopathic tendencies such as anxiety, impulsivity and delusions of grandeur, commonly associated with this type of offence (Thornton et al., 2004:590). From a South African perspective it could be argued that the prevalence of these types of offences in the research may be related to their apparent prioritisation in the criminal justice system due to the notion that minimum sentencing legislation is said to be “aimed primarily, but not solely at sexual and violent offences” (Giffard & Muntingh, 2007:26).

### **3.2.1 Violent Offences**

As previously mentioned, the traditional view of the relationship between violence and self-esteem is that individuals who display aggressive behaviour are perceived to have a low self-esteem (Leary et al., 1995:297). Parker et al., (2005:414) established in their study on the predictors of violent behaviour of a juvenile sample that low self-esteem and other personality factors such as unstable emotionality and increased anxiety predicted violent behaviour. Jordan and O'Hare (2007:126) provided an explanation from the behaviourist perspective and claimed that violence can be considered a learned response that acts as positive reinforcement for the individual's behaviour that in turn increases self-esteem (see 2.4.2). In an article evaluating the effect of South Africa's National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS), Bruce (2006) identifies variables that were not explicitly considered in the NCPS. Of relevance to this study, self-esteem and factors associated with the high levels of violence are considered and possible explanations provided. Reference is made to the available theories linking self-esteem and violence which include the low self-esteem and link to violent behaviour as well as the unstable high self-esteem link to violence which is

referred to in this article as a “disguised low self-esteem” (Bruce, 2006:34). It is further stated that self-esteem alone is not the actual cause of violent behaviour but rather an underlying factor that necessitates the use of certain psychological defences that manifest behaviourally as aggression. Bruce (2006:34) also makes a linkage between self-esteem and status inequality borne out of the vast relative disparity between individual status and economic situations. Such inflated ideas of self-worth, contrasted against a background of social and economic inequality can be seen as plausible illustrations of theoretical understandings of the discrepancy between the real and ideal self as purported by Rogers as well as Merton’s view of anomie (see 2.3).

Research conducted by Baumeister et al., (1996) that critically evaluated a number of studies that had found inverse relations between self-esteem and offending behaviour proposed that aggression and violent behaviour stem not from a low self-esteem but rather from a narcissistically high self-esteem and a threatened or fragile ego. The authors felt that the traditional perspective was grounded in the narrow view of past research defining high self-esteem as a positive attribute pertaining to good adjustment and social likeability and that synonyms for high self-esteem with negative connotations were forgotten and conveniently ignored, in reference to terms such as “arrogance”, “pride”, “conceitedness” and “narcissism” (Baumeister et al., 1996:5). Numerous studies linking self-esteem to offences such as terrorism, murder, domestic violence and hate crimes were analysed and critiqued. The analysis established that none of the studies could unequivocally identify low self-esteem as a predictor of offending behaviour and that most of the research ignored indicators of high self-esteem. Illustrations of this can be found in research establishing that the participants showed “exaggerated self-esteem” or demanded “unwarranted respect”, yet still maintained the low self-esteem conclusion. Self-esteem was in some cases poorly measured with conclusions about self-esteem being made from single items such as whether or not parents wanted their children to emulate them when they grew up and an over reliance on historical societal factors without incorporating the modern context (Baumeister et al., 1996:6). In addition to the critical analyses performed on the literature presented in the study, the authors also obtained support of the role of ego threats and fragile high self-esteem in aggressive behaviour. Further literature reviews established that factors such as being humiliated or insulted (real and perceived), confidence by males in their physical prowess, perceptions of superiority, being outspoken and extreme competitiveness all lead up or were related to expressions of aggression and violence on varying levels (Baumeister et al., 1996:15-25).

Self-esteem was also assessed in a study conducted across 18 Spanish prisons between male inmates incarcerated for intimate partner violence. Participants were split into two groups namely, psychopathic and non-psychopathic based on their psychopathy checklist scores. The results showed that inmates classified as psychopathic had significantly lower self-esteem levels than the non-psychopathic group, however both samples scored above the normative range for the self-esteem scale used, thus providing support for a high self-esteem link to aggressive behaviour (Echeburua & Fernandez-Montalvo, 2007:261). With reference to the results of other sociodemographic and correctional variables, it was found that for the entire sample the majority of participants were single or divorced, came from middle-low socioeconomic backgrounds and only had a primary school education (Echeburua & Fernandez-Montalvo, 2007:259). In consideration of the recidivism research, these findings can be said to support the perspectives presented earlier in the chapter identifying factors commonly related to recidivism (see 3.1).

Beesley and McGuire (2009) assessed the differences in gender-role identity, hyper-masculinity, self-image and self-esteem, between two groups of offending population samples namely violent and property offenders and a third non-offending group where the comparative role of self-esteem in behaviour was assessed. The results of the study showed that there were no significant differences in self-esteem scores between the three subsets of the sample and that the majority of the scores fell between the mid to high range of the self-esteem scale, indicating average to high levels of self-esteem (Beesley & McGuire, 2009:264). This finding is in contrast to the popular view, which claims that self-esteem is generally lower in offending populations than in non-offending counterparts (Beesley & McGuire, 2009:253). One can therefore establish that the findings of Beesley and McGuire's (2009) research support the plausibility of Baumeister et al.'s (1996) perspective. However, the researchers continue to elaborate on their findings and state that in light of the substantial support for both high and low self-esteem relations to deviance it is plausible that the relationship between the factors may not be as linear as previously thought. Therefore, individuals with scores ranging in the upper and lower ends of the self-esteem scale can be said to be at equally high risk of eliciting violent behaviour (Beesley & McGuire, 2009:264). Similarities can also be drawn here between this explanation and Kernis et al.'s (1989:1019) view of stability of self-esteem. Kernis et al. (1989) established that individuals with low and unstable high self-esteem were more likely to display aggressive behaviour than those with a

stable high self-esteem, even though unstable high self-esteem was a stronger predictor of aggressive responses than low self-esteem.

Beesley and McGuire's (2009) findings could furthermore relate to one of the explanations proposed by Baumeister et al., (1996:7) which states that self-esteem may not be a predictor of offending behaviour at all but rather an influencing factor in target selection. In the sense that individuals with high self-confidence will seek out more difficult targets to bolster their already high self-perception whereas those with low self-esteem will be more inclined to seek out vulnerable targets such as women, children, the elderly and individuals from marginalised populations. Support for Baumeister et al.'s (1996) perspective on target selection becomes increasingly evident in consideration of sexual offender research.

### **3.2.2 Sexual Offences**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the role of perception in level of self-esteem is a crucial factor to account for when analysing the relationship between self-esteem and offending behaviour. Perception therefore not only determines how individuals experience the treatment and evaluations of others but also determines the individuals' beliefs in their own abilities to satisfy general needs. Thornton et al., (2004:588) state that the means to satisfy a need for sexual gratification for someone with low self-esteem would have to be perceived as a non-threatening and non-demanding exercise. Therefore, in the case of sex offenders, the sexual assault of easily overpowered targets such as lone women and children may become attractive options if such actions are perceived to be less threatening or demanding than consensual options. This negative view of the self would also extend to the way in which individuals experience the perception of others. The focus on negative evaluations by others could create feelings of resentment towards these others and encourage the individual to behave in a manner indicative of power or status assertion in order to reciprocate the perceived inherently hostile perceptions of others (Thornton et al., 2004:589).

Webster, Mann, Thornton and Wakeling (2007:207) established that the link between low self-esteem and sexual offending behaviour had been supported in a review of the literature included in their study. However, it was also found that support for self-esteem as a significant predictor of recidivism remained contested. Reference was made to previous studies that collectively found sexual offenders to have a generally lower self-esteem than

non-offenders but not to vary significantly from other offender populations. An analysis of different types of sexual offenders revealed that those convicted of offences against same sex victims and children tended to have lower self-esteem scores than those who offended against the opposite sex (Webster et al., 2007:208). Similar conclusions were purported by Van der Hoven and Ovens (2003:22) as they claimed that it was common for paedophiles and child sex abusers to have low self-esteem. This could provide support for the close linkage between self-esteem and societal norms, specifically those related to sexual interactions, as those with offending behaviour reflecting the more traditional or mainstream sexual relations had higher self-esteem than those reflecting less popular or minority sexual practices. Findings showed low levels of self-esteem even after treatment in comparison to non-offenders despite marked improvements (Webster et al., 2007:213).

Oliver et al. (2007) conducted comparative research on a group of rapists and sexual murderers with the intent of investigating and comparing factors relating to family variables, personality, victimology and offence. It was established that the sexual murderer subset were more likely to be single at the time of the offence compared to the rapists being in a monogamous relationship. IQ scores were higher and victims tended to be younger for the rapist subset (Oliver et al., 2007:304). There were no mean differences found in terms of personality however, the rapist subset did score higher on the Paranoid Suspicion, Resentment and Self-Esteem scales of the Antisocial Personality Questionnaire (Oliver et al., 2007:306). The increased resentment score would support the findings of Thornton et al. (2004:589) mentioned earlier in this section as a characteristic of sexual offenders. In addition to these conclusions drawn between the two sample groups, it was also found that the sample of convicted rapists scored lower on self-esteem assessment than the sexual murderers (Oliver et al., 2007:307). Further comparison to a non-offending sample revealed that 42.7% of the rapist sample and 17.9% of the sexual murderer sample had lower self-esteem than the normative sample. The rapist sample also had a higher mean number of previous violent offences which would provide support for the view that violent offenders have a lower level of self-esteem. In light of the Antisocial Personality Questionnaire results, this would however be a very one-dimensional conclusion to draw, as it is plausible to assume that the factors related to antisocial personality disorder such as grandiose feelings, neuroticism, depression and anxiety may outweigh the usually positive effects of high self-esteem (see 3.1.5).

As one can deduce there is a wide variety of available research that provides support for the relationship between both, high and low levels of self-esteem and offending behaviour. One of the biggest reasons for this wide discrepancy in the findings can be attested to the methodological, analytical and conceptual concerns of the studies. One particular concern is the environment in which the offenders are assessed (Baumeister et al., 1996:5; Bonta & Gendreau, 1990:348). The cross-sectional nature of much of the research has also been identified as a detracting factor for sound conclusions due to the fluctuating nature of self-esteem. The popular perception that low self-esteem is related to offending behaviour has also been found to affect researcher analysis, as many clear indicators of high self-esteem as mentioned earlier in the section on violent offences (see 3.2.1) are overlooked or simply not included due to the narrow conceptualisation of the self-esteem factor (Baumeister et al., 1996:15). Furthermore, the psychological understanding required for research of this nature has also come into question with researchers from historical, sociological and even political orientations researching such phenomenon (Baumeister et al., 1996:24). Therefore, in order to perform research in the prison environment it is essential to understand, acknowledge or attempt to control for the effect of the incarceration experience on self-esteem as well as other confounding methodological, analytical and conceptual factors mentioned.

### **3.3 The Effect of Incarceration on Self-Esteem**

The negative effects of incarceration on inmates both physically and psychologically are commonly cited in reviews of correctional centres (see 1.4.3). As previously mentioned, incarceration places strain on individuals as it strips them of their freedom, independence and often their support system. The stress experienced by the individual due to these factors has been shown to have a negative effect on self-esteem. Research with sex offenders has likewise shown that some of the self-esteem scores of the offenders can be attributed to prison conditions rather than the actual offence (Webster et al., 2007:208). The effect of imprisonment has also been shown to be exacerbated in young offenders due to the critical psychological development taking place during this time which is highly prone to environmental influences (see 3.1.1). However, as with much of the research on self-esteem the findings of studies measuring the effect of imprisonment on self-esteem tend to vary rather substantially (Greve & Enzman, 2003:12).

Whilst numerous reports refer to the poor living conditions in prisons and the frequency of human rights abuses, there is evidence in the literature of research that refutes the negative effects of long-term incarceration on individual levels of self-esteem. In a literary review, Bonta and Gendreau (1990:359) concluded that there was little evidence to suggest a negative effect of long-term imprisonment on the individual. This conclusion was however obtained through the critical view of sampling, analytical and methodological considerations of the observed studies rather than in light of more compelling research.

A study of French inmates detained in different conditions established a link between type of detainment and self-esteem. Data was drawn from five subsets, namely convicted offenders held in isolation and those not in isolation, individuals awaiting trial held in isolation and those not in isolation as well as convicted offenders allowed to work outside of the prison (Blatier, 2000:101). Results showed that those who were allowed to work outside of the prison scored the highest on the self-esteem scale, followed by both non-isolated subsets that obtained similar scores. However, the only significantly different self-esteem scores were those of the convicted inmates held in isolation. These inmates had distinctly lower levels of self-esteem than the other inmates did in the different conditions (Blatier, 2000:103). Additionally, time related variables have also been found to have a significant impact on level of self-esteem. Oliver et al., (2007:309) found in a comparative study of sexual murderers and rapists that offenders who had spent more time in prison tended to have higher levels of self-esteem. This was attributed to time taken to acclimatise with the conditions in prison and get used to the way of life and develop a routine.

Familiarity with the prison environment can also be seen to have an effect on self-esteem. Oser (2006:346) purported that inmates who have had extensive exposure to the correctional setting such as repeat offenders or “state raised offenders” as they were referred to in the study, have a higher level of self-esteem. The explanation with the most support highlights the importance of considering individual coping resources (Greve & Enzman, 2003:12). MacKenzie and Goodstein (1985) were of the opinion that individual differences could not be ignored when considering inmate reactions to imprisonment. It was found that inmates entered the prison system with varied levels of preparation and prior knowledge of the system (either direct or indirect) and those who were less prepared were often most negatively affected (MacKenzie & Goodstein, 1985:400). Results from the study showed that long-term offenders in the early stages of their sentences had a significantly lower level of self-esteem



and were more prone to psychological issues such as depression (MacKenzie & Goodstein, 1985:406). Thus providing support for the perspective that self-esteem increases with the length of time spent in prison.

Another significant individual coping resource found to influence the degree to which self-esteem is affected during incarceration is accommodation and immunisation. Similar to Rogers' defensive mechanisms and the neutralisation techniques of Sykes and Matza, the concept of accommodation refers to the ability of individuals to adjust their own value system to minimise the dissonance experienced due to a new contradictory experience in order to incorporate it into the self. Immunisation on the other hand allows the individual to entirely ignore the new experience by denying or excusing it as a result of factors external to the self and therefore out of the individual's control (Greve, Enzmann, & Hosser, 2001:753). Greve et al., (2001) concluded in their study of 299 inmates that the use of accommodative strategies and a high level of immunising tendency were positively correlated with self-esteem. These factors were furthermore found to be used by some offenders in a correlational manner. In other words, it was established that those inmates who did not score highly in accommodation tendencies used immunising tendencies earlier on in their sentences to stabilise their sense of self. Whereas those who did use accommodative processes earlier on in their sentences were seen to begin to use immunising tendencies as their release dates drew nearer as they would need to begin to justify their behaviour to society (Greve et al., 2001:758). Self-esteem at the beginning of the sentence is said to decrease sharply if the individual is less inclined to use accommodative strategies and unable to immunise the situation. However a decrease in immunisation need not be interpreted in a negative light as this may indicate the individuals realisation of responsibility for and wrongfulness of their offending behaviour (Greve et al., 2001:760).

Lastly, the social reaction to those who were incarcerated needs to be included when exploring the effect of incarceration on offender self-esteem and recidivism. As mentioned in the previous chapter the effects of negative labeling or the stigmatisation that accompanies inmates may be far reaching with a negative effect on self-esteem (see 2.4.2.2). Inmates serving short sentences can thereby be said to be most at risk of developing a negative self-esteem, as they may not have sufficient time inside the correctional centre to benefit from rehabilitation programmes or to accommodate to the environment but still leave with the criminal label firmly attached. It has long been acknowledged that previous incarceration

elicits a stigmatising response from society and that this type of response may limit the ex-offenders chances of reintegrating and becoming a contributing member of society (Roberts & Jackson, 1991:558). Because of the overwhelming strength of the deviant label, the offender requires family to assist and support in portraying the individual in a more positive light to the community. However, it should also be acknowledged that these family factors may have had a significantly negative influence on the individual and contributed to the incarceration in the first place therefore, family related factors linked to self-esteem and recidivism will now be explored in more detail.

### **3.4 Family Systems and Structures**

One of the focal points of Rogers' theory is the role of significant others in the attainment and development of the self and the evaluative criteria for self-esteem (see 2.4.1.1). It therefore becomes necessary to explore the available research that account for the effect of family and peers on self-esteem and recidivism. The relation between parental incarceration and future offending of the children has been well established. Children of incarcerated parents have also been found to be more likely to partake in substance abuse, general deviant behaviour and have their first encounter with the criminal justice system as offenders at an earlier age (Murray, Loeber, & Pardini, 2012:273; Roettger & Swisher, 2011:1135). Brownfield and Thompson (2005:27) also found that whilst both peer appraisals and peer delinquency correlated positively with self-reported delinquency the former relationship was the strongest. This finding emphasises the importance of peer approval rather than simple behavioural mimicry in the process of increasing self-esteem. Therefore, even though the linkage to offending behaviour and recidivism may be of an indirect nature via the correlation between early delinquency and recidivism (see 3.1.4) the role played by significant others in the development of the initial behavioural pattern by the individual cannot be overlooked.

In a South African context, the effect of apartheid on marginalised families was vastly negative, creating family environments characterised in many instances by absent fathers, inconsistency in primary caregivers and on fewer occasions alcoholism. This less than ideal family environment could potentially have detrimental effects on the socialisation process due to a lack of emotionality and familial closeness (Bruce, 2006:35). Although, this was not always the case, as numerous resilient families managed, despite the many hardships, to

provide a nurturing environment for the children. However, the probability of such positive outcomes and avoidance of criminality decreased when there was a lack of resilience and the incorporation of factors such as low or unstable high self-esteem, acceptance of negative racial stereotypes and status insecurity linked to economic inequalities (Bruce, 2006:35). Though many of the inter-racial inequalities are no longer as evident in South African society, a divide within the previously marginalised community has begun to develop on economic grounds. This has resulted in a perpetuation of relative economic insecurity and a breakdown of the once high levels of solidarity in these communities and therefore also the family unit (Bruce, 2006:35). The effect of these negative familial factors are not unique to South Africa or apartheid, as many researchers have found similar family circumstances in offender research around the world (Benda, 2001; Benda, et al., 2001; Gendreau et al., 1996; Katsiyannis & Archwamety, 1997; Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978).

In the case of most incarcerated individuals, such negative familial factors could be considered detrimental to the stability of the familial support system, which could create a large problem when these individuals are released from the correctional centres (see 3.1.3). Though the adoption of new cognitive strategies, taught in many correctional treatment programmes to appropriately deal with stressful situations, may be necessary for effective reintegration, there arises a need for these strategies to be implemented and rehearsed in an accepting and conducive environment. This is however not a reality for numerous inmates as the level of involvement of friends and family in criminal activities could make it difficult to implement this new thinking due to the level of approval and self-esteem obtained through deviant and often violent behaviour from these significant others (Jordan & O'Hare, 2007:135). Therefore, it is imperative to include information on the nature of the family circumstances of offenders as well as the level of personal investment these individuals have in the opinions of family and peers when exploring possible causes of reoffending behaviour.

As one can deduce from the previous chapter the role of the family and peer group as significant others in the development of self-esteem and the socialisation process is of the utmost importance. This influence does however not end there as these significant entities have also been found to influence the effect of traumatic experiences and victimisation on individual self-esteem and future delinquency.

### **3.5 Early Victimisation**

Due to Rogers' phenomenological approach to the development of the self, interactions with the environment and the individuals that populate that environment are important factors to consider when analysing the current state of the self and the resulting self-esteem. Therefore, the effects of victimisation could have far-reaching influence on the self-evaluative process of individuals due to this significant linkage to social interactions and experiences. Rogers (1951:500-502) highlights the importance of a nurturing and caring environment in the early childhood years for the development of a perception by the child of being worthy of love and affection. This positive self-view significantly contributes to the ability of the individual to make positive behavioural decisions based on the concept of conscious balancing which allows the individual to account for the effect of their behaviour on others and therefore consider the consequences of their behaviour.

However, when an individual experiences abuse from a significant other, the dynamic may change. The source of comfort and care could become a source of pain and fear and instead of feeling loved and worthy of affection, the individual may begin to feel worthless and undeserving of love. This incongruent situation can lead to an individual who is emotionally unstable, socially dysfunctional, highly influenced by cognitive distortions and may respond poorly to stress later in life (Wade, 2009:175). This is indicative of Rogers' use of defence mechanisms whereby individuals distort or deny their experiences in order to maintain their self-perception. This distorted reality has also been linked to an increase in behaviour characteristic of anti-social personality disorder, which has been found to have a strong relationship with deviant behaviour (see 2.4.4). Peacock (2006:56) makes mention of a similar influence when discussing the effect of degradation on adolescent offenders within correctional facilities. He states that the conditions within the correctional centres such as a lack of privacy, basic nutritional provisions and basic ablutions may have an extensive effect on feelings of self-worth making the individuals feel devalued and unworthy of respect. These experiences and related feelings may negatively affect the individuals' ability to develop or maintain a positive sense of self, leading to the manifestation of aggressive behaviour due to the frustration associated with this sense of incongruity. Thus, experiences of victimisation or trauma could be said to contribute to level of self-esteem as well as a future propensity for deviant behaviour.

Research conducted by Kort-Butler (2010) concurs that both direct and vicarious experiences of victimisation or trauma can contribute to future offending behaviour and that the relationship between these two variables can be affected by level of social support and self-esteem. The effects of exposure to violence are mentioned in the study and reference is made to research that established that being directly victimised and witnessing violent victimisation has the potential ability to cause anxiety, depression and anger reactions. Even the anticipation of being victimised was shown to have similar adverse psychological effects and was also found to be linked to substance abuse (Kort-Butler, 2010:497). The study favours the explanations provided by Robert Agnew in his general strain theory that builds on Merton's anomie theory (see 2.3) by presenting a micro level perspective that emphasises the inability of individuals to avoid certain stressful circumstances. The theory states that negative relationships between family, peers, community or neighbours may cause strain and negative emotional responses such as anger and frustration that could lead to an increased propensity for deviance (Williams & McShane, 2010:204). Using the database from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health in the United States, a sample of 10 404 adolescents were included in the study. The results showed that individuals who experienced victimisation, those who witnessed victimisation and those who felt their neighbourhoods were unsafe were more likely to get involved in delinquent activities. High levels of self-esteem and social support were furthermore found to relate to a general decrease in delinquency. However, witnessing violence was found to predict delinquency in both the high and low self-esteem groups. Additional results purported a negative relationship between delinquency and level of household education whereas previous delinquency and peer delinquency were positively correlated to future violent delinquency (Kort-Butler, 2010:501).

In consideration of the family and experiential variables reviewed, the factors identified by Rogers as critical in the development of the self and the behavioural effects that manifest as a result of this process should be included in the understanding of both self-esteem and offending behaviour. An analysis of such processes may be fruitful to develop measures that could prevent recidivism. Therefore, due to the wide array of psychological, psychosocial or cognitive issues many offenders are confronted with, the role of the implementation and effectiveness of treatment programmes also requires attention.

### **3.6 Treatment and Intervention Programmes**

Treatment and intervention programmes in the correctional setting are often criticised in terms of their level of effectiveness. Throughout the chapter, mention has been made of numerous perspectives relating to which factors should be targeted in treatment programmes, with each of these perspectives being associated with varying support. Using recidivism rates as a measure of success for treatment programmes and considering the estimated 85% to 94% recidivism rate in South Africa referred to by numerous researchers (Dissel & Ellis, 2002; Muntingh, 2002:21; Williams & Fouche, 2008:151), one can understand the argument for the negative perspective. Though rehabilitation in general has been said to be ineffective, recidivism rates have been found to decrease in instances where programmes run under sound conditions (Dissel, 2008:157; Sarkin, 2008:28). However, it would be ill advised to simply rely on recidivism rates to determine the general usefulness of treatment programmes in prisons as there are a number of post-treatment factors such as family environment, availability of opportunities and even the offender willingness to change that may contribute to success. Thus if one is to consider the conditions of South African corrections (see 1.4.3), one would find that they are not in any state to be considered sound. It therefore also becomes important to consider the implementation of prison programmes, the perception of offenders by their communities, the presence of support systems upon release and even the conditions in which the programmes are run as it is through the incorporation of such factors that the true effectiveness of treatment programmes can be measured.

As it was mentioned in section 3.1 of this chapter, there are a number of dynamic and static factors which contribute to recidivism including, criminogenic needs, family and peer associations, psychological factors and exposure to the correctional environment. Of these factors mentioned, criminogenic and psychological factors were identified as the more popular targets of treatment programmes due to their significant correlations with offending behaviour. Some researchers have stated that recidivism will most likely be reduced by addressing criminogenic needs (Davies, 2007:98; Hollway et al., 2007:110). Substance abuse treatment, although widely accepted as a risk factor of recidivism, provides with mixed results ranging from weak correlations with reducing reoffending to recidivism rates as low as 20% after treatment (Hollway et al., 2007:110). A substantial body of work however provides support for the latter assertion that treatment of substance abuse decreases

recidivism (Hollway et al., 2007:111). This approach can however be seen as an attempt to deal with the symptoms of criminal behaviour as opposed to the causes. Referring to treatment programmes for child sex offenders in South Africa, Harris and Bezuidenhout (2010:28) state that such programmes are based on the therapeutic approach and tend to focus the efforts on the symptoms of the behaviour as opposed to the cause. However, research referred to in the study conducted by Righthand and Welch (2001) on behalf of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in the United States indicated that child sex offenders who had undergone treatment were half as likely to reoffend in comparison to both violent and non-violent youth offenders (Harris & Bezuidenhout, 2010:31). With that being said, it becomes necessary to consider available treatment options as well as to explore the focus of some of these programmes.

### **3.6.1 Treatment Methods**

Research conducted on the Boot Camp programmes, run as alternatives to formal incarceration in the United States, claims that the military style of detention, which has been in existence since 1888 aims to provide the inmates with discipline and structure. This approach is said to increase inmates' self-control, which will in turn assist them in staying out of a criminal lifestyle (Benda, 2001:711). Benda (2001:712) continues to highlight that the boot camp structure is less expensive and more expedient than traditional incarceration but also questions its true motive in terms of punishment, rehabilitation or "political expediency" and acknowledges that to date there had been little support to state that boot camps were any more effective than traditional incarceration options in reducing recidivism. Furthermore, recidivists were also more likely to perceive participation in the boot camp programme as an expedient route to being released as this alternative is often shorter than full prison sentences, whereas the non-recidivists participated more in the programmes, felt it benefitted them and stimulated them and they were able to gain support from the staff (Benda, 2001:723). However, research conducted after Benda (2001) found that programmes such as diversion, correctional boot camp and community based programmes show a general decrease in recidivism (Hollway et al., 2007:110). Research evaluating programmes such as the 'scared straight' programmes in the United States found that this type of programme had very little effect on juveniles' attitudes and were also not related to any kind of reduction in recidivism. The programmes takes juveniles who have been identified as problematic and exposes them to the prison environment in an attempt to deter them from embarking on a life of crime

(Bonta & Gendreau, 1990:362). The use of this specific programme in South Africa has not been recorded in the literature and can therefore not be comparatively examined.

The more commonly accepted form of treatment in terms of effectiveness has been the cognitive-behavioural approach. In a study on arsonists, researchers found that both adult and juvenile arsonists showed a low level of reoffending. This level decreased even further after the completion of cognitive-behavioural treatment programmes (Palmer, Caulfield, & Hollin, 2007:102). The use of educational programmes for arsonists had also shown to be quite effective as it included aspects of fire safety, risk factors and consequences of fire setting. This was also coupled with treatment of the psychosocial variety that often utilised cognitive-behavioural approaches to explore the psychological as well as social factors associated with arson (Palmer et al., 2007:102).

Furthermore, treatment programmes for sexual offenders were also found to be commonly based on cognitive-behavioural perspectives that aimed to alter individual attitudes that fostered thoughts and behavioural patterns associated with sexual offending (Williams & Fouche, 2008:152). The process involves teaching the individuals to take responsibility for their actions and learning how to manage certain stressors both internal and external (Williams & Fouche, 2008:157). With this in mind, the authors recommended that treatment of sexual offenders should thereby not focus on rehabilitation but rather on management of cognitive processes and perceptions (Williams & Fouche, 2008:159).

### **3.6.2 Self-Esteem in the Treatment Environment**

The consideration of self-esteem as an important psychological factor involved in motivating deviant behaviour can also be deduced in light of its popularity as a treatment target in rehabilitative programmes. The outcomes of numerous treatment programmes often involve increasing participant self-esteem to a level of functioning characterised by an increased willingness to recognise fault and accept change, thus decreasing behaviour leading to reoffending (Dissel, 2008:157; Oser, 2006:346). If however the perspectives of academics such as Baumeister et al., (1996) which propose a stronger link between unstable and narcissistically high self-esteem to aggression were to find support in the prison environment, the traditional low self-esteem link to deviance that currently influences numerous treatment programmes would need to be reconsidered. The general results of studies in the field of



correctional treatment have however lacked support for this alternative perspective. Studies have provided evidence to suggest that participation of sex offenders in cognitive-behavioural programmes increase self-esteem levels (Webster et al., 2007:214) and that high self-esteem was found to be indicative of treatment success for over 50% of participants (Fisher et al., 1998:7). These findings may however not be contradictory to the perspective of Baumeister et al., (1996) as they propose the unstable high self-esteem level to be linked to violent offending rather than sexual offending and actually mention the relationship between different levels of self-esteem and offence types (see 3.2). Another possible explanation could lie in the nature of the cognitive-behavioural therapy. As previously mentioned this type of treatment focuses on altering the participant's thoughts and attitudes around offending behaviour and may therefore also affect an unstable high self-esteem. The perception of violence and aggression as a positive social reinforcement could be changed through cognitive-behavioural therapy and replaced with more pro-social, non-violent alternatives.

Additionally, research on the individual factors related to self-esteem have also produced convincing explanations. The willingness of individuals to accept treatment can also be affected by the court process and the degree of social stigmatisation the offender is exposed to. It was found that sexual offenders may be more reluctant to participate in treatment programmes if they internalise the negative labels allocated to them during court proceedings which could decrease levels of self-esteem leaving the offender feeling incapable of change and thus untreatable (Edwards & Hensley, 2001:655). Low self-esteem can furthermore be considered detrimental to treatment effects as it has the potential to limit the individual's receptiveness to new experiences and change which is what many treatment programmes attempt to achieve by introducing the individuals to different ways to cope and deal with certain situations and emotions. Even successful completion of certain tasks within the treatment programme will not always have the desired effect as individuals with low self-esteem have a tendency to attribute anything positive to factors external to themselves and will thus not integrate the new perspective into their thinking patterns (Thornton et al., 2004:587). The perception of the offence and the accompanying emotions attached to it may also affect treatment success. Individuals with low self-esteem, who perceive themselves as 'bad', and therefore experience shame in reaction to their deviant behaviour, may experience greater difficulty in changing, as they could interpret the source of the problem to be an inherent part of who they are. Guilt reactions are, however more likely experienced by individuals with high self-esteem who tend to maintain the positive view of self but are more

likely than their low self-esteem counterparts to acknowledge the negative element in the behaviour and thereby be more receptive to change (Thornton et al., 2004:588). Sexual recidivism could therefore be linked to the relationship between self-esteem and the individuals' reaction to their behaviour. The cognitive distortions most likely possessed by those individuals who do not experience guilt or shame in reaction to their own deviant behaviour are more readily dealt with in the treatment environment and if present may not present as difficult a task as redefining the individual's definition and perception of the self.

### **3.6.3 Offender Adjustment and Reintegration**

As it was previously mentioned, 95% of the individuals who enter correctional centres will be released at some stage (Mpuang 2005, in NICRO, 2009:29). Though prison programmes that have been correctly implemented have been found to be effective, attention must also be focused on the environment in which the offenders are released into upon completion of their sentence. It was mentioned in section 3.2 that the environment into which many individuals are released are often filled with the same factors that lead the individual to engage in criminality in the first place. Therefore, the effectiveness and eventual success of the programmes provided inside the correctional centres can be said to be highly dependent on the manner in which offenders are reintegrated into society (Dissel, 2012:29).

The effects of isolation due to imprisonment and the non-involvement in the criminal justice proceedings on some of the most important familial and community-based support structures have not been identified as conducive to successful reintegration (see 3.2.3). The ability of these entities to assist in offender reintegration cannot be excluded from analysis as it is through the support of these social institutions that offenders may be able to minimise the stigmatising effects of incarceration and become self-sustainable and contributing members of society (Dissel, 2012:31). However, inadequate support may lead to the inability to secure legitimate means of sustainability, which may lead to an increase in stress that in turn increases the individual's risk of resorting to factors supportive of a deviant lifestyle (Dissel, 2012:31).

A suggestion to bridge this gap between the correctional facility and the community was found in an Australian study by Tamara Walsh (2006) in which she highlights the importance of throughcare. The term "throughcare" refers to the case management of incarcerated

individuals from the time they walk into the correctional facility until sometime after release, when they have independently established themselves as contributing citizens within the community (Walsh, 2006:111). This approach may be effective as it allows for the unique needs of offenders to be catered for and real *correction* to occur, however as a realistic option in South African correctional centres, with the problem of understaffed and under resourced centres (see 1.4.3), a suggestion of this nature might be difficult to implement.

To refer back to the implementation of newly developed cognitive strategies, it has been established that one's environment plays an important role in putting these new thought patterns to practice (see 3.2). This may become increasingly difficult when the individual is not given any opportunities to become self-sustainable through a lack of employment opportunities, exaggerated by either a lack of skills or community stigmatisation or both. The importance for skills development whilst inside the correctional centre is therefore also highly important (Dissel, 2012:30). Therefore, it can be said that the re-integrative efforts cannot only commence once the offender is released but rather while still in incarceration. Contact with a support system and knowledge of what to expect and where to go can provide the type of directed behaviour needed to avoid further recidivism.

The South African DCS currently provide a pre-release programme for this specific purpose. The programme aims to: prepare offenders for reintegration; prevent recidivism; ensure proper support systems are in place; restore relationships (through restorative justice practices); encourage offenders to take responsibility; build self-esteem and self-confidence. The programme is also structured around assistance with financial matters, relationships, health education, finding employment and includes relapse prevention for substance abusers (DCS, nd:14-15). However, in a report prepared by Tarisai Mchuchu-Ratshidi (2012) on behalf of the Network on Reducing Re-offending, the pre-release programme offered by the DCS has been defined as "something that exists on paper and is not implemented as it should be" (Mchuchu-Ratshidi, 2012:3). Reasoning for this statement is provided and factors such as staff shortages effecting the proper (if any) implementation of the programme are highlighted. Examples are given from correctional centres in Eshowe where a social worker from community corrections had to be used from neighbouring centres to conduct the pre-release programmes for Eshowe in addition to the commitments at two other centres. It was also mentioned that a number of offenders up for parole in Pollsmoor Medium A corrections

had not completed the pre-release programme but their file indicated that they had (Mchuchu-Ratshidi, 2012:3).

From the information presented, post-release efforts can be argued to be strongly correlated with reoffending behaviour and need to be implemented more effectively. Offenders need a support system, whether it be familial or provided by the DCS in the form of a halfway house to successfully apply the skills learned in the correctional centres. Social stigmas surrounding ex-offenders need to be addressed to possibly increase the number of opportunities available to the ex-offenders in terms of employment and community support (Dissel, 2012:32). Therefore, in addition to the treatment programmes provided in the correctional facilities, proper aftercare also needs to be provided if a significant decrease in recidivism rates is to be achieved.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In light of the information presented, one can deduce that in terms of the available research and perspectives involving self-esteem in the correctional setting, a significant relationship exists between self-esteem and reoffending behaviour. The exact nature of the relationship has however found mixed support (see 3.2). Due to the complex and inclusive nature of Rogers' perspective of the development of the self, a one-dimensional approach to the exploration of this concept will not be adequate. It was therefore imperative to include factors relating to the psychosocial, environmental, community, familial and demographic aspects of the offenders in order to establish a holistic understanding about the role self-esteem plays in influencing these individuals' behaviour. Therefore, in order to develop and nurture a healthy self-perception, assistance beyond the correctional centres is required to prevent offenders from reoffending. The information presented in this chapter along with the theoretical perspectives of chapter two will now be utilised in the development of testable hypotheses to assist in the fulfilment of the aims of this study and a greater understanding of the nature of the relationship between self-esteem and reoffending behaviour in a South African context.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Hypotheses**

In consideration of the information presented in the foregoing chapters, the theoretical and empirical perspectives associated with the role of self-esteem as a factor related to repeat offending behaviour has been explored in the international literature with some support in the South African context. However, more research is required to make more informed conclusions. Using the information presented, this chapter aims to present specific and testable hypotheses that will be utilised for the purpose of fulfilling the aims of the study outlined in chapter one (see 1.5). As a number of factors were found to relate to self-esteem and repeated offending behaviour both internationally and in South Africa, it was decided to assess the perspectives that were found to have substantial theoretical or empirical support. Hypotheses will be presented as either null or alternate hypotheses in order to illustrate the expected direction or presence of the effect (or lack thereof) of the relationship between the variables, followed by a full rationale grounded in the theoretical and empirical perspectives presented in the preceding chapters.

#### **Hypothesis 1: There will be a significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores amongst each offending category:**

- 1.1** Aggressive offenders will have a significantly higher mean self-esteem score than offenders who fall into the sexual, economic, narcotic and “other” offending categories.
- 1.2** Sexual offenders will have a significantly lower mean self-esteem score than offenders who fall into the aggressive, economic, narcotic and “other” offending categories.
- 1.3** Repeat offenders placed into the economic, narcotic or “other” offending categories will have significantly lower self-esteem scores in comparison to the mean self-esteem scores for the entire repeat offending sample.

The effect of self-esteem on behaviour is a complex phenomenon due to the importance of contextual factors related to the source of the evaluative criteria individuals use as a measure of appropriate and admirable behaviour (Rogers, 1951:499). As previously mentioned there is

little consensus about the exact nature of self-esteem's relationship with reoffending behaviour but that exploration of the available literature seems to provide evidence of support for a linkage between level of self-esteem and the types of offences individuals commit with specific reference to sexual and aggressive offences (see 3.2). Findings from various studies purport, that sexual offenders are more likely to have lower levels of self-esteem in comparison to non-offending populations (Oliver et al., 2007:304; Van der Hoven & Ovens, 2003:22; Webster et al., 2007:207) whereas, aggressive offenders have been found to have increased levels of unstable self-esteem (Baumeister et al., 1996:5; Beesley & McGuire, 2009:264; Bruce, 2006:34; Echeburua & Fernandez-Montalvo, 2007:261; Kernis et al., 1989:1019; Salmivalli, 2001:390).

Although the available research on self-esteem and its influence on the type of offence committed tend to be predominantly dedicated to sexual and aggressive offences, there is evidence available in the theoretical and empirical literature to suggest a linkage to other offending categories such as economic, narcotic and those classified as "other". For example, the research conducted by Gudjonsson and Sigurdsson (2004:78-79) on a group of university students discovered that students with lower levels of self-esteem were more likely to commit criminal acts for monetary gain or for enjoyment or excitement. It was also found that 73% of these individuals were in the company of their peers during the commission of their most serious offences. This lends support to Rogers' (1951) view on the behavioural impact of the individual need for positive regard in the form of an over reliance on peer approval. Rogers (1951) postulates that an over reliance on peer evaluations may lead to an alienation of personal values and beliefs in place of those regarded as more appealing by the peer group resulting in the formation of deviant subcultures with counter conventional beliefs and values as purported by Cohen (Williams & McShane, 2010:93). This denial of mainstream ideologies could result in a decrease in self-esteem and the adoption of deviant principles hence individuals who fall into the economic, narcotic and "other" offending categories can be said to have a lower level of self-esteem than non-offending individuals due to their denial of conventional norms and values reflected in their criminal behaviour.

**Hypothesis 2: Repeat offenders with high levels of exposure to the correctional environment will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than those with low levels of exposure to the correctional environment.**

- 2.1** Repeat offenders who have a high number of previous offences for which they were incarcerated will have higher self-esteem scores than those with a low number of previous offences for which they were incarcerated.
- 2.2** Repeat offenders who have spent a longer period of time in the correctional centre for their current offence will have higher self-esteem scores than those who have only been incarcerated for a short period of time for their current offence.

In order to achieve the third and final aim of the study, it becomes imperative to analyse the relationship between self-esteem and various other demographic, psychosocial and correctional variables. One of the correctional variables identified that could have a strong positive relationship with level of self-esteem is the amount of time spent in the correctional facility (Oliver et al., 2007:309; Oser, 2006:346). Extensive exposure to the correctional environment has been shown to result in an increased self-esteem due to the ability of the individuals to adapt to changes in the environment and identify behaviours held in high regard. The identification of appropriate behaviours has been said to stem from direct or indirect experience with the correctional environment thus influencing the offenders' level of preparedness for the prison sentence and thereby the individuals level of self-esteem (MacKenzie & Goodstein, 1985:400). This perspective has however predominantly found support in the international literature and due to the difference in conditions and cultures within different correctional centres in different countries it becomes important to assess the validity of this hypothesis in a South African context. Therefore, it has been established that long-term offenders in the early stages of their sentences have a significantly lower level of self-esteem and are more prone to psychological issues such as depression (MacKenzie & Goodstein, 1985:406).

**Hypothesis 3: Repeat offenders who have achieved a higher level of formal education will report significantly higher self-esteem scores than those who have not achieved a high level of formal education.**

This demographic variable has been established to be an important risk factor to repeat offending for both practical and cognitive reasons. Level of education was established to be an important factor to consider when interpreting data related to offender intelligence. This is because as a popular finding, researchers have deduced that offenders generally tend to have lower IQ scores than non-offenders (Gendreau et al., 1996:577). This is not always due to an inherent lack of intelligence but also a disruption in the formal schooling programmes due to the repeated vacillation in and out of the prison system (Dissel, 2008:158). The linkage between self-esteem and level of education is best established by considering Rogers' view of the need for positive regard and the accompanying close relationships formed with significant others that share the individuals' ideals (Rogers, 1951:499). This would therefore make the relationship between education and self-esteem dependant on how it is perceived in the community. Therefore, in terms of Cohen's subculture perspective it is purported that criminal behaviour is motivated by frustration and competition born out of the inability of individuals from lower social class backgrounds to achieve high social status as prescribed by the dominant middle class (Williams & McShane, 2010:93). If education is thereby seen as a upper class luxury or a definitive characteristic of higher social structures held in disregard by individuals from the lower socioeconomic strata, the relationship may be negative, however if the need to excel academically is positively viewed, the opposite may be true (Harris, 2009:13-14).

**Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant relationship between the self-esteem scores of repeat offenders from different age groups.**

The effect of age related factors on self-esteem can be said to be important although not as a direct factor. During the life span of an individual, there are certain times particularly in the early and adolescent years where the evaluative criteria used to establish self-esteem have a higher probability of change. During infancy the individual obtains the evaluative criteria from primary caregivers that tend to act as the core beliefs and ideologies of the individual throughout the lifetime and form the basis of the self-concept. As the individual ages and interaction with the social environment begins to increase, these core evaluative criteria



become confronted with those of other individuals which may or may not be similar or entirely different (Rogers, 1951:499). The perception of what is considered appealing therefore begins to change as societal experiences increase, effecting self-perceptions of worth. It is therefore the different types of interactions and experiences individuals have throughout their lifetimes that effect level of self-esteem more than the actual aging process. Therefore, as the individual ages and new experiences tend to decrease the perception of self and level of self-esteem tends to become more consistent, increasing in stability as the individual matures (Block & Robins, 1993:919; Leary, 1999:33). Due to the adult nature of the sample population of this study and bearing in mind the consistent nature of self-esteem throughout adulthood it can be said that any changes in self-esteem scores found to exist will not be independently related to age.

**Hypothesis 5: The structure and composition of repeat offenders' own families will not have a significant effect on self-esteem scores.**

- 5.1** There will be no significant difference in self-esteem scores between repeat offenders who are single, married, divorced or widowed.
- 5.2** The self-esteem scores of the repeat offenders will not be significantly related to the number of children they have.

In the empirical literature factors related to marital status and number of own children have found mixed results in South Africa as well as internationally and are therefore used predominantly for descriptive information purposes (Foster, 2011:10; Williams & Fouche, 2008:151). From a theoretical perspective it could be argued that individuals who subscribe to the traditional cultural norms and values of their societies associated to family composition would have an increased self-esteem due to the accompanying positive regard they would receive from significant others (Rogers, 1951:499). However, in the context of a post-apartheid, democratic society South Africa has seen an increase in intra-racial inequality particularly on economic grounds resulting in a further increase in perceptions of relative economic insecurity and a breakdown of the once high levels of solidarity in these communities and therefore also the family unit (Bruce, 2006:35). This dissolution of the importance of the family unit may have a similar effect on the importance of cultural ideologies often passed on by the parents or primary caregivers resulting in a decrease in the perception of a need for strict adherence to cultural practices.

**Hypothesis 6: Repeat offenders who come from families with high socioeconomic status will not have significantly different self-esteem scores to those whose families have a low socioeconomic status.**

Socioeconomic status (SES) has been found to only have a moderate effect on self-esteem. This effect has furthermore been linked to age and residential environment and is therefore considered an additional factor in its relationship to self-esteem as opposed to a causal variable (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978:57). SES has been found to play a moderate role in affecting self-esteem as individuals get older and have essentially no effect during childhood. This can be attributed to the homogenous nature of many childhood experiences with others in terms of SES as school and neighbourhood environments tend to consist of families in similar economic positions. The comparative nature of self-perceptions as purported by Rogers (1951) begin to become more influential when individuals leave these homogenous environments and venture out into the working environment where the SES of others is more diverse and may therefore influence levels of self-esteem. However due to the current dearth of research on the link between SES and self-esteem in the correctional environment, research within the South African context is required in order to make definitive conclusions.

**Hypothesis 7: The level of parental closeness experienced by repeat offenders will be significantly related to level of self-esteem:**

**7.1** Repeat offenders who recorded a high level of closeness to their mother or mother figure will have higher self-esteem scores than repeat offenders who were not close to their mother or mother figure.

**7.2** Repeat offenders who recorded a high level of closeness to their father or father figure will have higher self-esteem scores than repeat offenders who were not close to their father or father figure.

A positive bond between individuals and their primary caregivers is vitally important for the development of a stable sense of self, capable of incorporating positive and negative experiences into the self-concept. The ability to incorporate all experiences into the self, stems from an open and understanding upbringing characterised by unconditional positive regard where boundaries are set according to positive and negative behaviour. This would ideally entail the need for an accompanying explanation with all reprimands that it is the

behaviour of the individual that is being disapproved of and not an inherent characteristic of the individual (Maddi, 1980:100; Meyer et al., 1997:476).

Rogers was not the only theorist to place such emphasis on the parent-child relationship as numerous other theorists from different perspectives such as Freud, Erikson, Sellin and Miller all mention such factors in their perspectives of personal development and the effects on behaviour (see 2.4.1.1). This may be because the primary caregivers also tend to provide the first experience of socialisation and could therefore be perceived by the child as the custodians of what is considered culturally and socially acceptable. The bond between primary caregivers and children can therefore be considered an essential part of the development and maintenance of the self-esteem as it is from these interactions that the evaluative criteria for acceptable behaviour are obtained (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:170). This knowledge of what is expected and considered socially appealing coupled with the opportunity to incorporate positive and negative experiences into the self-concept without condition allows for the development and maintenance of a stable high self-esteem. As these factors are highly culture specific it becomes essential to establish the presence and magnitude of the relationship between self-esteem and parental closeness in a South African context in order to determine its relevance as a factor to consider in future research.

**Hypothesis 8: Repeat offenders from structurally impaired homes will have significantly lower self-esteem scores than those who were raised by intact family units.**

As mentioned in the rationale for hypothesis 8, Rogers (1951) identifies the family unit as being of the utmost importance in terms of the development of the self and thereby self-esteem. Though healthy familial bonds are essential, the structure and composition of the family unit must be considered as it greatly influences the availability of parents or primary caregivers to which the bonds previously mentioned should be formed. Erikson and Miller both make specific mention of the role of the mother in the developmental process. Erikson views the presence of a mother as necessary for the development of personal independence and responsibility of the child (Peacock, 2006:33). Miller on the other hand refers to the role of single mothers in influencing the structure and composition of the family unit. It is said that single mothers from lower economic strata may have an increased tendency to engage in multiple short term relationships which could have negative effects on the development of ideas of masculinity specifically for male children resulting in these young boys seeking role

models in street gangs or deviant groups which provide a sense of security and consistency (Brown et al., 1998:321; Williams & McShane, 2010:100). Therefore, structurally impaired families can be conceptualised as families characterised by the absence of one or more parent due to reasons of abandonment, death or general absence.

**Hypothesis 9: Repeat offenders who have a high need for acceptance from significant others who have been in trouble with the law will have significantly higher levels of self-esteem than those who do not have significant others who have been in trouble with the law.**

**9.1** Repeat offenders with a high need for familial acceptance from parents or siblings who were in trouble with the law will show significantly higher self-esteem scores in comparison to those who do not have parents or siblings who were in trouble with the law.

**9.2** Repeat offenders with a high need for peer acceptance from friends who were in trouble with the law will show significantly higher self-esteem scores in comparison to those who do not have friends who were in trouble with the law.

The importance of significant others in the development of the evaluative criteria used by individuals to guide their behaviour in a socially accepted manner has repeatedly been emphasised by Rogers (1951:499) in the development of the self. It has also been said that the approval or disapproval of individuals by significant others does not have to be experienced directly and is significantly affected by the individuals perception of approval (Meyer et al., 1997:476). Similarly, the norms and values taught by the significant others to the individual do not always reflect those of general society but also the culture and passed experiences of the significant others. This factor is significant when considering the labelling phenomenon of ex-offenders as the stigmatisation associated with prison exposure is significantly related to the perceptions of criminal behaviour by the community and significant others. One can therefore postulate that if the significant others of individuals have been exposed to the prison environment and the individuals hold these others in high regard, it may be possible that a lower level of stigmatisation by associated ex-offenders will occur upon release thus, minimising the negative effects of labelling on self-esteem.

**Hypothesis 10: Repeat offenders who have experienced abuse will have a lower level of self-esteem than those who have not experienced abuse.**

- 10.1** Repeat offenders who experienced familial abuse will have significantly lower self-esteem scores than those who did not experience familial abuse.
- 10.2** Repeat offenders who experienced abuse before they entered the correctional centres will have significantly lower self-esteem scores than those who did not experience abuse.

**Hypothesis 11: Repeat offenders who have experienced victimisation inside the correctional centre will have a lower level of self-esteem than those who have not experienced victimisation inside the correctional centre.**

- 11.1** Repeat offenders who were victimised inside the correctional centres will have significantly lower self-esteem scores than those who were not victimised.
- 11.2** Repeat offenders who witnessed violence inside the correctional facility will have significantly lower self-esteem scores than those who did not witness prison violence.

The following rationale refers to both hypotheses 10 and 11 as these hypotheses refer to the experience of victimisation, although within different contexts. The effect of victimisation on individual self-esteem has been well documented, and established to have far-reaching implications for both level of self-esteem as well as propensity for future delinquent behaviour (Kort-Butler, 2010; Wade, 2009:175). Individuals who have directly experienced victimisation or abuse have been found to show increased anxiety levels as well as depression and aggression. Vicarious experiences have yielded similar results with those witnessing violence or hearing about it showing similar reactions. All these experiences may lead to the development of fear of one's own neighbourhood or surrounding areas resulting in hyper-vigilance and anxiety that may be expressed in aggressive reactions. In consideration of Rogers' (1951:500) perspective abuse from a family member would have a specifically negative effect on the individual's perception of self and valuation of self-worth. This is due to the importance of the primary caregiver as a source of comfort and care which allows the individual to feel worthy of love and affection and thereby have a positive sense of self. However, in the case of an abusive relationship this source of positive affect is replaced with a source of pain and discomfort which may have an opposite effect creating a situation

whereby the individual feels inherently worthless and incapable of being loved or valued. Self-esteem in these instances has been found to be affected as a result of the experiences as well as play a role in moderating the influence such experiences have on the individual. Peacock (2006:56) found that degradation in the correctional environment has a negative effect on adolescent identity development and self-evaluations that could result in a decrease

in self-esteem. Similarly, Kort-Butler (2010:501) found that individuals with high levels of self-esteem and social support were less likely to engage in future criminal behaviour than their low self-esteem and low social support counterparts despite both groups having experienced some form of victimisation. The only exception was for individuals who had witnessed violence as both the high and low self-esteem groups showed an increase in delinquency in this category. Therefore, there is a general consensus that victimisation experiences at any stage in the life time are negatively related to self-esteem but more research is required.

**Hypothesis 12: Repeat offenders who receive visits in prison will have a significantly higher level of self-esteem than those who do not receive visits.**

Rejection by the family unit can be a traumatic experience for offenders whilst in the correctional facility as well as upon release. The importance of familial support as an influencing factor of self-esteem has been emphasised on numerous occasions but it has also been found to positively affect the likelihood of recidivism (Dissel, 2008:158). Strong familial support has been shown to decrease recidivism due to the provision of a place where the ex-offenders' basic needs can at least be cared for whilst they acclimatise to life outside the correctional centre and possibly search for legitimate means to become contributing citizens within their communities (see 3.1.3). The mere presence of family visits could increase offenders' self-esteem as a symbolic gesture to indicate to them that whilst their families may not agree with or condone the offences or the behaviours associated therewith, they are still willing to visit the individuals showing that they still care for them as people. This could be interpreted as an expression of unconditional positive regard and the assurance that the offenders are still worthy of affection. An assurance Rogers (1951:502) often speaks about as an important variable in the development of a healthy sense of self.

**Hypothesis 13: Repeat offenders who have a positive perception of the conditions in the correctional facilities will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than offenders who have negative perceptions of the conditions within the correctional facilities.**

The conditions in South African prisons have been well documented and often create an image of institutions that lack basic provisions from sanitation to nutrition and healthcare (see 1.4.3). Research has furthermore shown that exposure to such conditions may increase the prevalence of psychological illnesses such as depression, anxiety and other stress related issues as well as more serious personality and conduct disorders (Dissel, 2008:158). The prison experience is however not perceived by every offender in the same manner. To Rogers the role of perception is of vital importance in terms of the magnitude of which the individual will be affected by certain circumstances. Due to his humanist approach to human understanding Rogers often mentioned that the reality of individuals was not an objective variable but rather an incredibly subjective experience, characterised by interactions and experiences symbolised according to the perceived manner in which it occurred to the individual (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:168; Rogers, 1951:492). Therefore, the value of an experience or interaction as well as the effect it would have on the individual would depend largely on how it was perceived by the individual.

**Hypothesis 14: Repeat offenders who participated in treatment programmes will display a significantly higher level of self-esteem than those who did not participate in treatment programmes.**

Despite the generally negative perspectives of treatment programmes in correctional centres, such programmes have been shown on numerous occasions to improve self-esteem when conducted correctly and under appropriate conditions (Dissel, 2008:157; Sarkin, 2008:28). Even in the midst of findings disputing the effectiveness of treatment programmes in the correctional setting, numerous studies have still shown an increase in self-esteem and associated a high self-esteem result with increased treatment success (Dissel, 2008:157; Fisher et al., 1998:7; Oser, 2006:346; Webster et al., 2007:214). The exact nature of the relationship has however been disputed as some researchers found an initially high self-esteem to be more indicative of treatment success than an increased self-esteem due to treatment. This perspective could be explained by the assertion that individuals with low self-

esteem are less likely to believe in their own ability to change where as those with high self-esteem are capable of acknowledging the negative event without internalising it and thereby being more receptive to change (Thornton et al., 2004:588).

**Hypothesis 15: The perception of the community reaction by the repeat offender upon prior release will be significantly related to self-esteem scores:**

**15.1** The level of self-esteem achieved by repeat offenders will be significantly affected by the perception of fair treatment by the community upon release.

**15.2** Repeat offenders who felt that their community were supportive upon prior release will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than those who did not receive any support.

As it was previously mentioned in the rationale for hypothesis 12, to Rogers the role of perception is of vital importance when assessing the effect certain experiences have on individuals' sense of self. Perception and community support are furthermore identified by Rogers (1951) as two essential factors in the development and maintenance of the self. In contrast to Freudian perspectives that view society as inherently hostile, Rogers perceives society as an entity in the phenomenal field that has the ability to either facilitate or hinder the actualisation process (Maddi, 1980:99-100). Society that reflects the positive, unconditional regard required in Rogers' ideal family situation can be said to further assist the development of a healthy self-concept. However, the reality of this situation is that as individuals grow older they are exposed to many different individuals, cultures, perspectives and evaluative criteria. This broad new exposure has the ability to create a situation whereby individuals may feel the need to behave in a manner that would be against their norms and values in order to gain positive regard and be held in high esteem by others. It is at this stage when society is viewed as detrimental when it is perceived by individuals to require an alienation of their own ideologies and be replaced by those considered more desirable by society (see 2.1). Therefore, the power of society's perceived opinion of an individual in the current context of the study should be assessed and the strength of the phenomenon determined as a feasible factor that could directly affect the participants' level of self-esteem.



## **Chapter 5**

### **Research Design**

In order to test the hypotheses presented in chapter 4 and thereby fulfil the aims of the study, it was imperative to select the appropriate methodological procedures and techniques. The research design of a study provides the framework for aspects related to how the study is to be carried out in the field. A good research design encompasses adherence to the rules of scientific investigation along with a level of creativity which allows the researcher to be flexible within the context of the study (Bayens & Roberson, 2011:24). This chapter will outline the research methodology along with the assessment instruments used in the study to fulfil the aims outlined in chapter one (see 1.5). This will be followed by a presentation of relevant participant characteristics in order to provide a description of the overall nature and characteristics of the sample. Lastly, the statistical techniques used to analyse the collected data will be presented and explained.

#### **5.1 Methodology**

The research strategy of this study can be described as being descriptive and explanatory in nature due to the type of variables considered and the unique context in which the study takes place. As there is very little research available on the level of self-esteem of repeat offenders in a South African context, the overall findings will be relatively unique. Bayens and Roberson (2011:28) define descriptive research as the search for information related to a relatively unknown population or phenomenon for the sake of providing a representative description. The information is often represented in terms of means and frequencies that are used to describe the population or phenomenon for the sake of generalised qualitative comparison across contexts. Explanatory research indicates a progression in the investigative process as it attempts to explain certain phenomenon in terms of the presence or absence and nature of certain relationships between key variables (Babbie, 2007:90; Bayens & Roberson, 2011:29). In the context of this study an explanatory approach will allow for conclusions to be made about the relationship between self-esteem, repeat offending and related factors and thereby use this understanding to implement strategies to alter or influence certain treatment outcomes and correctional practices or procedures.

In order to fulfil the aims of the study it was decided to adopt a quantitative approach as this would allow for the statistical assessment of the nature of the relationships between factors related to self-esteem and repeat offending behaviour as well as demographic, correctional and environmental factors. The quantitative research methodology requires knowledge of the phenomenon to establish an accurate range of appropriate answers to questions related to relevant factors (Bayens & Roberson, 2011:25). This approach is characteristic of deductive reasoning as a thorough understanding of the theoretical perspective is necessary. Therefore the self-concept theory of Rogers (1951) was utilised to inform the research process and assist in the development of testable hypotheses (Babbie, 2007:46).

The quantitative methodology furthermore permitted the use of questionnaires which allowed for the maintenance of uniformity in data collection across the sample population. To ensure uniformity and full completion of the questionnaires it is important for the researcher to be present during the explanation of the process and answer any possible questions. This form of research allows for the maximisation of sample size in order to gather sufficient data to draw accurate conclusions (Babbie, 2007:276).

## **5.2 Measuring Instruments**

Due to the quantitative nature of the study, it became important to capture the data in a manner that would allow for statistical coding in order to transfer the data into a statistical programme for analysis. Two questionnaires were used, namely the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (Adult Form) and a *Self-Concept and Multivariate Questionnaire*.

### **5.2.1 Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Adult Form)**

As it was mentioned in Chapter 2, although Rogers did not specifically mention the term “self-esteem”, he did provide an explanation of the development of the evaluative process of the self and the sources of the evaluative criteria individuals use to determine their level of positive regard by others. It was this insight into the causal and developmental aspects of the self that laid the theoretical foundation for the development of the first *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* by Stanley Coopersmith in 1967.

Eight years later in 1975, the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (Adult Form) (SEI-AF) was developed as an adaptation of Coopersmith's second version known as the School Short Form. The SEI-AF consists of 25 short statement items that were adapted from the School Short Form to be more relevant to individuals less bound to parents and school. Participants are required to read each item and rate it as either "like me" or "unlike me" (see Appendix 1). It is important to note that during administration, caution needs to be exercised as not to influence the participants' responses by making any of the statements seem inherently positive or negative (Coopersmith, 2002:7). A preliminary total is then obtained by adding all the positively answered items together for a score out of 25. Therefore, one point would be awarded for each positive statement item that the participant rated as "like me" and negative items would be scored in reverse resulting in a point allocation for negative statement items rated as "unlike me". The Total Self Score is then obtained by multiplying the score out of 25 by four in order to get a maximum possible score out of 100 (Coopersmith, 2002:8).

The SEI-AF measures the individuals self-evaluations in four domains namely, general self, academic, social and home related factors. The adult adaptation of the inventory was developed for use by individuals aged 16 and above and has been found to be suitable for use by both males and females of all ethnic groups in the United States (Coopersmith, 2002:20-22). After the adult form was developed using a sample of 647 high school and college students, further assessments were performed to establish reliability, validity and normative scores.

The SEI-AF was administered to 226 college and university students and the results produced for the various subgroups (gender, ethnicity, age) showed high reliability with Cronbach Alpha's ranging from .78 to .85 (Coopersmith, 2002:22). In terms of validity the school forms of the SEI have shown high validity in all aspects of self-esteem assessment. In two separate studies with a combined total of 15200 participants it was concluded that the SEI has high construct validity as a measure of factors related to global self-esteem and that it is widely applicable to other populations (Coopersmith, 2002:13). Furthermore, Blascovich and Tomaka (1991:121) make mention of research conducted indicating that the Coopersmith SEI-AF has also been found to correlate strongly with other popular self-esteem assessments such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (.55), the Janis-Field FIS (.72) and the Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (.77). The adult form has also been shown to have a .80 correlation of total scores with the short form and thus with this point in mind as well as the stable nature of

self-esteem throughout the lifetime similar validity can be assumed (Coopersmith, 2002:2). High, medium and low self-esteem is also said to vary and it is therefore recommended to consider scores in the upper and lower quartiles as high and low self-esteem respectively and those that fall within the interquartile range to be indicative of average or medium self-esteem (Coopersmith, 2002:8).

As there is no available normative data for non-offending South African samples for the CSEI-AF, comparisons will be made from the normative data of the relevant subgroups identified in the CSEI-AF manual:

Table 1

*Normative scores and reliabilities for selected subgroups of the CSEI-AF research*

Subgroup	N	Mean	SD	Cronbach Alpha
Males	114	68.4	18.5	.79
Black	24	71.2	18.4	.79
Ages 20-34	148	71.7	18.8	.81

(Coopersmith, 2002:22)

Table 1 indicates the normative scores for the CSEI-AF found in the assessment manual. Of the 226 total participants, 114 were male with mean self-esteem scores of 68.4 and a standard deviation of 18.5. Black participants made up 10.6% of the total sample and scored marginally higher than the male only subgroup with a mean self-esteem score of 71.2 and 18.4 standard deviations. The last subgroup relevant to the current study consists of participants who fell between the ages of 20 and 34 years of age. The mean self-esteem score for this subgroup is 71.7 with 18.8 standard deviations. The Cronbach alpha column indicates that the CSEI-AF can be considered a reliable test of self-esteem for all three subgroups with scores ranging between .79 and .81. A generally accepted Cronbach alpha is said to be between .7 and .8, however for assessments dealing with psychological constructs, a value below .7 is said to be expected due to the diverse nature of the constructs (Field, 2009:675). The CSEI-AF results for the current study can be seen in Table 2 below:

Table 2

*Average CSEI-AF scores for repeat offender research participants*

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Cronbach Alpha
CSEI-AF Score	73	28	88	61.37	15.78	.69

It was established that individuals who participated in the current study had an average self-esteem score of 61.37 with a standard deviation of 15.78. The highest self-esteem score of the 73 repeat offenders was 88 and the lowest score was 28. The mean score for the reoffending sample is lower than the data for the normative subgroups presented in Table 1. It was furthermore established that for the repeat offender sample, the CSEI-AF produced a Cronbach alpha of .69 indicating an acceptable level of reliability and signifying that the test can be accurately utilised within the local South African context.

### 5.2.2 Self-Concept and Multivariate Questionnaire

In order to fulfil the remaining aims of the study, further information about the participants' offences as well as information relating to demographic, psychosocial and correctional variables was required. Using the information gathered from the theoretical perspectives and the literature on self-esteem and reoffending behaviour, the *Self-Concept and Multivariate Questionnaire* (Appendix 2) was developed to quantitatively assess the relationship between self-esteem and the required factors. This questionnaire consists of five sections and will allow the various factors to be quantitatively analysed and recorded. The five sections are outlined below:

#### A. General Information

This section consists of questions related to general demographic aspects of the participants and will be used predominantly for the sake of providing a sample description. Eight questions are utilised to gain information about age, gender, ethnicity, education, family composition, culture and related factors.

## **B. Childhood Information**

The importance of family related variables has been repeatedly expressed as a vital factor in Rogers' theory. Therefore, this section aims to gain information regarding the participants' upbringing and childhood family circumstances. Caregiver information, familial and peer relationship information, socioeconomic information and information regarding the participants' perceptions of childhood victimisation were gathered amongst other information through the formulation of twelve questions.

## **C. Offence Information**

Eight questions were formulated to assess the nature of the participants' current and previous offences, time related factors of incarceration as well as perceptions of community treatment after being exposed to the correctional environment. Thus factors related to participants' offences along with the community perceptions of those offences were assessed from the perspective of the participants.

## **D. Programme Participation**

Programme participation was a factor established to be strongly related to level of self-esteem in the literature and highly influenced by the popular perspective of a relationship between low self-esteem and offending behaviour. It is therefore important to establish which programmes participants had participated in. Two questions were asked with multiple answers allowed regarding participation in the programmes provided by *Phoenix Zululand* and an open ended question regarding any other form of programme participation.

## **E. Prison Experience**

In closing, seven questions were presented regarding the participants' experiences within the correctional centres. Questions about both direct and vicarious victimisation were put forward as well as those related to opinions of the correctional environment and indirect involvement in prison gangsterism. A question regarding prison visitations was also presented as an indicator of level of ties participants still held with general society.

### 5.3 Pilot Study

Before embarking on the full scale research process, a pilot or feasibility study was performed on ten participants from the sample population. Conducting a pilot study has numerous benefits to research. Pilot studies are useful for testing the feasibility of the research methodology and questionnaires in practice. This allowed for any unforeseen downfalls or problems to be identified and dealt with before embarking on the full scale research project (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001:1). Due to the deductive nature of the study, a pilot study was utilised to assess the administration of the questionnaires by conducting it under the same conditions as the final assessment. Participants were therefore welcomed and informed of the details, aims and purpose of the study and reminded that participation was entirely voluntary. It was stressed that if at any stage there was any confusion that questions were welcome and further explanation was provided. This also allowed for the accuracy and clarity of the verbal translation of the questionnaire items to be tested. After the completion of the pilot study no items required changing on the questionnaires however the meaning of a few questions needed to be clarified:

- Marital status (question 3) was determined to refer to the legal process of marital unions or divorce and not to traditional marriages alone.
- Number siblings (question 9) was determined to include all siblings who were alive during the participants childhood and adolescent years as many of the participants' siblings had passed away subsequent to this period in their lives.
- Experiences of abuse or victimisation (questions 20 and 32) were explained to the participants to include any experience/s they felt constituted abuse or victimisation. This explanation was derived from Rogers' (1951:492) theoretical perspective that emphasises the importance of the participants' perception of an experience in understanding the associated behavioural effect.

With those explanations included and dealt with during the pilot study it was established that the responses from the ten participants were of high enough quality to be included in the final sample.

## 5.4 Data Collection

The study took place with the assistance of *Phoenix Zululand*, an independent organisation that runs various projects in ten correctional centres in the Zululand area of KwaZulu-Natal. The fieldwork was conducted in five of the correctional centres where *Phoenix Zululand* had active programmes running namely the Eshowe, Melmoth, Mthunzini, Nkandla and Nongoma correctional facilities. The aim and purpose of the study was communicated to the heads of each correctional facility and permission was granted without fail.

Known repeat offenders were informed of the study and allowed to volunteer to participate. No language or literacy restrictions were prescribed as this would have greatly decreased the number of available participants because due to the relatively rural nature of the communities in the Zululand areas many participants were unable to speak or read English and a few participants were illiterate. Therefore with the assistance of *Phoenix Zululand* facilitators, all the questionnaires were verbally translated into isiZulu as all participants were able to understand this language. Facilitators also assisted in answering any questions and writing down answers for individuals who were unable either due to hand injuries or illiteracy. Participants were informed about the aims and purposes of the study as outlined in the instrument cover page (Appendix 3) and were given the opportunity to abscond from the study at any time. All participants completed the questionnaires with a 0% dropout rate. Informed consent forms (Appendix 4) were also signed and collected from each participant. This was the only place where the participants' names were recorded to ensure confidentiality. Questionnaires were numbered after collection for administrative purposes. Due to the need to translate each item on the questionnaires, the assessments took approximately two hours to complete. The assessments were administered to seven groups of participants with sizes of between nine and 13 participants with most of the groups consisting of ten participants. At the end of each session the questionnaires were collected and checked to ensure all the questions had been answered and that the written answers were clearly understood and accurately translated. Before final conclusion of the sessions participants were encouraged to raise any questions or concerns they may have had regarding the study and the facilitators were made available for anyone who needed debriefing or preferred to raise their questions or concerns on an individual basis.



## 5.5 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling was utilised in the selection of an appropriate sample for the study due to the practical limitations of drawing a sample from the entire repeat offending population in South Africa. This form of sampling is categorised under the nonprobability sampling techniques and allows for the selection of a sample based on the knowledge of the aims of the research study, previous research and the participants' representativeness of the greater population (Babbie, 2007:184; Bayens & Roberson, 2011:134; Huysamen, 1996:44). Due to the absence of statistical randomness in the sampling procedure of all nonprobability sampling, it would not be possible to generalise the findings to the entire prison population of South Africa. Conscious or unconscious researcher bias is also a general concern of nonprobability sampling (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:279). However, due to the specific nature of the required sample along with the voluntary nature of participation within the participating correctional centres, researcher bias was minimised as the researcher had little influence over the selection of individual participants.

In terms of access to correctional facilities and representation of the sample population it was decided to approach an organisation that had access to numerous centres in order to increase the diversity of the sample to ensure conclusions were not only applicable to one correctional centre. Therefore the *Phoenix Zululand* organisation was approached to assist with the logistical aspects of the study as the organisation has access to ten correctional centres in the Zululand area of KwaZulu Natal. With the aims of the study in mind, the reoffending behaviour required and due to an established dearth of research on mature populations, the sample was drawn from the adult male sections of five correctional centres in the Zululand area. Due to the cultural uniformity of the participants throughout the correctional centres in the Zululand area along with the assistance provided by facilitators from *Phoenix Zululand* at all the sessions in the administration of the assessments, proficiency in the English language was not a necessity. After the completion of seven sessions and with a 0% dropout rate the total sample size reached 73 research participants.

## 5.6 Description of Sample

With an understanding of how the sample population was collected for the purpose of this study it becomes imperative to provide a description of the general characteristics of the sample. Figure 1 indicates the chronological age distribution of the sample.

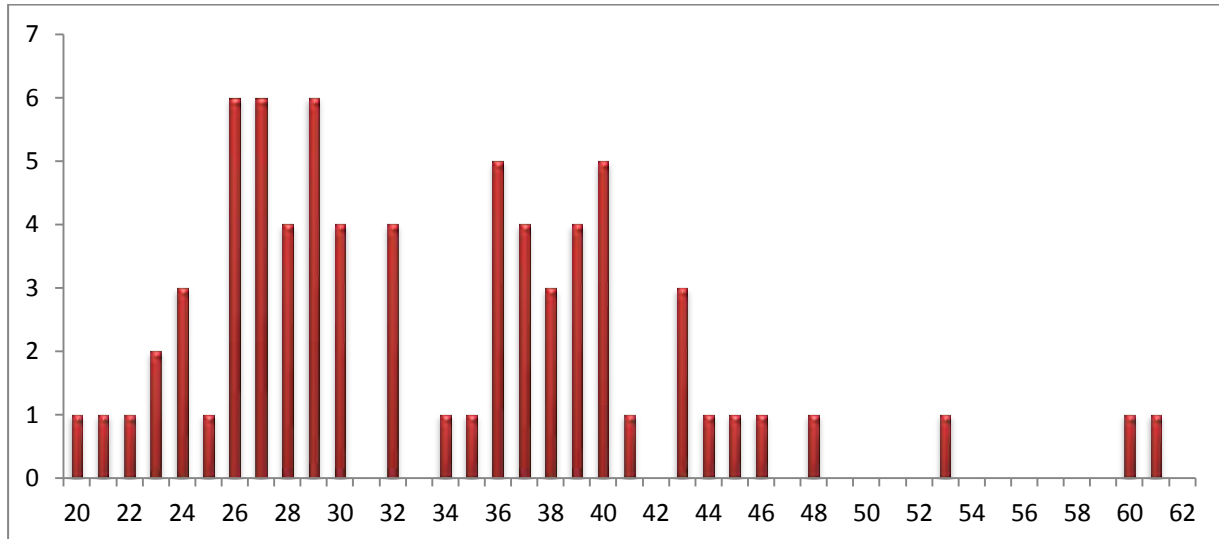


Figure 1. Age distribution

The mean age of the participants for the study is 33.59 years with a standard deviation of 8.48, while the sum of the sample ages is 2452. The age range was spread over 41 years with the youngest participant being 20 years old and the oldest being 61 with 41.1% of participants between the ages of 26 and 32 years old.

Table 3 represents the marital status of the participants.

Table 3

<i>Marital Status</i>		
Marital Status	N	%
Single	69	94.5
Married	2	2.7
Divorced	1	1.4
Widowed	1	1.4

A large majority (94.4%) of the participants were classified as single with only 2.7% being married and 1.4% of participants being divorced or widowed respectively. As the legal (customary and common law) classifications of various marital statuses were utilised, the “single” category included individuals who had girlfriends or long term partners. The reason

for utilising the legal definitions of marital status and thereby clustering these factors under the “single” category was for the sake of understanding as numerous inmates had long-term girlfriends who they considered a “wife” but no formal ceremony had taken place. It was determined that the inclusion of additional categories would only add to the difficulties in translation and participant understanding. Adding to family composition, the number of participants own children is presented in Table 4.

Table 4

*Frequency Distribution of Number of Children of the Research Participants*

Number of children	N	%
0	15	20.6
1	16	21.9
2	16	21.9
3	8	11
4	4	5.5
5	5	6.8
T	3	4.1
8	2	2.7
9	2	2.7
12	1	1.4
13	1	1.4

The most common frequencies for the number of own children were the no children, one child and two children categories with these categories collectively accounting for 64.3% of the total population. Individually, 20.5% of the population had no children and participants with one or two children each contributed to 21.9% of the sample respectively. The numbers of this factor ranged between zero and 13 with zero being the least amount of children and 13 being the highest amount of children recorded for a single participant.

In terms of ethnicity, the entire sample population consisted of participants who were black. It must however be noted that the reason for this finding can be due to the ethnic composition of the rural Zululand area in which the study took place and is not representative of the entire offending population in South Africa. The cultural composition of the sample has also been presented in Table 5.

Table 5

<i>Cultural group</i>		
Cultural Group	N	%
Xhosa	1	1.4
Zulu	71	97.2
Tonga	1	1.4

The vast majority of the sample population (97.3%) classified themselves as Zulus with only one Xhosa participant and one individual classifying himself as “Other”. The individual who classified himself as “Other” was from a small village in the Zululand area and identified himself as a Tonga. The overrepresentation of Zulus can once again be attributed to the area in which the study was located as the name suggests the Zululand area has a long history as Zulu territory. The home language information shows a similar distribution. As expected the language predominantly spoken at home by the participants was Zulu (98.6%) with only the Tonga participant selecting the “Other” classification for home language as he spoke Tonga.

Level of school education is presented in Table 6.

Table 6

<i>Highest Level of School Education Obtained</i>		
Education	N	%
No schooling	3	4.1
Up to grade 4	9	12.3
Grade 5, 6 or 7	17	23.3
Grade 8 or 9	16	21.9
Grade 10	10	13.7
Grade 11	6	8.2
Grade 12	8	11
Trade	4	5.5

In terms of level of schooling completed by the participants, it was found that the most participants had either completed up to Grade five, six or seven (23.3%) or Grades eight or nine (21.9%). Only 4.1% of the participants had no schooling at all and 11% had completed grade 12. A further 5.5% of participants had continued their educational training beyond grade 12 with Trade certifications. The distribution for levels of education is graphically represented in Figure 2.

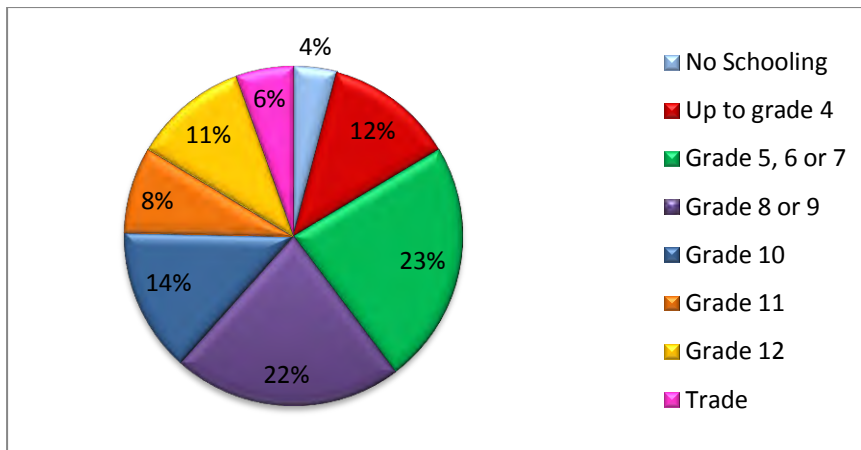


Figure 2. Highest level of school education completed

The number of siblings of the participants is presented in Table 7 together with the ranking of birth order presented in Table 8.

Table 7

<i>Number of siblings</i>		
Siblings	N	%
0	4	5.5
1	4	5.5
2	7	9.6
3	7	9.6
4	9	12.3
5	9	12.3
6	10	13.7
7	7	9.6
8	2	2.7
9	7	9.6
10	3	4.1
11	1	1.4
14	2	2.7
15	1	1.4

Table 8

<i>Birth Order</i>		
Birth Order	N	%
Only child	4	5.5
Oldest	19	26
Middle	33	45.2
Youngest	17	23.3

The participants were found to generally come from relatively large families with the highest percentage of participants having between four and six siblings. The highest percentage of participants had six siblings (13.7%), followed closely by participants with four and five siblings who contributed to 12.3% of the total each. Furthermore, the range of this factor was broad with the lowest score being zero and the highest number of siblings reaching 15. It was furthermore established that 45.2% of participants were also middle children in terms of birth order with 23.3% being the youngest and 26% being the oldest. The increased number of middle child classifications could be attributed to the large number of siblings as those who were not classified as oldest or youngest were clustered together into this category. Figure 3 provides a graphical representation of the birth order ranking.

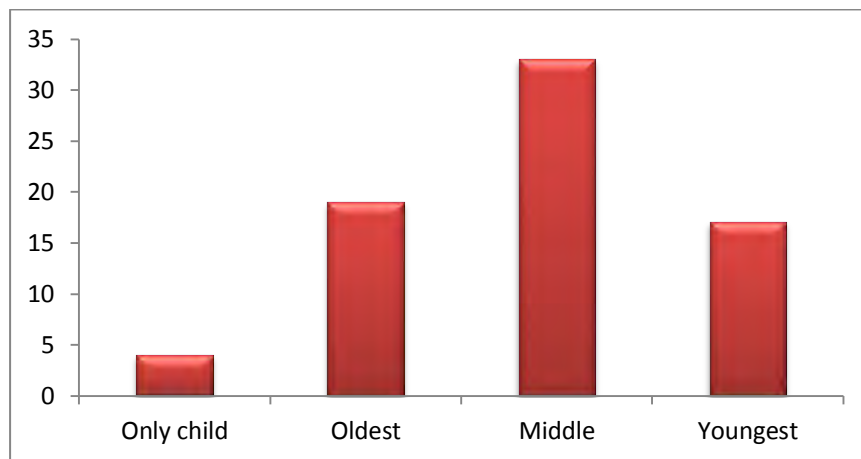


Figure 3. Birth Order

Information regarding the frequency of participants' exposure to the correctional environment and types of offences will be presented below. Table 9 provides information regarding the previous number of times participants had been incarcerated.

Table 9

*Number of Times Incarcerated in a Correctional Centre*

Time in prison	N	%
First	3	4.1
Second	18	24.7
Third	24	32.9
Fourth or more	28	38.3

It was established that 24 (32.9%) participants had been incarcerated twice before and were therefore serving their third sentence followed by 18 (24.7%) participants who were serving

their second sentence. Although the study required the participation of repeat offenders only, it was found that three (4.1%) of the participants were serving their first sentence. This was however due to having been given suspended sentences for previous offences, hence qualifying them as recidivists and therefore able to remain a part of the study. The remaining 28 participants (38.4%) who were serving their fourth sentence or more accounted for the largest portion of the sample for this factor.

Tables 10 and 11 contain information regarding the type of offences the participants are currently serving sentences for and have previously been sentenced for respectively. The South African Department of Corrections currently uses five categories to classify offences namely aggressive, sexual, economic, narcotics and “other”. In this study the offences included in the aggressive category were murder, attempted murder, common assault, assault with intent to do grievous bodily harm, armed robbery, common robbery and robbery with aggravated circumstances. Sexual offences included rape and attempted rape whereas narcotics included possession of and dealing in marijuana. Economic offences included common theft, stock theft, car theft, shoplifting, housebreaking and fraud. The offences categorised as “other” included those which could not be classified in the previous categories and therefore included possession of illegal firearm, parole violations, escape, breaking of protection orders, arson, intimidation and malicious damage to property.

Table 10

*Frequency Distribution of Current Offences*

Type of Offence	N	%
Aggressive	21	28.8
Sexual	6	8.2
Economic	43	58.9
Narcotics	1	1.4
Other	7	9.6

The distribution values in Table 10 do not add up to 100% as some participants committed multiple offences both within a single offending category and between different categories. Economic offences were found to be the most commonly committed offence amongst participants at 58.9%, followed by aggressive offences at 28.8%. Representation of sexual, narcotic and other offences were relatively low in comparison with all three categories collectively representing less than 20% of the sample’s offences.

Table 11

<i>Frequency Distribution of Past Offences</i>		
Type of Offence	N	%
Aggressive	35	47.9
Sexual	4	5.5
Economic	43	58.9
Narcotics	6	8.2
Other	12	16.4

With a number of offenders having been sentenced on more than two occasions, the number of offenders committing offences across offence categories increased. However, similar to the current offence results, economic offences also accounted for 58.9% of the sample's previous offences. Aggressive offences were committed by 47.9% of participants followed by 16.4% of offenders committing "other" offences such as parole violations, breaking of protection orders, escape, arson and malicious damage to property. The least common offences were sexual and narcotic offences which accounted for 5.5% and 8.2% of previous offences respectively. The distribution values in Table 13 also do not add up to 100% as some participants had previously committed multiple offences both within a single offending category and between different categories. Figure 4 shows the percentages of each offending category for both current and past offences.

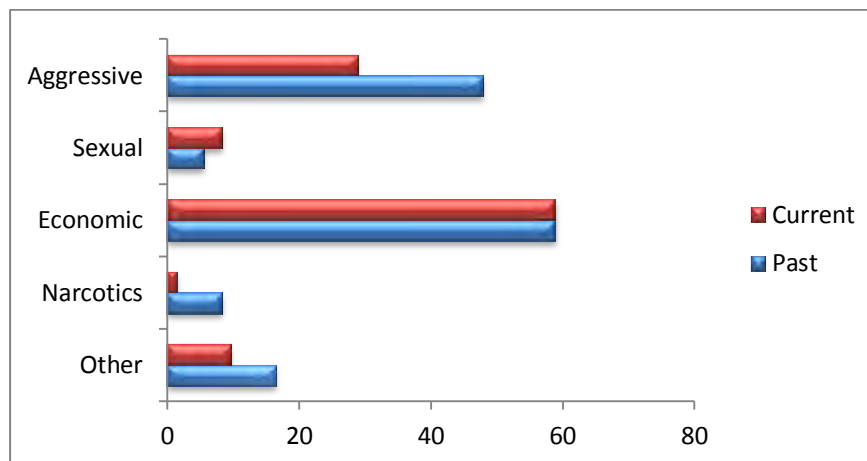


Figure 4. Percentages of Current and Past Offence Categories

Participants were also requested to provide information about the time dimension (length) of their respective prison sentences. Table 12 contains information about the length of the participant's current sentences.



Table 12

<i>Length of Current Sentence</i>		
Length of current sentence	N	%
3 to 6 months	7	9.6
7 to 11 months	3	4.1
1 to 2 years	9	12.3
2 to 3 years	24	32.9
4 to 5 years	4	5.5
More than 5 years	26	35.6

The length of the participants sentences seem to be skewed toward lengthier sentences as opposed to shorter sentences with 74% of participants (n=54) having been sentenced to incarceration for a period of two years and longer. Of the remaining 26%, participants with three to six month sentences constitute 9.6% (n=7), seven to eleven months constitute 4.1% (n=3) and participants serving sentences of one to two years constitute the remaining 12.3% (n=9). The length of time participants had been incarcerated for their offense/s at the time of assessment was also recorded and presented in Table 13.

Table 13

<i>Time Currently Served in Corrections</i>		
Time currently spent in prison	N	%
Less than 6 months	26	35.6
6 to 12 months	17	23.4
12 to 18 months	5	6.8
19 to 24 months	3	4.1
More than 2 years	22	30.1

Lastly it was found that the length of time participants had spent in corrections clustered on either end of the scale. 35.6% of participants had spent less than six months in the correctional centre at the time of assessment whereas 30.1% had been there for more than two years. This was followed by 23.3% of participants who had been in the correctional centre for between six and 12 months and those who had been there for between 12 and 24 months who collectively consisted of 10.9% of the total sample (n=8).

## 5.7 Statistical Techniques

The statistical techniques used to analyse the data can be grouped into two broad categories namely descriptive and inferential statistics.

### **5.7.1 Descriptive Statistics**

Due to the relatively unique nature of the study within the South African context statistical evidence of a descriptive nature was required. Descriptive statistics allow for all the raw data to be summarised and organised into smaller, more simple groupings representative of the actual factors under study (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007:6). Through obtaining frequencies, means and standard deviations the researcher is able to gain a better understanding of the nature of the sample as well as a preliminary overview of the magnitude of the similarities or differences between the individual participants as well as how much variability is present.

### **5.7.2 Inferential Statistics**

To increase the understanding of the factors under study it becomes necessary to explore the relationship between these factors in a statistical manner. Inferential statistics allow the researcher to assess the data obtained from a study in terms of whether or not there is a statistically significant relationship or how well the obtained data fits a statistical model representing the predicted nature of the relationship. The probability of the obtained data fitting a statistical model that represents no effect or no relationship between the variables is obtained and as that probability increases or decreases the researcher may conclude with increasing confidence the nature of the relationship between the variables as either non-existent or existent respectively (Field, 2009:49). This will allow for generalisations to be made, not only within the sample population but possibly of the greater repeat offending population of which they are representative (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007:7). The inferential tests used in this study refer to t-tests, analysis of variance (ANOVA) and correlation analysis.

#### **5.7.2.1 T-Test**

The t-test is essentially an assessment of mean scores between two groups or subgroups. A t-test can be used to compare the means between two different sample groups or two subgroups within a sample that consist of different participants. Assessment within a single group consisting of the same participants at different time intervals or under different conditions is also possible (Field, 2009:325). For this study, the mean self-esteem scores of different

subgroups within the sample will be compared in terms of different demographic, psychosocial and correctional variables. The resulting score will allow the researcher to determine whether or not the differences or similarities found between the two groups or subgroups are statistically significant. This will allow for generalisations to be made in relation to the greater repeat offending population (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007:276).

#### **5.7.2.2 Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

If however the means of more than two sample groups or in the case of this study, subgroups within the sample need to be compared it becomes necessary to utilise analysis of variance or ANOVA. ANOVA allows for the simultaneous analysis of the means of more than two variables using an *F-statistic* or *F-ratio* to test the null hypothesis which states that all group means are equal by comparing the amount of unsystematic variance in the variable to the amount of systematic variance. This allows for the Type 1 error rate (the probability of falsely rejecting the null hypothesis) or level of probability (usually set to 95%) to remain constant throughout the analysis (Field, 2009:348-349). In summary, if a significant *p-value* of less than .05 (5%) is found for the ANOVA the researcher can be at least 95% confident that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of two or more of the variables being tested. However, the data utilised for this type of analysis need to be parametric and therefore conform to a number of assumptions namely, normal distribution, homogeneity of variance, independence and interval data (Field, 2009:133). If any of these assumptions are not met, there are alternate, non-parametric statistical analyses available to ensure a more accurate statistical conclusion.

#### **5.7.2.3 Correlations**

The term correlation essentially describes the nature of the relationship between two factors. Unlike the t-test, correlational analysis identifies the presence of a linear relationship, the strength of that relationship as well as the direction in which the relationship moves. The variable that communicates this information is known as the correlation coefficient. The correlation coefficient will always be a number between -1 and +1 therefore the closer it gets to -1 or +1 the stronger the relationship between the two variables. A 0 value would however indicate no relationship at all. The “-” and “+” signs indicate the direction of the relationship and therefore a perfect negative relationship would imply that as one variable increases the

other variable decreases whereas a perfect positive relationship would indicate that both variables increase simultaneously (Field, 2009:170-172). When performing a correlational analysis the nature of the data collected would dictate what type of statistical test is most appropriate to use. As the majority of data collected for the current study was non-parametric a Spearman's correlation was utilised in order to find a monotonic relationship which refers to the consistent directionality of the relationship between the variables (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006:402).

#### **5.7.2.4 Statistical Significance**

The term statistical significance refers to the level of confidence with which a researcher can state that an effect or a relationship was present between variables during statistical analysis and that the observed effect was due to a true effect and not chance (Gravetter & Forzano, 2006:381). Conventionally an acceptable significance or *alpha* level is anything less than .05 ( $p < .05$ ) indicating that the probability of making a false conclusion is restricted to 5%. Setting the alpha level to .05 would mean that if a significant result is established the researcher can be 95% confident that the result was not due to chance and may be therefore reject the null hypothesis which states that there will be no effect (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2007:240). For the purpose of this study a significance level of .05 was selected.

### **5.8 Measures to Enhance Reliability and Validity of the Study**

In order to increase confidence in, and enhance the validity of the findings of a study it is important to utilise instruments that accurately measure the constructs related to the purpose of the study. In addition to the psychometric properties of the assessment instruments used, the method in which the data is collected and analysed can also aid in further increasing the overall reliability and validity of research. The term triangulation refers to the practice of collecting and analysing data through different techniques and interpreting it in light of the point of view provided by these different perspectives (Olsen, 2004:3; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2002:430). It is therefore that the study was inclusive of an integrated approach to the application of theoretical understandings by utilising both criminological and psychological perspectives to provide a more encompassing and complete explanation of the research findings.

As mentioned in section 3.1.5, the variety of concepts circumscribing self-esteem and subsequent divergent methodologies employed have been cited as some of the main criticisms of self-esteem research affecting validity and reliability. The level of specificity included in these research studies have also been said to depend largely on the theoretical perspectives used to guide the operationalisations and analyses of variables (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991:116-117). For the purposes of this study the Coopersmith SEI-AF was selected to be used in combination with Rogers' (1951) Self-Concept theory as a number of the items utilised in the inventory are drawn from Rogers' (1951) theoretical perspective. The interrelated nature of the theoretical perspective and the assessment instrument would thereby contribute to enhancing construct validity (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991:127; Coopersmith, 2002:6).

The validity and reliability of the instruments and procedures utilised in the study and the resulting data obtained were further enhanced by statistically determining the reliability of the self-esteem assessment, the inclusion of expert assistance and using the information gained from the pilot study. It was established that for the current sample, the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (Adult Form) produced a Cronbach alpha of .69 indicating an acceptable level of reliability for instruments assessing psychological constructs and signifying that the test can be accurately utilised within the local South African context (Field, 2009:675). The items selected for inclusion into the general information questionnaire were evaluated in terms of relevance to the aims of the study by an expert in research methodology. The use of an expert or professional opinion refers to the face or content validity of a scale and is used as an indication that the assessment is testing what it claims to be testing (Zikmund, 2000:282). The pilot study allowed for the testing of the administration process of the assessments as well as the most suitable translations and explanations of the assessment items. The establishment of a uniform process across sample groups as well as the use of standardised questionnaires is said to increase internal validity and reliability as it ensures the possibility of accurate replication and the acquisition of comparative data (Porta, 2008:151). The inclusion of procedural standardisation, sound research methodologies and procedures as well as analysis based on relevant empirical and theoretical perspectives have been found to increase the validity of a study (Babbie, 2007:146-147; Bayens & Roberson, 2011:86; Porta, 2008:252). Therefore, the process of theoretical triangulation and selection of

psychometrically sound assessment instruments ensured that the study met appropriate standards of validity and reliability.

## **5.9 Ethical Considerations**

As with all research, the safeguarding of the integrity and humanity of the research participants is of the utmost importance. As the factors explored in the study were of a deep seated psychological nature, it became an integral part of the research process to maintain a level of comfort and understanding on the part of the participants. It was therefore important to stress that all participation was voluntary and that there would be no material gain in participating in the study. The participants were also allowed to cease participation at any time during the research process if they felt uncomfortable. Due to the sensitive nature of the content of the study, confidentiality of the results and anonymity of the participants were strictly maintained and no names or identifiable variables were recorded on the questionnaires. Furthermore, the participants were made completely aware of the aim and purpose of the study to avoid any feelings of deceit or confusion and informed consent in the form of a written agreement was explained in a language the participants understood and signed before the commencement of the research procedures. Lastly, ethical concerns should not be limited to the considerations placed around the participants but should extend the entire length and breadth of the complete research process. The potentially subjective nature of the quantification process as well as the quantitative interpretations of the research data required sound methodological practices and accurate reporting to produce research that is thorough and empirical. An application for ethical clearance was submitted to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's Research Ethics Committee whereby full ethical clearance was granted before the commencement of the data collection process (see Appendix 5).

## **5.10 Conclusion**

With the information presented in mind it can be concluded that the current study has been executed within the framework of a sound and appropriate methodology to fulfil the aims of the study. The following chapter will therefore present the findings of the study in reference to the hypotheses postulated in chapter 4 based on the data captured from the measuring instruments (*Questionnaire* and *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory*).

## Chapter 6

### Interpretation of Results

In this chapter the results of the research study are discussed in relation to the hypotheses formulated in chapter 4 in order to empirically verify the aims of this study.

#### 6.1 Self-Esteem and Type of Offence

In order to compare the self-esteem scores of participants classified into different offending categories, participants were requested to provide information about their offending history. The mean self-esteem scores related to the offence or offences participants were serving their sentences for at the time of the assessment were used to test hypothesis 1.

##### 6.1.1 Descriptive Data

The mean self-esteem scores for repeat offenders were collected and grouped into different offending categories. The specific offences that constitute these categories have been outlined in the previous chapter along with the frequency and percentage distributions of each offending category. The offences categorised as “Other” include possession of illegal firearms, parole violation, breaking of a protection order, arson and intimidation. Table 14 outlines the descriptive data for the different offending categories.

Table 14

##### *Different Offending Categories*

Offence Category	N	%	Mean Self-Esteem Score	SD
Aggressive	21	28.77	68.57	15.63
Sexual	6	8.22	64.00	16.81
Economic	43	58.90	56.37	13.85
Narcotic	1	1.37	40.00	0
Other	7	9.59	66.86	10.84

N=78

The information provided in Table 14 indicates that the majority of participants (58.9%) at the time of the assessment were incarcerated for economic offences followed by aggressive offences (28.77%). Sexual, narcotic and “other” offences were less frequent in the sample and collectively only represented 19.18% of the total sample population of the study.

### 6.1.2 Hypothesis 1, 1.1 to 1.3

It is postulated in hypothesis 1 that there will be a statistically significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores for offenders classified into each of the offending categories. Due to the large amount of variability and in terms of the number of participants in each category it is necessary to cluster the remaining offending categories (other than the specific group being tested) into one group with a single mean in order to most accurately test the hypothesis and sub-hypotheses. Sub-hypothesis 1.1 states that the mean self-esteem scores for repeat offenders currently serving a sentence for an aggressive offence will be significantly higher than those of repeat offenders classified into the remaining offending categories. The results pertaining to this sub-hypothesis are presented in Table 15.

Table 15

*Comparison of Mean Self-Esteem Scores between Aggressive Offenders and Offenders from the Remaining Offending Categories using a t-test*

Offending category	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Aggressive	68.57	15.63	2.688	.009**
Remaining categories*	58.19	14.71		

\*includes: sexual, economic, narcotic and other categories

\*\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

A statistically significant difference in terms of mean self-esteem scores has been established between repeat offenders categorised as aggressive and those categorised into the remaining categories. Sub-hypothesis 1.1 is therefore supported as aggressive offenders tend to have statistically significantly higher self-esteem scores than the other types of offenders.

Sub-hypothesis 1.2 states that the self-esteem scores of repeat offenders at the time of the assessment serving a sentence for a sexual offence will be significantly lower than those of repeat offenders classified into the remaining offending categories. As aggressive offenders have already been confirmed to have the significantly highest self-esteem, the scores for these offenders were excluded from the analysis in order to gain a more accurate comparison.



Table 16

*Comparison of Mean Self-Esteem Scores between Sexual Offenders and Offenders from the Remaining Offending Categories using a t-test*

Offending category	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Sexual	64.00	16.81	1.112	.271
Remaining categories*	57.00	14.25		

\*includes: economic, narcotic and other categories

Sub-hypothesis 1.2 is not supported as sexual offenders were found to have higher self-esteem than economic, narcotic and other offenders collectively. The difference is however not statistically significant and should be interpreted cautiously as the subset for sexual offenders is very small and therefore cannot be generalised to the greater repeat offending population of South Africa.

In sub-hypothesis 1.3 it is postulated that repeat offenders serving sentences for the remaining categories consisting of offences classified as either economic, narcotic or “other” at the time of assessment will have significantly lower self-esteem scores than the total mean self-esteem score for the repeat offending sample.

Table 17

*Comparison of Mean Self-Esteem Scores between the Remaining Offending Categories and the Total Reoffending Sample using a t-test*

Category	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Remaining categories*	57.00	14.25	-1.537	.127
Reoffending total	61.37	15.78		

\* includes: economic, narcotic and other categories

The mean score for the remaining offending categories is not statistically significantly lower than the mean score for the entire reoffending sample, thus hypothesis 1.3 is not supported. In light of the results presented for sub-hypotheses 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 it can be determined that hypothesis 1 was only partially supported due to the significantly high scores of the aggressive offenders. Although precautions were taken to minimise the effect of the small subsets for a number of the offending categories, caution must still be applied in the interpretation of the results as generalisable to the wider repeat offending population in South Africa.

The findings of hypothesis 1 provide mixed support for the different perspectives in the literature. The findings of sub-hypothesis 1.1 supports the alternate view of Baumeister et al.

(1996) which rejects the popular notion of a low self-esteem link to offending behaviour in favour of a high, unstable self-esteem link, particularly in terms of violent offending. The explanation essentially refers to the presence of a narcissistically high, yet unstable self-esteem which may increase personal sensitivity to criticism. This level of self-esteem, associated with a view of violence as a socially appealing factor results in the manifestation of aggressive behaviour in order to maintain or increase the individuals social perception (Baumeister et al., 1996:15-25; Beesley & McGuire, 2009:264; Kernis et al., 1989:1019).

On the other hand, the result for sub-hypothesis 1.2 differs to the perspectives found in the literature as there was not only no statistically significant difference between the self-esteem scores of sexual offenders and the remaining offending categories (economic, narcotic and other), but the self-esteem scores for the sexual offenders were also found to be higher than the remaining offending categories. Research has established that level of self-esteem affects sexual offenders in terms of anxiety related to socially accepted (sexual) behaviour. Decreased confidence in personal ability to behave appropriately has also been linked in the literature to victim selection, with lower self-esteem offenders selecting targets that are easily overpowered such as lone women and children if such actions are perceived to be less threatening or demanding than consensual options (Oliver et al., 2007:304; Van der Hoven & Ovens, 2003:22; Webster et al., 2007:207). It should however be emphasised that this contrary finding may be due to the small size of sexual offender subset and should therefore be interpreted with caution and it is recommended that more research be conducted with larger samples.

Lastly, the results for sub-hypothesis 1.3 were found to support the literary perspectives, however not statistically significantly. The finding that the mean self-esteem scores for the economic, narcotic and other offenders collectively were lower than the total mean for the sample provides some support for the popular perspective which states that deviant behaviour is related to a low self-esteem (Gudjonsson & Sigurdsson, 2004:78-79; Leary et al., 1995:297; Oliver et al., 2007:304; Parker et al., 2005:414). The explanation behind this perspective can be drawn from the theoretical perspectives of Rogers and Cohen that emphasise the importance of positive regard and the influence of subcultures on behaviour respectively (Rogers, 1951:499; Williams & McShane, 2010:93). The similarities between these perspectives that pertain to the explanation of sub-hypothesis 1.3 are embedded in the influence of others and the propensity of the individual to commit to the ideologies of these

significant others regardless of their adherence to conventional beliefs. It is therefore argued that individuals with low self-esteem who interact with these deviant subgroups are at higher risk of displaying deviant behaviour in order to obtain positive regard from the group thus increasing self-perception and thereby self-esteem.

It is therefore suggested that future research may benefit from the inclusion of increased sample sizes for the various offending categories and a non-offending control group, taken from similar communities as the reoffenders for comparative purposes. Along with level of self-esteem, stability should also be assessed to further determine the validity of the perspective purporting a high self-esteem link to offending behaviour. This could also be determined by utilising longitudinal research to assess the degree of change self-esteem undergoes at different time intervals such as entrance into the correctional facility, throughout the sentence and upon release. Lastly, additional contextual data in the form of qualitative information could be collected regarding personal perspectives to determine what type of behaviour is revered and considered socially appealing by the participants.

### **6.1.3 Serendipitous Findings**

A serendipitous finding that emerged from this pioneering research relates to the repeated offending behaviour of the participants in terms of comparing past offences to current offences. Participants were also requested to provide information relating to their previous offences and it was found that in terms of past offences; 35 (47.9%) participants were aggressive offenders, 4 (5.5%) were sexual offenders, 43 (58.9%) were economic offenders, 6 (8.2%) were narcotic offenders and 12 (16.4%) had committed “other” offences. The frequencies for the interactions between types of past and current offences are presented in Table 18.

Table 18

*Cross Tabulation between Past and Current Offences Committed*

Offence	Past Aggressive	Past Sexual	Past Economic	Past Narcotic	Past Other*
Current Aggressive	11	2	7	4	3
Current Sexual	4	3	3	0	1
Current Economic	18	0	32	1	3
Current Narcotic	0	0	1	1	1
Current Other	5	0	2	0	5

\*includes: possession of illegal firearms, escape, arson and malicious damage to property.

In terms of frequencies Table 18 indicates that a high number of current economic offenders have a history of previous economic or aggressive offences. This may however be as a result of the economic offenders contributing to the largest portion of the sample. Therefore if one is to consider the individual distributions of the offending categories it can be said that participants with past aggressive offences were most likely to recommit future aggressive offences or economic offences whereas past sexual offenders were most likely to continue to commit sexual offences or cross over to aggressive offences. Economic offenders tended to maintain economic offending behaviour whereas narcotic offenders seemed to become more aggressive in their offending behaviour. Lastly, offenders whose past offences fell into the “other” category tended to commit similar offences in the future although a large percentage of them also progressed onto economic and aggressive offences.

In light of the findings from hypothesis 1, the knowledge of previous and current offences could provide greater understanding of offending behaviour related to self-esteem. The presence of aggressive offending behaviour in the past may produce a higher self-esteem score in a current sexual, narcotic or economic offender. Further analysis of the relationship between past and current offences could provide insight into the changing nature of self-esteem and its effect on offending behaviour.

Analysis of this type can be useful when assessing risk of future serious offending. However due to the large amount of variability in terms of representation in each offending category it is difficult to make significant conclusions and it is therefore recommended that future research utilise bigger samples with more representation across offending categories. Non-

offending control groups and participants with single offences could also be utilised in a longitudinal study to compare the changing nature of self-esteem and its effect on behaviour. This will allow for more robust conclusions to be made resulting in more accurate predictions of future offending behaviour.

## 6.2 Self-Esteem and Exposure to the Correctional Environment

The descriptive data related to the levels of exposure to the correctional environment is presented in section 5.6 of the previous chapter (see Table 12 and Table 13). Hypothesis 2 states that repeat offenders with high levels of exposure to the correctional environment will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than those with less exposure to the correctional environment. Two sub-hypotheses were therefore formulated to assess the number of times the repeat offenders had previously been in prison (sub-hypothesis 2.1) and how long the repeat offenders had been incarcerated for at that stage for the sentence they were serving (sub-hypothesis 2.2).

### 6.2.1 Hypothesis 2, 2.1 to 2.2

It is postulated, in hypothesis 2.1 that repeat offenders with a high number of previous incarcerations will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than repeat offenders who have fewer previous incarcerations. The results for the analysis of variance (ANOVA) between the mean self-esteem scores for the number of previous incarcerations are presented in Table 19.

Table 19

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores for Number of Previous Incarcerations of Repeat Offenders*

Previous incarcerations	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
None	3	74.67	16.65	1.204	.317
Once	18	61.33	12.50		
Twice	24	64.33	16.84		
Three times	14	58.00	18.01		
Four or more	14	56.86	14.65		

N=73

The results from the ANOVA indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in mean self-esteem scores between the various numbers of previous incarcerations. Further

analysis on the direction of the data using a Spearman's correlation found a non-significant negative correlation,  $r_s = -.187$ ,  $p = .114$ , two-tailed. This indicates that self-esteem actually decreases as the number of previous incarcerations increase, thus failing to support hypothesis 2.1.

Furthermore, sub-hypothesis 2.2 states that repeat offenders who have spent a longer period of time in the correctional centre for their current offence will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than those who have only been incarcerated for a short period of time.

Table 20

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores for Time Spent by Repeat Offenders in Incarceration for their Current Sentences*

Time in incarceration	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
Less than 6 months	26	59.69	16.65	3.361	.014*
6 to 12 months	17	56.71	12.50		
12 to 18 months	5	53.60	16.84		
19 to 24 months	3	49.33	18.01		
More than 2 years	22	70.36	14.65		

N=73

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

The results presented in Table 20 indicate a statistically significant difference between lengths of time currently spent in incarceration and thereby provides support for sub-hypothesis 2.2. A Spearman's correlation supports this finding and with a positive correlation indicates that repeat offenders who spend more time in incarceration tend to have an increased level of self-esteem,  $r_s = .244$ ,  $p = .037$ , two-tailed. It is also worthwhile to notice the pattern of the mean scores presented in Table 20. The sharp decrease in mean self-esteem scores for the 12-18 months and 19-24 months groups could be due to the small size of the groups. The significantly high score in the "more than 2 years" subset does however support the finding with an adequate number of participants as well.

The results for sub-hypotheses 2.1 and 2.2 provide mixed support in relation to existing empirical perspectives. The result from sub-hypothesis 2.1 does not support the views of MacKenzie and Goodstein (1985), Oser (2006) and Oliver et al. (2007) which state that familiarity with the correctional environment would positively influence self-esteem due to an increase in knowledge of the system and expectations of the environment. Sub-hypothesis 2.2 on the other hand does however provide support for this perspective.

The result from sub-hypothesis 2.2 can be explained by considering the role of individual coping mechanisms such as accommodation and immunisation (Greve & Enzman, 2003; Greve et al., 2001). These mechanisms were found to be similar to Rogers' defensive mechanisms and the neutralisation techniques of Sykes and Matza (see 3.3). Accommodation refers to the ability of individuals to adjust their own value system to minimise the dissonance experienced due to a new contradictory experience in order to incorporate it into the self. Immunisation on the other hand allows the individual to entirely ignore the new experience by denying or excusing it as a result of factors external to the self and therefore out of the individual's control (Greve et al, 2001:753).

The difference in the result of sub-hypothesis 2.1 could however be explained by taking into account the effect of community treatment as an additional factor. Rogers (1951) often refers to the importance of the perceptions of others in self-esteem development and states that the need for this acceptance has the ability to influence individuals to alienate their own beliefs in replacement for those deemed more attractive by those with whom the individuals interact with in their communities. This leads to the inclusion of the impact of negative labeling and stigmatisation. The continuous exiting and re-entering of the repeat offender into the correctional environment may influence the community's perception of the individual's capacity to change entrenching the negative stereotypes into the community members' minds. As purported by Lemert, the continuous negative social reactions may lead to feelings of resentment towards community members responsible for the continued stigmatisation but not a cessation in deviant behaviour. This continuous interplay between deviant behaviour and negative social reaction eventually results in the internalising of deviant stigmas and acceptance of the associated label as a core identity (Brown et al., 1998:348; Williams & McShane, 2010:115).

In order to assess this perspective it is recommended that future research employ a longitudinal approach and assess the inmates' self-esteem at different time intervals during incarceration as well as upon release. This will allow for a more precise understanding of the effect of various community related factors on self-esteem development. The extent of the use of various defensive mechanisms or individual coping mechanisms should also be taken into account to establish the magnitude of the effect such variables have on self-esteem maintenance.

### 6.3 Self-Esteem and Level of Education

The results and discussion presented below refer to the relationship between self-esteem scores and level of formal education. The descriptive data for the level of education for the repeat offending sample is presented in Table 6 found in section 5.6 in the previous chapter.

#### 6.3.1 Hypothesis 3

In terms of education, it is postulated in hypothesis 3 that repeat offenders who have achieved a higher level of formal education will have higher self-esteem scores than those who have low levels of formal education. The result for the ANOVA performed on the data is presented in Table 21.

Table 21

<i>Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders in terms of Level of Education</i>					
Level of education	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
No Schooling	3	66.67	14.05	.471	.852
Up to grade 4	9	61.33	15.75		
Grade 5, 6 or 7	17	57.18	17.93		
Grade 8 or 9	16	65.25	15.44		
Grade 10	10	62.00	9.29		
Grade 11	6	65.33	15.53		
Grade 12	8	59.50	21.00		
Trade	4	56.00	17.28		

N=73

In terms of the results presented in Table 21 no statistically significant difference or particular pattern was established between different levels of education and self-esteem scores. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is not supported.

This finding contradicts the perspective of Dissel (2008:158, 2012:30) that states that level of education tends to be generally low in adult correctional populations and contributes to repeat offending behaviour. An alternative explanation could however be provided by considering the perspective of Harris (2009:13) that emphasises the perception of education in different communities. The importance placed on education by the general community has been found to relate to the effect it could have on self-esteem. Due to the rural nature of the surrounding areas of which many of the repeat offenders were members it could be argued that formal



education is not as highly emphasised as in the more urban areas due to a lack of resources and comparatively substandard levels of education. An increased need for individuals to assist with providing for their families and therefore finding means to generate income earlier on in life, may contribute to a perception of education as less important. It is therefore recommended that future investigations include information related to the social perception of the importance and need for education to more conclusively establish the nature of the relationship between level of education and self-esteem.

## 6.4 Self-Esteem and Age

The discussion to follow will present and analyse findings pertaining to the relationship between level of self-esteem and chronological age. Descriptive data relating to the age distribution of the sample of repeat offenders is available in Figure 1 in the previous chapter.

### 6.4.1 Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 states that there will be no significant relationship between age and self-esteem scores. Due to the large amount of variability found in the initial analysis between age and self-esteem scores it was decided to categorise the participants into generational groups because as far as it could have been established, there was no literature found that indicated any form of direct relationship between age and level of self-esteem. Participants who were born between 1946 and 1964 were therefore categorised as “Baby boomers” whereas those born between 1965 and 1980 were categorised as “Generation X”. The last grouping was for the participants born between 1980 and 2000 who were classified as “Generation Y”.

Table 22

<i>Comparison between Self-Esteem scores for Repeat Offenders of Different Age Groups</i>					
Age group	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	<i>p</i> -value
Baby boomers	4	67.00	19.97	1.643	.201
Generation X	34	57.88	16.19		
Generation Y	35	64.11	14.63		

N=73

As the information provided in Table 22 indicates, hypothesis 4 is supported as no statistically significant difference between age groups and self-esteem scores was established.

It can therefore be said that age is not an influential factor related to self-esteem and that self-esteem tends to be relatively consistent across repeat offenders from different age groups.

The findings of the current study amongst individuals who can be assumed to be from similar situations supports the perspectives provided in the literature regarding the general consistency of self-esteem in adulthood (Block & Robins, 1993:919; Leary, 1999:33). The cross sectional design of the study does not allow for the production of suitable results to assess Rogers' (1951:499) perspective of the changing nature of self-esteem from childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood.

It is recommended that future research into the effect of age related factors on self-esteem be longitudinal in nature as this will allow for any changes to be noted due to the aging process. Specific focus on obtaining more participants from the "baby boomers" generation should also be considered to make more accurate comparisons in terms of the possible effects of apartheid on self-esteem. The generational groupings have been quite usefully defined to make apartheid related conclusions as the year to year classifications fit well into important times in South Africa's history. The baby boomers were born in the beginning of apartheid (1946-1964) so they would have spent their childhood, adolescent and most of their adult lives under apartheid conditions and would therefore have had an increased chance, due to chronological age, to have been exposed to the increasingly violent uprisings particularly during the 1980's. The generation X individuals were born in the middle of apartheid (1965-1980) and would therefore have been going through or just completed their most important developmental years during the 1980's uprisings. Lastly the generation Y individuals were born during the last years of apartheid (1980-2000) and would therefore have been too young to entirely grasp the socio-political developments in South Africa at the time and therefore may be said to have self-perceptions influenced by different evaluative criteria than the older generations. Qualitative and quantitative studies of this nature may allow for conclusions about the possible effects of historical factors on self-esteem as opposed to simply identifying it as a related factor to other variables that affect self-esteem and reoffending behaviour.

## 6.5 Self-Esteem and Own Family Composition

In hypothesis 5 it is postulated that family composition has no significant effect on self-esteem scores. Family composition is conceptualised by marital status and number of own children, both of which are tested in hypotheses 5.1 and 5.2 respectively. The descriptive data pertaining to marital status and number of own children can be found in Tables 3 and 4 respectively in chapter 5.

### 6.5.1 Hypothesis 5, 5.1 to 5.2

According to sub-hypothesis 5.1 marital status is said to have no effect on level of self-esteem, hence there will be no significant difference in self-esteem scores between repeat offenders who are single, married, divorced or widowed.

Table 23

<i>Comparison between Self-Esteem scores for Repeat Offenders with Different Marital Statuses</i>					
Marital status	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	<i>p</i> -value
Single	69	61.51	15.76	1.113	.350
Married	2	58.00	14.14		
Divorced	1	40.00	-		
Widowed	1	80.00	-		

N=73

Sub-hypothesis 5.1 is supported as no statistically significant difference between marital status and self-esteem score was established from the data provided in Table 23. These results are however difficult to generalise to the greater reoffending populations due to the low representation of married (2.7%), divorced (1.4%) and widowed (1.4%) participants in this study. It can nevertheless be deduced that repeat offenders are more likely to be single.

Sub-hypothesis 5.2 postulates that the self-esteem scores of repeat offenders will not be significantly affected by the number of children they have. Due to the high amount of variance it was decided to group this variable into 6 manageable groups for the sake of producing more robust results.

Table 24

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders with Different Numbers of Own Children*

Number of children	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F <sub>w</sub> -statistic	p-value
0	15	62.40	13.51	.699	.001*
1	16	60.25	14.20		
2	16	61.75	17.53		
3	18	60.50	20.78		
4	4	49.00	2.00		
5	5	70.40	18.89		
More than 5	9	62.22	16.63		

N=73

\* =  $p \leq 0.01$

Due to the assumption for homogeneity of variance being violated the usual ANOVA output could not be used. Homogeneity of variance refers to the similarity of the variance of one factor at all levels of the factor(s) to which it is being compared (Field, 2009:787). The Welch's *F* test was therefore utilised as it is considered a robust alternative to ANOVA as it minimises the effects of a violated assumption of homogeneity of variance (Field, 2009:380). Considering the data presented in Table 24 it can be stated that sub-hypothesis 5.2 is not supported due to the statistically significant difference between repeat offenders with different numbers of own children.

The result from sub-hypotheses 5.1 is in accordance with the previous perspectives that state that marital status generally tends to be used for descriptive purposes as no relationship has been established with self-esteem (Foster, 2011:10; Williams & Fouche, 2008:151). The statistically significant result for sub-hypothesis 5.2 should be interpreted with caution due to the presence and resulting effect of the extreme score for participants with four children. Scores that vary to such a degree are referred to as outliers and can be said to be the cause of the violation of the assumption of homogeneity of variance. The similarities between the remaining scores may therefore indicate that the explanation provided by the literature may still be valid. The rationale for this finding may be linked to individual and community perceptions of the importance of family related factors as a source of positive regard. In the South African context, the negative effects of apartheid on the family unit may have led to a breakdown in the importance of the maintenance of cultural perspectives related to marriage and children (Bruce, 2006:35). Future research should therefore identify the content of the cultural perspectives of the individuals and assess the level to which repeat offenders

subscribe to these norms and values prescribed by their cultures and sub-cultures. This will allow future researchers to determine the level of deviance from these cultural guidelines in order to make more contextually based conclusions.

## 6.6 Self-Esteem and Socioeconomic Status

The socioeconomic status (SES) of the family to which individuals belong has been found to have only a moderate effect on self-esteem. One indicator of familial SES is parental employment. Households where both parents are employed will hereby be indicative of a higher SES than those where only one or no parents are employed (Gendreau et al., 1996:577). The descriptive information pertaining to the parental employment of the repeat offenders is presented in Table 25.

### 6.6.1 Descriptive Data

A summary of the data collected regarding parental employment is presented in Table 25. The table includes the frequencies indicating how many repeat offenders came from homes where only the mother was employed, only the father was employed and where both parents were employed. A fourth category was included to indicate the number of repeat offenders whose parents were both not employed and included unemployed single parents as well as those who never had any parents at all due to abandonment or being deceased.

Table 25

#### *Parental Employment*

Variable	N	%	Mean self-esteem score	SD
Not applicable	17	23.29	58.12	13.43
Mother only	8	10.96	52.50	8.12
Father only	29	39.74	65.10	15.30
Both parents	19	26.01	62.32	19.43

N=73

From the information presented in Table 25 it can be deduced that 26.01% (n=19) of the participants could be classified as being from higher SES families whereas 73.99% (n=54) would be classified as being from lower SES families. The highest percentage (39.74%) of the total participants had only fathers that were employed and lowest percentage (10.96%) had only mothers who were employed.

### 6.6.2 Hypothesis 6

Hypothesis 6 postulates that there will be no significant difference in self-esteem scores between repeat offenders from high socioeconomic status families and those from families with lower socioeconomic status.

Table 26

*Comparison of Mean Self-Esteem Scores between Repeat Offenders from High and Low Socioeconomic Status Families using a t-test*

Socioeconomic status	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
High	62.32	19.43	.262	.398
Low	61.04	14.48		

N=73

Although the mean self-esteem score for repeat offenders from higher SES backgrounds is higher than for repeat offenders from lower SES backgrounds, the difference is not statistically significant thus providing support for hypothesis 6.

These findings correspond with the literature in that SES was not found to significantly affect self-esteem (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978:57). This has been explained in terms of the comparative nature of self-esteem which Rogers (1951) also emphasises in his perspective on the evaluative criteria of self-perception. It is said that SES moderately affects self-esteem when incorporated with age related factors in the sense that as individuals grow older and their social reference groups become less homogenous, the relative socioeconomic state increasingly becomes compared to that of others. Therefore, in order to establish a stronger linkage between self-esteem and SES future research would need to identify the degree of economic diversity in the communities from which the participants originate.

### 6.7 Self-Esteem and Parental Closeness

The following discussion will assess the effect of parental closeness on self-esteem. It is postulated in hypothesis 7 that the level of parental closeness experienced by the repeat offenders will be significantly related to self-esteem scores. This section will begin with a presentation of the descriptive data related to the answers given by the repeat offenders regarding their feelings of closeness to both their mother figure and father figure. Thereafter,

sub-hypotheses 7.1 relating to maternal closeness and 7.2 relating to paternal closeness will be presented along with the ANOVA results used to test the validity of these sub-hypotheses.

### 6.7.1 Descriptive Data

The information provided in Table 27 refers to the feelings of closeness the repeat offenders experienced with their mothers and fathers or respective parental figures. The item was scored on a Likert type scale which included four options namely “very close”, “close”, “not close” and “not applicable”. Participants were allowed to select the “not applicable” option if their mother or father was completely absent due to loss, abandonment or parental separation.

Table 27

#### *Feelings of Closeness to Mother and Father*

Variable	Very close		Close		Not Close		Not Applicable	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Closeness to mother	52	71.23	12	16.44	6	8.22	3	4.11
Closeness to father	28	38.36	16	21.92	19	26.03	10	13.7

N=73

As the information in Table 27 indicates, the majority of repeat offenders (71.23%) have a “very close” relationship with their mother figures. The same can however not be said for the feelings of closeness to father figures although a higher number (38.36%) of repeat offenders classified their relationship with their father figures as “very close” than any other available option. This may be due to the higher probability of fathers being employed than mothers (see Table 25), thus creating a situation whereby the participants would potentially spend more time with their mother figures. Migrant labour may also contribute to the possible time participants have to spend with their father figures as many individuals from rural areas tend to find employment outside of their residential area and may often stay away from home for prolonged periods of time (Montgomery, Hosegood, Busza & Timaeus, 2006:2412; Posel, Fairburn & Lund, 2004:1).

### 6.7.2 Hypothesis 7, 7.1 and 7.2

As this hypothesis refers to the presence of a parental figure of which to rate the level of closeness to, the “not applicable” responses were excluded from the analysis. Sub-hypothesis 7.1 postulates that repeat offenders who have high levels of closeness to their mother figure

will have higher self-esteem scores than repeat offenders who are not close to their mother figure.

Table 28

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders and Closeness to Mother Figure*

Closeness	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
Very close	62.38	15.67	2.202	.119
Close	52.67	13.84		
Not close	66.00	19.23		

n=70

Sub-hypothesis 7.1 is not supported in light of the information presented in Table 28. The *p*-value that is greater than .05 indicates that the mean self-esteem scores for the repeat offenders with varying levels of closeness to their mother figure did not differ statistically significantly.

Closeness to father figure is examined by sub-hypothesis 7.2 that states that repeat offenders with high levels of closeness to their father figure will have higher self-esteem scores than repeat offenders who are not close to their father figure.

Table 29

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders and Closeness to Father Figure*

Closeness	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
Very close	62.38	14.03	1.524	.226
Close	52.67	17.68		
Not close	57.89	14.69		

n=63

Similarly, sub-hypothesis 7.2 has also not been supported due to the differences in mean self-esteem score between repeat offenders with varying degrees of closeness to their father figures being non-significant. With no statistical support for both sub-hypotheses 7.1 and 7.2 it can be concluded that there is no significant relationship between parental closeness and the self-esteem scores of repeat offenders.

This finding is not in accordance with the theoretical perspectives of Freud, Erikson, Sellin and Miller who, like Rogers, emphasise the importance of the parent child relationship in healthy psychological development (Brown et al., 1998:321; Larsen & Buss, 2005:297;



Peacock, 2006:33; Williams & McShane, 2010:53). Rogers (1951:499) has also placed significant importance on the influence of the primary caregivers as significant others from which the core evaluative criteria are obtained which impacts on self-esteem development and maintenance. The explanation for this finding could however contain a number of elements from various perspectives. Being individuals who have transgressed the law on several occasions and therefore in many instances spent extended periods of time in correctional facilities on multiple occasions, the life experiences of repeat offenders can be said to have a negative effect on social bonds. The total institutional nature of correctional facilities, the negative social responses to repeat offenders associated with deviant labelling and the isolation experienced by a number of offenders whose families do not have the physical or financial means to visit them in the correctional centres could cause a breakdown in family bonds. This explanation is grounded in perspectives similar to those purported by Hirschi in his social control theory which states that a deterioration of social bonds can result in an increased propensity for criminal behaviour due to non-compliance of individuals to the conventional norms and values of society (Williams & McShane, 2010:155). This could lead to the repeat offenders negating the family and society as a source of conditions of worth thereby decreasing the effect any relationships of this nature will have on the self-evaluative process.

## **6.8 Self-Esteem and Childhood Family Structure**

Rogers (1951) emphasises the role of the family in the development of individual self-esteem. The discussion to follow will therefore focus on the effect of family structure on level of self-esteem. Participants were required to indicate who they felt they were raised by from a list of possible caregivers. Participants were encouraged to indicate as many of the options they believed applied to their own situation. Therefore by selecting a specific option, the participant would be indicating that, that individual contributed to their upbringing but was not necessarily the only person they were raised by. The descriptive information will first be presented followed by the results of the t-test between family structures considered intact and those classified as impaired.

### 6.8.1 Descriptive Data

Table 30 contains the descriptive information related to the family structures of the participants. The list of possible options pertaining to the people who may have contributed to the participants' upbringing included: mother, father, sister, brother, aunt, uncle, grandmother, grandfather, brother, sister and other. To decrease the variability in the data, the categories were grouped according to their similarities. Repeat offenders who were raised by both their mother and father were grouped as "both parents" and those raised by both their grandmother and grandfather were grouped as "both grandparents". Furthermore, the "extended family" and "siblings" groups consisted of repeat offenders raised by either their aunt or uncle or both and either their brother or sister or both respectively. The group classified as "other" was excluded due to only three participants selecting that option.

Table 30

*People who Raised the Participants*

Raised by	N	%	Mean Self-Esteem Score	SD
Both parents	33	45.21	62.18	15.67
Mother	55	75.34	60.36	15.88
Father	38	52.05	62.53	15.56
Both grandparents	14	19.18	69.14	15.15
Extended family	31	42.47	60.90	14.14
Siblings	23	31.51	61.04	16.18

Table 30 shows that a large majority of repeat offenders' mothers (75.34%) contributed to raising them and that 52.05% had fathers present during their upbringing. Furthermore it can be said that 45.21% of the sample came from families that were structurally intact with both parents contributing to their upbringing. In addition to these factors, it was found that 42.47% of the repeat offenders had extended family which included either an aunt or an uncle or both and 31.51% had siblings that contributed to their upbringing. The least amount of repeat offenders (19.18%) had both grandparents contributing to their upbringing; however this subgroup also had the highest mean self-esteem scores.

### 6.8.2 Hypothesis 8

Hypothesis 8 postulates that repeat offenders from structurally impaired homes will have significantly lower self-esteem scores than those who were raised by intact family units.

Intact families are characterised by both parents being present and contributing to the raising of the child whereas impaired families would be indicative of single parent headed homes or a complete absence of the parents due to death or abandonment. Therefore even families that had male and female adults present such as extended family or grandparents were still categorised as impaired due to the absence of parents.

Table 31

*Comparison of Mean Self-Esteem Scores between Repeat Offenders from Structurally Intact and Impaired Families using a t-test*

Family structure	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Intact family	62.18	15.67	.402	.689
Impaired family	60.7	15.64		

N=73

Hypothesis 8 could not be supported as there was no statistically significant difference found between the mean self-esteem scores for repeat offenders from structurally intact families and those from structurally impaired families.

The results for hypothesis 8 do not concur with the perspectives of Rogers, Erikson and Miller who comment on the possible detrimental effects of single parent headed homes and the importance of parents in the development of personality variables associated with a positive self-perception (Brown et al., 1998:321; Peacock, 2006:33; Williams & McShane, 2010:100). The similarity between the two self-esteem scores could therefore be explained in terms of the involvement of the rest of the immediate family and extended family in the cases of structurally impaired families. Rural African homes have been found to be characterised by the presence of extended families and membership in the household tends to vary due to the high amount of migrant labour of families affected by loss or separation (Posel et al., 2004:1; Schatz & Ogunmefun, 2007:1391). If one is to consider the information provided in Table 33 it can be noted that in a substantial amount of instances, siblings and extended family were found to contribute in raising the participants. Therefore, the presence of a surrogate family consisting of family members other than the biological mother and father may be able to provide a similar positive effect on the development of self-evaluative criteria and appropriate social behaviour as that provided by a structurally intact family.

## 6.9 Self-Esteem and Need for Acceptance

Hypothesis 9 postulates that repeat offenders who displayed a high need for acceptance from significant others (which include family and peers), who were in trouble with the law will show significantly higher self-esteem scores in comparison to those who do not have such significant others who were in trouble with the law. This section will discuss the relationship between level of self-esteem and need for acceptance from deviant peers or family members. Firstly, the frequencies and distributions will be presented followed by the t-test results for participants with a positive need for acceptance from parents, siblings and peers who have and have not been in trouble with the law.

### 6.9.1 Descriptive Data

Table 32 presents the frequencies and distributions for the responses given by participants relating to the importance they place on the need for acceptance by family and peers. The questions were presented in a Likert scale fashion requiring the participants to rate their need for acceptance as either very important, important or not important.

Table 32

#### *Need for Acceptance*

Variable	Very important		Important		Not important	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Need for acceptance from family	67	91.78	5	6.85	1	1.37
Need for acceptance from peers	41	56.16	22	30.14	10	13.7

Table 32 shows that in both instances of need for acceptance the majority of participants rated the need for acceptance as very important. The majority of participants (91.78%) rated the need for familial acceptance as very important whereas a lesser majority (56.16%) rated the need for acceptance from peers as very important. The remaining categories for familial acceptance failed to exceed 9% collectively. The need for peer acceptance on the other hand showed an increase of participants rating it as important (30.14%) and not important (13.7%).

### 6.9.2 Hypothesis 9, 9.1 and 9.2

As hypothesis 9 is stated in terms of the difference in self-esteem scores for repeat offenders who have a high need for acceptance from significant others who have or have not been in trouble with the law it was necessary to exclude the participants who rated the “need for acceptance” items (items 14 and 15) in the *Multivariate and General Information Questionnaire* as “not important”. Participants who rated these items as “very important” and “important” were included as they both indicate a positive need for acceptance from significant others. This resulted in a subset of 72 for the assessment of differences related to family and a subset of 63 for the assessment of differences related to peers.

Sub-hypothesis 9.1 states that repeat offenders with a high need for familial acceptance from parents or siblings who were in trouble with the law will show significantly higher self-esteem scores in comparison to those who do not have parents or siblings who were in trouble with the law. As siblings and parents both qualify as family, the responses that stated an important or very important need for acceptance from family were included.

Table 33

*t-test to Compare Mean Self-Esteem Scores of Repeat Offenders with a High Need for Familial Acceptance in terms of Siblings in Trouble with the Law*

Siblings in trouble with the law	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	29	58.90	17.07	-1.070	.144
No	43	62.98	15.02		

N=72

The results from Table 33 show that although self-esteem for participants who did not have siblings in trouble with the law was higher than those who did, the difference is not statistically significant.

Table 34

*t-test to Compare Mean Self-Esteem Scores of Repeat Offenders with a High Need for Familial Acceptance in terms of Parents in Trouble with the Law*

Parents in trouble with the law	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	20	61.20	15.25	-.044	.483
No	52	61.38	16.27		

N=72

Although the difference is smaller, Table 34 similarly shows a non-significant difference between participants with parents who were in trouble with the law and those who were not. It can therefore be concluded that sub-hypothesis 9.1 is not supported as repeat offenders with a high need for acceptance from family with siblings and parents who were in trouble with the law did not have statistically significantly higher self-esteem scores than those who did not have siblings and parents who were in trouble with the law. In fact the mean self-esteem scores show a pattern toward the opposite direction, with those with siblings in trouble with the law having a mean self-esteem of 58.90 against 62.98 for those with siblings not in trouble with the law. A similar pattern was found for parents in trouble with the law although the difference was smaller.

Sub-hypothesis 9.2 states that repeat offenders with a high need for peer acceptance from friends who were in trouble with the law will show significantly higher self-esteem scores in comparison to those who do not have friends who were in trouble with the law. The results for the t-test are presented in Table 35 below.

Table 35

*t-test to Compare Mean Self-Esteem Scores of Repeat Offenders with a High Need for Peer Acceptance in terms of Friends in Trouble with the Law*

Friends in trouble with the law	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	43	58.42	15.71	-1.922	.030*
No	20	66.60	15.75		

n=63

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

The results presented in Table 35 show that sub-hypothesis 9.2 is not supported. Although a statistically significant result was found, repeat offenders with a high need for acceptance from peers with friends who were in trouble with the law had significantly lower self-esteem scores than those who did not have friends who were in trouble with the law. This relationship therefore moves in the opposite direction to what was hypothesised.

The findings from sub-hypotheses 9.1 and 9.2 run counter to what has been recorded in the literature. It was postulated that due to Rogers' (1951:499) emphasis on significant others as a source of evaluative criteria that if repeat offenders had significant others who had also been in trouble with the law that they would not be deviating too drastically from what is considered normative or acceptable behaviour and the negative effects on self-esteem would

therefore be minimised. This was however found not to be the case in terms of the results derived from the sample of this study. A result of this nature might therefore be due to a stronger adherence to conventional norms and values than expected, despite personal behaviour and that of significant others. To use aspects of Cloward and Ohlins' differential opportunity theory as well as the perspectives of researchers supporting the relationship between an unstable or false high self-esteem and offending behaviour (Baumeister et al., 1996:8; Bruce, 2006:34; Salmivalli, 2001:390), repeat offenders who also hold deviant associations may therefore not entirely replace the beliefs of conventional society with opposing beliefs of a subculture but rather mask the failure to succeed within the socially accepted framework with a display of total deviance. This may result in society placing negative labels on these individuals based on their outward behaviour which may not be reflective of their internal belief system.

It may therefore be useful to include supporting qualitative data such as in-depth interviewing to explore further perceptions of family and peers to gain an understanding of how the participants feel about these individuals and the degree to which they associate with their behaviour. This may allow for the researcher to determine the level of commitment of the participants to the norms and values of significant others and how these relate or contrast with conventional society allowing for a better understanding of the presence of deviant norms and values and their ability to neutralise the negative effects of deviant behaviour on self-evaluations.

## **6.10 Self-Esteem and Experiences of Abuse Prior to Incarceration**

Victimisation has been found to have far reaching effects on the self-perception of individuals both as a direct experience as well as vicarious. Negative or degrading treatment has also been found to decrease personal evaluations and has been linked to increased depression, aggression and anxiety as well as future propensity for delinquent behaviour (Kort-Butler, 2010:501; Peacock, 2006:56; Wade, 2009). Hypotheses 10 and 11 will discuss the effect of victimisation prior to incarceration and inside the correctional facility respectively. Victimisation will be discussed in terms of two variables namely, whether or not victimisation was experienced as well as the type of victimisation. The frequencies and

distributions for the variables pertaining to abuse prior to incarceration will be provided, followed by the results of the t-tests and ANOVA's respectively.

### 6.10.1 Descriptive Data

Participants were asked to state whether or not they felt they had experienced any form of abuse prior to incarceration. The importance of perception is again very relevant here as it is the perception of an experience as negative (abusive) that will determine the effect on self-evaluation (Rogers, 1951:492). The descriptive bivariate data pertaining to experiences of abuse prior to incarceration shows that a majority of participants (n=41) had experienced some form of abuse before incarceration (56.16%).

Participants who confirmed that they had experienced some form of abuse prior to incarceration were requested to specify what type of abuse they had experienced. Responses were collected and grouped according to type. Physical abuse by family and community members were categorised under the "physical" grouping, whereas responses relating to poor treatment by family members in terms of neglect, unfair restrictions, lack of support, verbal attacks and being prohibited to go to school were categorised as "family related" abuse. Some participants who experienced abuse prior to incarceration felt that the loss or separation of their parents or family members was an abusive or victimising experience and were categorised under the "loss" grouping. Further responses included those related to sexual abuse, witnessing violence, property theft, negative treatment by neighbours and not knowing his surname. The frequencies and distributions of the categories are presented in Table 39.

Table 36

#### *Type of Abuse before Incarceration*

Variable	N	%
Physical abuse	17	23.29
Family related	14	19.18
Loss of family	8	10.96
Sexual abuse	1	1.37
Witnessed violence	3	4.11
Theft of property	4	5.48
Treatment by neighbours	1	1.37
Unknown surname	1	1.37

n=49



As it can be deduced by considering the information provided in Table 36, the most common form of abuse experienced by participants was physical in nature (23.29%) followed by the family related factors (19.18%) and the loss of family due to death or separation (10.96%). The remaining experiences perceived as being abusive were each experienced by a small number of participants with none of the remaining categories exceeding 6% representation. The increased number of cases from 41 to 49 indicates that some of the participants had experienced more than one different type of abuse.

### 6.10.2 Hypothesis 10, 10.1 and 10.2

Hypothesis 10 states that repeat offenders who experience abuse prior to incarceration will have a significantly lower level of self-esteem compared to repeat offenders who have not experienced abuse. Experience of abuse has been operationalised to include all perceived experiences whether they be direct or vicarious. Sub-hypothesis 10.1 postulates that repeat offenders who had experienced abuse from family members would have significantly lower self-esteem than those who did not experience abuse from family members. In order to test this hypothesis it becomes necessary to group all participants who experienced abuse from family members into one group and compare the mean self-esteem scores to participants who experienced other forms of abuse and victimisation as well as those who had experienced no victimisation.

Table 37

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders who were Abused by Family Members, Experienced Other Abuse and were Not Abused*

Variable	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
Family abuse	22	61.64	17.00	.203	.816
Other victimisation	22	59.64	13.46		
No victimisation	29	62.48	16.85		

N=73

The results from Table 37 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between repeat offenders who had experienced abuse from family members and those who had experienced other forms of victimisation as well as repeat offenders who felt that they had not experienced any victimisation either before incarceration or during their sentence. Therefore, sub-hypothesis 10.1 cannot be supported.

Sub-hypothesis 10.2 postulates that repeat offenders who had experienced abuse before incarceration would have lower self-esteem than those who did not experience abuse before this time. The result of the t-test on the bivariate responses provided by the participants is presented in Table 38.

Table 38

*t-test to Compare Mean Self-Esteem Scores of Repeat Offenders who Experienced Abuse Before Incarceration and those who Did Not*

Abuse before incarceration	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	41	60.98	15.59	-.240	.406
No	32	61.88	16.26		

N=73

The results from Table 38 show that there was no statistically significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores for repeat offenders who had experienced abuse before incarceration and those who had not. Hypothesis 10.2 is therefore not supported.

The results of the statistical analysis for the sub-hypotheses of hypothesis 10 indicate a general lack of support for the linkage between self-esteem and direct experiences of abuse. Though the results for sub-hypotheses 10.1 and 10.2 do not support the sub-hypotheses statements, there may still be a level of agreement with the theoretical and empirical perspectives presented in chapter 2 and 3 of this study. The non-significant results in comparison to those who had not experienced abuse could be explained by considering the current context of the participants. The literature suggests that experiences of abuse will have a negative effect on self-evaluations due to an increase in emotional instability, social dysfunction and reliance on psychological defence mechanisms (Rogers, 1951:500; Wade, 2009:175). Such factors may also increase the individual's propensity to display deviant behaviour or behaviour considered unappealing in general society. Therefore, due to the context in which the participants find themselves, being repeat offenders, the findings could provide support for the view that such negative experiences increase the probability of deviant or criminal behaviour but does not necessarily have a long term negative effect on self-esteem due to the similarity in self-esteem scores for both participants who did and did not directly experience abuse.

## 6.11 Self-Esteem and Experiences of Victimisation Inside the Correctional Centre

The effect of experiences of victimisation inside the correctional facility on self-esteem will now be considered. This section will contain a presentation of the descriptive information related to experiences of victimisation inside the correctional facility followed by the results of the t-tests and ANOVA's between relevant victimisation variables in terms of self-esteem.

### 6.11.1 Descriptive Data

Participants were asked to state whether or not they felt they had been directly victimised or witnessed victimisation in a correctional centre. The importance of personal perception is again very relevant as stated in the previous hypothesis. Table 39 provides the descriptive bivariate data pertaining to victimisation, experienced either directly or indirectly in the correctional facility.

Table 39

#### *Incidence of Victimisation*

Variable	N	%
Victimised in correctional centre	19	26.03
Witnessed violence in corrections	39	53.42

n=58

The information provided in Table 39 shows that a majority of participants had witnessed violence within the correctional centre (53.42%). However, personal victimisation in corrections was found to be less common with only 19 (26.03%) participants who were victimised admitting to having experienced it.

Participants who confirmed that they had been victimised inside the correctional facility were also requested to provide further information the incident or incidents. Five main themes were identified and referred to physical attacks by other inmates, assault by staff members of the correctional centres including those from the "EST" which was identified as a policing unit that performs raids and searches within the centres, being forced into gangsterism, spreading of rumours about the inmates and denial of healthcare, voting rights (during

apartheid) and the ability to care for their families. Table 40 provides the frequencies and distributions of this subset.

Table 40

*Type of Victimisation during Incarceration*

Variable	N	%
Physical attacks by other inmates	5	6.85
Assault by correctional staff	8	10.96
Forced into a gang	1	1.37
Denial of opportunities	3	4.11
Verbal insults	1	1.37

n=18

In terms of experiences of victimisation inside the correctional centre, the most common form was perpetrated by staff of the correctional centre (10.96%) followed by inmate on inmate attacks (6.85%). There were only single cases of gang related and verbal victimisation whereas victimisations classified as “denial of opportunities” were experienced by 4.11% of the reoffending sample.

This data differs largely to the findings of Kiessl & Würger (2002) and Peacock (2006) both of which were conducted on different samples of youth offenders. The findings from Kiessl & Würger (2002:308-312) indicated that over 50% of inmates interviewed had witnessed staff on inmate violence in incarceration whereas just less than 50% recorded having physically experienced violence by staff. Inmate on inmate violence was experienced by approximately 30% of participants and similar to the current study, a majority of participants reported that they had not been victimised. Peacock’s (2006:120-123) findings similarly differed from the current study with over 70% of participants having witnessed violence against inmates by both correctional staff and other inmates. Physical experiences of victimisation also showed a decreased prevalence in comparison to vicarious experiences but were still higher than the current study with verbal insults exceeding 40% and physical assaults by staff and inmates being experienced by over 50% and 25% of participants respectively.

### 6.11.2 Hypothesis 11, 11.1 and 11.2

Hypothesis 11 states that repeat offenders who experienced victimisation inside the correctional centre will have a significantly lower level of self-esteem than those who have not experienced victimisation inside the correctional centre.

Sub-hypothesis 11.1 states that repeat offenders who had been victimised in the correctional centre would obtain lower self-esteem scores than those who have not been victimised within the correctional centre. The results for the t-test can be found in Table 41.

Table 41

*t-test to Compare Mean Self-Esteem Scores of Repeat Offenders who were Victimised within the Correctional Centre and those who Were Not*

Victimised in correctional centre	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	19	57.47	10.43	-1.567	.061
No	54	62.74	17.14		

N=73

The result from the t-test provided in Table 41 indicates that repeat offenders who had not been victimised in the correctional centre had higher self-esteem scores than those who were victimised. The result does approach statistical significance but does not fall below the required .05 value to be considered statistically significant.

Sub-hypothesis 11.2 states that repeat offenders who have witnessed violence in the correctional centre will have lower self-esteem scores than those who had not witnessed any violence within the correctional centre. Table 42 contains the results of the t-test utilised to test sub-hypothesis 11.2.

Table 42

*t-test to Compare Mean Self-Esteem Scores of Repeat Offenders who Witnessed Violence in the Correctional Centre and those who Did Not*

Witnessed violence in corrections	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	39	57.85	15.16	-2.091	.020*
No	34	65.41	15.72		

N=73

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

Sub-hypothesis 11.2 has been supported due to the statistically significant result for the t-test. The results in Table 42 indicate that repeat offenders who witnessed violence in the correctional facility had significantly lower self-esteem scores than those who did not witness any violence within the facility.

The results of the statistical analysis for the sub-hypotheses of hypothesis 11 indicate a general lack of support for the linkage between self-esteem and direct experiences of victimisation (sub-hypothesis 11.1) whereas the result for vicarious experience was found to support the hypothesis (sub-hypothesis 11.2). The results found for sub-hypothesis 11.1 can be explained by the same information used for hypothesis 10 relating to the context of the participants and the length of time that has elapsed since the experience of victimisation. Though the result was not found to be statistically significant at an alpha level of .05, it was much closer to significance than the results for hypothesis 10 highlighting the role of context and environment in the effect of victimisation on self-esteem. The time factor mentioned in the hypothesis 10 explanation could be illustrated as the experiences of victimisation may be more recent and thus may have an increased effect on self-esteem.

The results of sub-hypothesis 11.2 on the other hand support the findings of Kort-Butler (2010:497) that established an additional linkage between witnessing violence and self-esteem levels and the further influence on deviant behaviour. It was found that individuals with high self-esteem and high social support were less likely to be involved in criminality and that a decrease in social support, being victimised and witnessing victimisation was related to future deviance. Witnessing victimisation was furthermore found to neutralise the effect of self-esteem as it was found to predict future offending behaviour in both high and low self-esteem participants. Hence the perception of a situation as volatile or dangerous could increase anxiety and the chance of aggressive responses regardless of the possible effect on self-evaluative processes.

The recommendations for future research refer to both hypotheses 10 and 11. Future research may benefit from a qualitative approach to understanding the perceptions of repeat offenders around what variables are considered socially appealing within their specific context or culture together with their feelings of safety within their environment. As the questions pertain to previous traumatic experiences, some participants may not want to divulge too much information about the experience as the memories may be too traumatising or the

participants may not feel comfortable with sharing their experiences with a stranger. Therefore, a longitudinal approach in addition to the qualitative interviews would allow for participants to be more comfortable and trusting in the researcher and possibly disclose more information about certain traumatic experiences that may otherwise make the participant feel vulnerable. Such interaction could allow the researcher to gain information about personal perceptions and establish the different levels of social support the participants enjoy or are deprived of.

### **6.11.3 Serendipitous Findings**

Although the literature does not differentiate between the effects of different types of abuse or victimisation on self-esteem and due to the relatively unexplored nature of the sample population it was decided to conduct an ANOVA to establish if any difference in self-esteem score existed between the different types of abuse categories established during the assessment of hypotheses 10 and 11.

Due to the wide array of answers and accompanying increase in variability, categorisation was required to make meaningful comparisons between the different types of victimisations experienced by the participants. Table 43 provides the ANOVA results for the mean comparisons between the different forms of abuse experienced before incarceration. Physical abuse by family and non-family members were categorised as physical, whereas responses relating to poor treatment by family members in terms of neglect, unfair restrictions, lack of support, verbal attacks and being prohibited to go to school were categorised as family related abuse. Loss or separation of parents or family members was categorised under the loss grouping and due to the large amount of variability and small sizes of the subsets the final category of “other” consisted of participants who witnessed violence, were victims of property theft, experienced sexual abuse, felt hated by the community and never knew his real surname and therefore felt abandoned.

Table 43

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders who experienced different Types of Abuse before Incarceration*

Variable	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
Physical abuse	17	60.94	17.86	.049	.985
Family related abuse	14	61.14	15.80		
Loss	8	59.00	14.30		
Other	10	62.00	18.31		

The mean scores for the different types of experiences of abuse before incarceration were found to be not statistically significantly different. Table 44 provides the results for the comparison of mean self-esteem scores for repeat offenders who were victimised inside the correctional facility. Due to small sizes of the subsets and high variability participants forced into gang activity, denied opportunities and verbally victimised were grouped into the “other” category.

Table 44

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders who experienced different Types of Victimization in the Correctional Centre*

Variable	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	$F_w$ -statistic	p-value
Attacks by other inmates	5	62.40	7.80	1.293	.331
Assault by correctional staff	8	56.00	6.41		
Other	5	52.80	16.35		

The assumption for homogeneity of variance was violated and therefore the Welch F test had to be utilised. The finding indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the self-esteem scores of repeat offenders who experienced different types of victimisation in the correctional centre.

These findings support the notion that the type of victimisation or abuse experienced does not necessarily affect individuals as much as the general experience of perceived victimisation itself. In other words, individuals may respond similarly to different types of victimisation and abuse. It may be due to this reason that the literature tends to speak about trauma and victimisation in broader terms when considering the influence on self-esteem and delinquency as opposed to mentioning specific types of victimisations (Kort-Butler, 2010; Wade, 2009). Future research may however want to adopt a qualitative approach in order to gain a deeper understanding of the experience of victimisation for the participants and to possibly compare the coping strategies utilised by the participants. Qualitative interviews and



focus groups conducted over multiple sessions may also allow the participants time to familiarise themselves with the researcher and build trust to open up and be honest about their victimisations or traumatic experiences.

## 6.12 Self-Esteem and Visitations in the Correctional Centre

The discussion to follow focuses on the relationship between self-esteem and whether or not the participants receive visits in the correctional centre. This section will begin with a presentation of the descriptive data related to whether the participants receive visitations in the correctional centre, followed by a presentation of the results from the ANOVA related to hypothesis 12.

### 6.12.1 Descriptive Data

Table 45 contains the descriptive data for visitations in the correctional facility received by repeat offenders. Participants were given three options to state whether they often received visits (yes), never received visits (no) or received visits on less frequent occasions (sometimes).

Table 45

*Visitations in the Correctional Centre*

Variable	N	%
Yes	35	47.95
Sometimes	20	27.39
No	18	24.66

N=73

From the information presented in Table 45 it can be said that the highest percentage (47.95%) of repeat offenders did receive frequent visitations in prison whilst an almost equal amount never received and visits at all (24.66%) or received visits on a less frequent basis (27.4%). It now becomes necessary to assess the magnitude of the difference between the mean self-esteem scores of the categories.

### 6.12.2 Hypothesis 12

Hypothesis 12 states that repeat offenders who receive visits whilst in the correctional centre will have a higher level of self-esteem than those who do not receive any visits. An ANOVA was performed on the three different categories to assess the magnitude of the difference and the results are presented in Table 46.

Table 46

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders Categorised into different Visitation Categories*

Visitation in correctional centre	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	<i>p</i> -value
Yes	65.83	14.20	2.820	.066
Sometimes	57.2	14.8		
No	57.33	18.1		

The results from Table 46 indicate that repeat offenders who received frequent visits in the correctional centre have higher self-esteem scores than the remaining two categories which are substantially similar. This difference is however not considered statistically significant at a confidence level of .05 although it does approach this required level. Hypothesis 12 is therefore not supported. The findings do however produce a significantly positive Spearman's correlation ( $r_s = .244$ ,  $p = .037$ , two-tailed) indicating that the reception of frequent visitors does tend to be related to level of self-esteem.

The findings for hypothesis 12 provide support for the perspective of Rogers (1951) that emphasises the importance of familial and community support in the maintenance of a positive sense of self. The difference in self-esteem scores between repeat offenders who receive visitations and those who only receive visitations sometimes could be indicative of the role of certainty in external factors effecting self-esteem. As personal perception is of the utmost importance when considering the effect of experiences on the self it could be argued that repeat offenders with higher self-esteem scores have an increased sense of certainty regarding the support of the individuals who visit them.

## 6.13 Self-Esteem and Conditions in the Correctional Centre

Conditions of incarceration in South Africa have been criticised for being substandard and at times inhumane (Dissel, 2008:162; Muntingh, 2002:21). This section will discuss the effect of these conditions on level of self-esteem, starting with a presentation of the descriptive data indicating participant satisfaction with the conditions inside the correctional facility.

### 6.13.1 Descriptive Data

The following section contains a discussion of the descriptive information for the level of satisfaction of repeat offenders with the conditions inside the correctional facilities. Satisfaction is conceptualised as a bivariate factor where participants were required to give a yes or no answer to whether or not they were happy with the conditions in prison. The information has been tabulated below.

As one may expect in consideration of the literature, a vast majority of 86.3% (n=63) of the participants were not happy with the conditions in the correctional facility. That left a remaining 13.7% (n=10) of participants who felt that they were satisfied with the conditions in the correctional facility. The difference in mean self-esteem scores between these two groups will now be assessed.

### 6.13.2 Hypothesis 13

It is postulated in hypothesis 13 that repeat offenders who have a positive perception of the conditions in prison will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than those with negative perceptions. Table 47 provides the results of the t-test between the options.

Table 47

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders in terms of Satisfaction with Prison Conditions using a t-test*

Satisfaction with prison conditions	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	68	8.84	2.208	.020*
No	60.32	16.42		

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

The results from the t-test show that hypothesis 13 is supported. This is based on the finding that there is a statistically significant difference between the mean self-esteem scores for repeat offenders who have a positive perception of the conditions within the correctional facility and those who have a negative perception.

This finding supports the aspects of Rogers' (1951) perspective that pertain to his humanist approach such as his expressed interest in perception. The results for hypothesis 13 support the view that positive perceptions of living conditions are associated with increased self-esteem scores. Therefore, although a number of individuals may be exposed to the same conditions, it will only negatively affect those who perceive and symbolise the experience as such (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:168; Rogers, 1951:492). Similarly, Peacock (2006:60) also speaks of the effect of internalising negative substandard conditions in prison. In terms of prison victimisation, some inmates may feel that they "deserve" to be victimised due to their low levels of self-value, supported and exacerbated by the poor conditions of the prison environment.

## **6.14 Self-Esteem and Participation in Treatment Programmes**

The provision of treatment programmes in the correctional centres can be considered one of the most important tasks of the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) as the adoption of the White Paper on Corrections places importance on the rehabilitation of inmates and thereby the use of effective treatment programmes. This section will present the descriptive information related to the different programmes participated in by repeat offenders followed by a number of analyses of related variables to determine statistical significance.

### **6.14.1 Descriptive Data**

Participants were requested to indicate from a list of programmes provided by *Phoenix Zululand* which programme/s they had participated in (see Table 48). They were also encouraged to stipulate in writing whether or not they had participated in any additional programmes provided in the correctional facility. Due to a high level of variability and single answers for some programmes, the "skills development", "specialist" and "other" programmes categories were formed to group certain programmes. Skills development

programmes included any vocational or educational programmes. Specialist programmes included any programmes aimed at specific issues such as drug, violence, obedience and sex offender programmes as well as restorative justice programmes. The programmes categorised as “other” included participation in religious, sporting or cultural programmes provided by DCS.

Table 48

*Participation in Treatment Programmes*

Treatment programme	N	%	Mean self-esteem score	SD
Phoenix Starting with Us	39	53.4	62.05	15.45
Phoenix Drama and Art	5	6.8	60.80	15.05
Phoenix Conversations	6	8.2	68.67	10.69
Phoenix Family Conference	10	13.7	67.60	10.80
Phoenix Victim Offender Mediation	2	2.7	84.00	4.00
Pre-Release Programme	12	16.4	54.33	10.51
Skills Development Programme	6	8.2	71.33	14.68
Life Skills Programme	11	15.1	62.91	15.73
Specialist Programme	7	9.6	65.14	15.82
Other Programme	6	8.2	63.33	15.22
No Programmes	21	28.8	59.24	16.28

n=104

Table 48 shows that programme participation seems to be very spread out amongst the participants, indicated by the high number of categories and the low number of repeat offenders represented in each category. Only one programme category exceeded 17% which was the participation in the *starting with us* programme provided by the NGO which is an introductory course to the remainder of the programmes provided by *Phoenix Zululand*. The next highest variable was for those who had not participated in any treatment programmes at all, which included 28.8% of the sample.

### 6.14.2 Hypothesis 14

Hypothesis 14 postulates that repeat offenders who participated in treatment programmes will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than those who did not. General participation was assessed on a bivariate scale followed by a comparison of broader variables related to programme participation. A correlation analysis was also performed between self-esteem scores and the number of programmes repeat offenders had participated in to ensure thorough investigation of the variable in question.

Table 49

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores for Repeat Offenders in terms of Programme Participation using a t-test*

Programme participation	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	62.23	15.65	.731	.234
No	59.24	16.28		

N=73

The information presented in Table 49 indicates that repeat offenders who participated in treatment programmes tended to have a higher self-esteem than those who did not, however the result was found not to be statistically significant.

Due to the large amount of variability of multiple responses and small numbers for some programmes it was decided to cluster the *Phoenix Zululand* programmes together in one group and the other available programmes in another. Participants who had only partaken in one or more of the *Phoenix Zululand* programmes were categorised into the “Phoenix” group and those who participated only in other programmes provided by DCS were included in the “other” group. Thereafter individuals who participated in one or more of both the *Phoenix* and other programmes were placed into the “both” group and those who had not participated in any programmes at all were classified into the “none” group.

Table 50

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores of Repeat Offenders Categorised according to Programme Participation*

Programme participation	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
Phoenix	59.29	15.89	.528	.665
Other	62.00	16.76		
Both	64.52	15.22		
None	59.24	16.28		

The results of the ANOVA presented in Table 50 indicate a non-significant relationship between the different programme participation variables. This finding is further corroborated by the results of the Spearman’s correlation which established a positive correlation ( $r_s = .116$ ,  $p = .164$ , one-tailed) although it too is not statistically significant. Therefore even though the results indicate that an increase in programme participation does increase self-esteem scores, it is not statistically significant and thus hypothesis 14 cannot be accepted.

The findings presented above can be said to run contrary to the perspectives presented in the literature that state that high self-esteem is associated with treatment success (Dissel, 2008:157; Fisher et al., 1998:7; Oser, 2006:346; Webster et al., 2007:214). The explanation for the contrary result may therefore be related to certain situational factors present in South African correctional facilities. Dissel (2008:157) and Sarkin (2008:28) both refer to research stating that when conducted correctly and under appropriate conditions, correctional programmes have been found to positively affect self-esteem. The key factors here may therefore be the implementation of correctional programmes as well as the conditions to which the offenders return after the programme sessions. The combination of a decreased sensitivity to human rights of inmates by correctional staff, poor living conditions due to overcrowding and the lack of resources available to DCS do not provide an environment conducive to effective rehabilitation (Dissel, 2008:162; Van Zyl Smit, 2004:229).

Programme evaluation is an important factor for treatment providers and the DCS alike as it allows for the assessment of effectiveness of the programme within the given correctional institution. The Department of Correctional Services (DCS) also make mention of the importance of programme evaluation and have established quality assurance committees to assess and endorse programmes before they are introduced to the correctional centres (DCS, nd:24). Dissel (2012:41) identifies three main ways of assessing programmes which include formative, summative and monitoring evaluations. Formative evaluations focus on the provision of the service and therefore assess the implementation process of the programme whereas summative evaluations are more outcomes based and therefore focus on the effectiveness of the programme as a treatment option. Monitoring focuses on the maintenance of the quality of service delivery at the practical level.

An article by Wood (2003) includes the details of diversion programme evaluations conducted in South Africa. All four studies included in this article utilised recidivism as a measure of programme success with two studies including perceptions of effectiveness of the programme, assessing factors related to taking responsibility for behaviour, retention of information learned during the programme and behavioural changes. All the studies utilised interviews of participants and in some cases significant others as well to collect the required data carried out at least 12 months after completion of the programmes. Though the general results and perceptions of the effectiveness of the programmes were favourable, recidivism did tend to vary with the different programmes.

Thorough evaluations may therefore need to go beyond simply assessing the level of recidivism of programme graduates and include an assessment of changes to variables targeted in the assessment which often include, but are not limited to, cognitive behavioural factors, impulse control, skills development and moral education (Howells, Watt, Hall, & Baldwin, 1997:126; Palmer et al., 2007:102; Williams & Fouche, 2008:159). Future research may therefore also benefit from considering the conditions in which treatment programmes are conducted as well as the perceptions and attitudes of correctional staff towards the necessity for the implementation of the goals outlined in the White Paper on Corrections which emphasise the need for more humane treatment of offenders and the effective use of rehabilitation programmes.

### **6.15 Self-Esteem and Perceptions of Community Treatment**

As it has been mentioned, the role of perception and community support are two important factors in determining how experiences affect individuals self-perception and in shaping ideas of what is considered appealing or not, respectively. It therefore becomes important to assess the effect of perceived community reaction on the self-esteem scores of the repeat offenders as a perception of negative treatment by the community could contribute to feelings of ostracism and thereby a return to deviant behaviour in an attempt to deal with a devalued sense of self and to survive psychologically, socially and economically.

Hypothesis 15 states that the perception of community reaction of the repeat offenders upon prior release will have a significant effect on their self-esteem scores. This hypothesis will be tested in terms of perceptions of community support (hypothesis 15.1) and fairness of treatment upon release (hypothesis 15.2).

#### **6.15.1 Hypothesis 15.1**

Hypothesis 15.1 postulates that the level of self-esteem will be significantly affected by the perception of fair treatment upon prior release. Fairness of treatment was determined by a bivariate response item where participants were requested to answer yes or no to a question about fairness of treatment by the community upon prior release. Table 51 presents the t-test



results for the comparison of self-esteem scores between participants who felt they were fairly treated by their community and those who did not.

Table 51

*t-test to Compare Mean Self-Esteem Scores of Repeat Offenders in terms of Fairness of Community Treatment upon Release*

Fairness of treatment	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	t-score	p-value
Yes	51	64.63	15.85	2.811	.006*
No	22	53.82	13.05		

N=73

\* =  $p \leq 0.05$

The information provided in Table 51 shows that the majority of repeat offenders (69.86%) felt that they were fairly treated by their community upon release and the remaining 30.14% did not. The t-test result indicates a statistically significant difference between the scores and it can therefore be concluded that repeat offenders who felt they were fairly treated by their communities upon release had higher self-esteem scores than those who felt they were unfairly treated hence providing support for hypothesis 15.1.

### 6.15.2 Hypothesis 15.2

Community support has also been purported by Rogers (1951) to be an important factor in maintaining a positive self-perception. Hypothesis 15.2 states that repeat offenders who felt that their communities were supportive upon release will have significantly higher self-esteem scores than those who did not feel supported by their communities.

Participants were requested to answer a question regarding the level of support they felt they had received after being previously incarcerated. The answers to the questions were presented on a Likert scale and included options such as “very supportive”, “supportive”, “no change”, “unsupportive” and “very unsupportive”. Due to the small number of participants who selected the unsupportive and very unsupportive options it was decided to group the variables into three categories namely supportive, no change and unsupportive. The result for the ANOVA is presented in Table 52.

Table 52

*Comparison between Self-Esteem scores for Different Perceptions of Community Support of Repeat Offenders*

Community support	N	Mean self-esteem score	SD	F-statistic	p-value
Supportive	49	64.24	14.68	2.596	.082
No change	12	56.00	17.64		
Unsupportive	12	55.00	16.28		

N=73

As it can be deduced from the information in Table 52, higher self-esteem scores are found to be associated with increased levels of support and are seen to decrease as the support becomes less. These results are however not statistically significant and therefore cannot provide adequate support to accept hypothesis 15.2.

Despite the non-significant result for 15.2, the findings from hypothesis 15.1 and 15.2 both provide support for the perspectives derived from the literature. Perceptions of positive treatment from the community were established to be associated with increased self-esteem scores. However, the repeated offending nature of the participants in the study contradicts the literary perspectives as an increase in community support should also correlate with pro-social or conforming behaviour. This could be indicative of the presence of additional factors when considering the relationship between self-esteem and community support. The complex and contextual nature of self-esteem maintenance and development requires in-depth investigation of social and familial bonds which may be best achieved by the use of interviews and focus groups with both repeat offenders and non-offending community members. The administration of such interviews may be beneficial at different time intervals as a longitudinal study to measure the perception of community support whilst incarcerated as well as upon release in order to assess the participants changing perception of community support and possibly identify factors related to continued offending behaviour despite positive reactions from the community. Interviewing community members and significant others will not only allow for comparative data around perceptions to be drawn but also to establish the views of why individuals from similar communities and situations do not turn to crime and deviance.

## **6.16 Conclusion**

In this chapter a discussion of the results for the hypotheses developed with the goal of fulfilling the aims of the study was presented. The results were discussed in relation to theory and research pertaining to level of self-esteem and repeat offending behaviour. In chapter 7 the analyses of the data will be examined in relation to the aims of this study and recommendations for further research will be formulated.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

In light of the analysis of the hypotheses presented in chapter 6 pertaining to the variables associated with self-esteem and repeated offending behaviour, the extent to which the aims of the study (see 1.5) have been achieved can now be discussed. Recommendations for future research pertaining to the relationship between self-esteem, repeated offending behaviour and associated factors based on the findings of the current study will also be presented.

#### **7.1 Conclusions Pertaining to the Fulfilment of the Aims of the Study**

The following discussion pertains to the conclusions derived from the results of the study based on the hypotheses developed in chapter 4 with the express purpose to consider the achievement of the aims of this research (see 1.5).

##### **7.1.1 The Assessment of Self-Esteem of a Group of Repeat Offenders**

The first aim of the study refers to an assessment of the level of self-esteem achieved by a group of repeat offenders. This was accomplished through the administration of the *Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory* (Adult Form) (see Appendix 1). The self-concept theory of Carl Rogers (1951) which provides an explanation of the development of the self and the concomitant self-evaluative process formed the theoretical foundation for the development of Coopersmith's first Self-esteem Inventory in 1967. This, along with the general acceptance of Rogers' theory as the most comprehensive, developed and psychological of all the actualising perspectives of personality development made it an obvious choice to guide the research and interpretation of results. Although the CSEI-AF was developed using data from American samples, the Cronbach alpha of .69 obtained for the results of the current sample confirmed that it could be considered a reliable test (Field, 2009:675), of self-esteem for the South African repeat offending sample.

The mean self-esteem score for the repeat offending sample was established to be 61.37 with a standard deviation of 15.78. This mean score is lower than the total normative score provided in the CSEI-AF assessment manual obtained from American students of different

ethnicities, socioeconomic backgrounds, genders and ages. The scores for the male subset (68.4), the black subset (71.2) and the subset which included participants between the ages of 20 and 34 (71.7) were all individually higher than the mean self-esteem score for the repeat offending sample as well. The level of variance in terms of the standard deviation for the repeat offending sample was however lower than the American samples which were found to range between 18.4 and 18.8 for the relevant subsets indicating a greater degree of similarity between the scores of the repeat offending sample.

### **7.1.2 The Comparison of Self-Esteem between Repeat Offenders from Different Offending Categories**

The second aim of the study required a comparison between the self-esteem scores of repeat offenders classified into different offending categories. In consideration of the literature (Baumeister et al., 1996:15-25; Beesley & McGuire, 2009:264; Kernis et al., 1989:1019; Oliver et al., 2007:304; Van der Hoven & Ovens, 2003:22; Webster et al., 2007:207) it was hypothesised that there would be a significant difference between the self-esteem scores of the repeat offenders serving sentences for different types of offences. It was established that aggressive offenders had significantly higher levels of self-esteem than offenders from all the other offending categories. Differences in self-esteem scores were also found between sexual offenders and participants classified as economic, narcotic and “other” (possession of illegal firearms, parole violation, breaking of a protection order, arson and intimidation) offenders and between a combination of economic, narcotic and “other” offenders and the total sample mean, however neither of these differences were statistically significant. These results satisfied the second aim of the study.

For aggressive offenders, the increase in self-esteem could be attributed to a narcissistically high self-esteem and unstable self-perception which when threatened, results in the manifestation of violent or aggressive behaviour with the aim of asserting this perception of superiority on the source of the threat (Baumeister et al., 1996:15-25; Beesley & McGuire, 2009:264; Kernis et al., 1989:1019). Furthermore, self-esteem is said to be related to sexual offending in terms of anxiety related to socially acceptable sexual behaviour and thereby victim selection. Sexual offenders with low self-esteem are therefore more likely to select victims such as children, the elderly or lone women if such targets are perceived as “easier” or more vulnerable to overpower (Oliver et al., 2007:304; Van der Hoven & Ovens, 2003:22;

Webster et al., 2007:207). Finally, the popular perspective of a low self-esteem link to offending was also supported although not significantly as participants classified as economic, narcotic and “other” offenders were found to have lower levels of self-esteem than the sample total. The high number of economic offenders could however also be indicative of the relatively low socioeconomic nature of the surrounding communities and the lack of available employment opportunities which indicates a possible relevance to Cohen’s subculture theory and Rogers’ views around the need for positive regard (Rogers, 1951:499; Williams & McShane, 2010:93). Furthermore, as many of the economic offences included shoplifting, housebreaking and cattle theft, it could be defined as survival or opportunistic crimes rather than purely motivated by greed.

### **7.1.3 The Multivariate Analysis of Self-Esteem in Relation to Demographic, Psychosocial and Correctional Variables**

The third and final aim of the study required a multivariate analysis of self-esteem in relation to demographic, psychosocial and correctional variables. The demographic variables which included chronological age groups, level of education, socioeconomic status of family, number of children, marital status and childhood family composition, all produced non-significant results in terms of self-esteem. The explanation behind many of these results could be attributed to one of the tenants of the theoretical perspective of Rogers (1951:498) that emphasises the importance of the role of societal perceptions of what is deemed attractive in terms of behaviour and the norms and values derived from these collective views. In other words, the norms and values of society could mediate appropriate behaviour.

The level of education achieved was found to have no significant effect on level of self-esteem. The explanation provided by Harris (2009:13) emphasises the importance of perceptions related to the achievement of high levels of education in different societies or communities. The rural nature of the surrounding communities may influence a decrease in importance of the achievement of high levels of formal education due to a lack of resources and comparatively substandard levels of education and a possible increase in the importance for informal education that is focused on sustainable familial support. The results for the relationship between self-esteem and marital status as well as number of children (see hypothesis 5) refer to a similar explanation detailing the role of societal perceptions in terms of cultural norms and values. The negative effects of apartheid on the family structure are

also mentioned as a possible influencing factor that may have led to a breakdown of the traditional African family unit, thereby alienating the importance of the maintenance of cultural perspectives related to marriage and children (Bruce, 2006:35).

The effect of age on self-esteem is said to stabilise in adulthood (Block & Robins, 1993:919; Leary, 1999:33) and due to the adult nature of the repeat offending sample, it was found that self-esteem did not differ significantly between different generational groups. Age is also identified in the literature to play a role in the effect of socioeconomic status on self-esteem (Rosenberg & Pearlin, 1978:57). The comparative nature of self-evaluation as purported by Rogers (1951) is said to become more influential as individuals age and become exposed to more diverse groups of people in the working and social environment.

Lastly, the findings related to the demographic variable of childhood family composition did not support theoretical perspectives as it was found that participants who came from structurally impaired homes did not have significantly different levels of self-esteem than participants who came from structurally intact homes. A possible explanation could refer to the collective nature of many African families whereby members of the extended family are often found to contribute to the raising of children thus minimising many of the negative effects of absent parental figures (Posel et al., 2004:1; Schatz & Ogunmefun, 2007:1391).

Data regarding the level of closeness with parental figures corroborated this finding as it was established that there was no significant difference between the self-esteem scores for participants who felt “very close”, “close” and “not close” to both their mother and father figures. Although this finding did not provide support for the theoretical perspectives that associated high self-esteem with an increase in parental closeness, the nature of the repeat offenders life experiences did provide an alternate reasoning. The nature of the sample consisting of individuals who had transgressed the law on multiple occasions during their lifetimes and also spent extended periods of time within a correctional centre/s would provide support for Hirschi’s perspective which would indicate a possible deterioration of social and familial bonds leading to a rejection of conventional norms and values and an increased propensity for criminal behaviour (Williams & McShane, 2010:155). Descriptive results indicated that a higher percentage of participants felt very close to their mother figures than their father figures. This could be due to the high level of paternal absence common in rural African households due to an increased amount of migrant labour requiring the father figures

to leave their homes for extended periods of time to fulfil employment commitments and provide for their families financially (Montgomery et al., 2006:2412; Posel et al., 2004:1).

Other psychosocial variables closely related to Rogers' (1951) core perspectives include the need for acceptance by significant others and perceptions of community treatment. The results for both of these factors could be explained using Rogers' theoretical underpinnings (1951) although there was a degree of differentiation with the literature.

It was proposed that participants who associated with significant others who had been in trouble with the law would not be deviating too far from the models of acceptable behaviour experienced growing up and would therefore maintain a high level of self-esteem despite their status as repeat offenders. Participants with a high need for acceptance from family and peers who had been in trouble with the law were found to have lower levels of self-esteem than those who did not have family or peers in trouble with the law. Although the only significant difference was in relation to friends who were in trouble with the law, this may have indicated that despite being repeat offenders, participants still placed high importance on the norms and values of conventional society. Therefore the perspectives of deviant behaviour being related to unstable or false high self-esteem (Baumeister et al., 1996:8; Bruce, 2006:34; Salmivalli, 2001:390) may be elaborated on through the inclusion of Cloward and Ohlins' differential opportunity theory which would state that repeat offenders who also hold deviant associations may therefore not entirely replace the beliefs of conventional society with opposing beliefs of a subculture but rather mask the failure to succeed within the socially accepted framework with a display of total deviance.

The role of personal perception of experiences was again prevalent in the explanation of findings related to community treatment. Results indicated that participants who perceived their communities to be supportive and felt that they were fairly treated upon release had higher levels of self-esteem. The findings for fairness of treatment were highly significant whereas those related to community support approached significance but were slightly above the required .05 alpha level. The relation between self-esteem and community treatment supported the theoretical perspectives despite the continued involvement in crime. It can therefore be concluded that additional factors had to be present in the motivation for offending behaviour and that an increased self-esteem and perceptions of community support are not the exclusive factors to adequately explain the complexities of the manifestation of



criminal behaviour. Therefore, more research is required focusing on the interplay between different psychosocial and demographic variables within the South African context.

The experience of abuse and victimisation was also found to have a negative impact of self-esteem although significance was established to vary with context and time related factors. Self-esteem scores of participants who were abused prior to incarceration were found to be lower than those who were not abused before incarceration. The difference was however not statistically significant. Type of abuse was also assessed and found that no difference existed between participants who experienced familial abuse, any other forms of victimisation and those who felt they had not been victimised. Victimisation in the correctional setting showed similar results as participants who had directly experienced victimisation were found to have lower levels of self-esteem. Although this finding was also not significant it did come close to the .05 alpha level with a *p*-value of .061. The only significant finding related to victimisation was therefore between participants who had witnessed violence within the correctional centre and those who had not. It was established that participants who had vicariously experienced violence within the correctional centre had significantly lower levels of self-esteem than those who had not. It can therefore be concluded that experiences of abuse were more likely to have an effect on the propensity for deviant behaviour rather than level of self-esteem due to a possible overreliance on psychological defence mechanisms that may create a distorted sense of reality thus minimising perceptions of responsibility for behaviour (Rogers, 1951:500; Wade, 2009:175). The increased significance related to experiences of victimisation within the correctional environment emphasises the role of time related factors and context. The participants who had experienced victimisation during incarceration were still in the same environment where the victimisation occurred. This, coupled with the closed nature of correctional centres could thus exacerbate the effects of these experiences. The constant fear of victimisation may significantly increase anxiety levels and could give rise to numerous other psychological illnesses such as depression, substance abuse or suicide (Kort-Butler, 2010:497).

Other correctional variables that produced indicative of relationships with self-esteem included exposure to the correctional environment, visitations and satisfaction with conditions. Exposure was assessed by number of previous sentences and length of time spent in corrections at the time of assessment. It was established that the number of previous sentences did not significantly affect self-esteem scores but that the time spent incarcerated

did. Length of time spent in the correctional facility was positively correlated with level of self-esteem. This provided support for the views of Greve and Enzman (2003) and Greve et al. (2001) emphasising the role of coping mechanisms such as accommodation and immunisation that are related to familiarity with the conditions and expectations of the environment *and* the ability to justify and neutralise any negative associations stemming from incarceration.

The maintenance of familial bonds whilst incarcerated as indicated by the frequency of visitations in the correctional centre also showed an increase in self-esteem. This again provided support for Rogers' (1951) perspective emphasising the importance of familial bonds as well as the certainty thereof. The difference in scores between participants who felt they received visits frequently and those who felt that they only received visits "sometimes" indicated that the perception of certainty of familial and community support had an impact on its relation to self-esteem.

Perception was again utilised in the explanation of the relationship between self-esteem and satisfaction with prison conditions. It was established that participants who were satisfied with the conditions in the correctional centre had significantly higher levels of self-esteem than those who were not. Therefore although the conditions for most of the participants were the same, it was the perception and degree of internalisation of the substandard and negative aspects of the environment that had a negative effect on self-perception (Cervone & Pervin, 2008:168; Peacock, 2006:60; Rogers, 1951:492).

The final correctional variable that was assessed in terms of self-esteem was participation in treatment programmes. Numerous studies have indicated the positive relationship between programme participation and self-esteem (Dissel, 2008:157; Fisher et al., 1998:7; Oser, 2006:346; Webster et al., 2007:214). The results from this study also found a positive relationship, however it was not statistically significant. The explanation for this finding can be as a result of the substandard conditions in a number of South African correctional facilities. The lack of basic accommodation, nutritional and healthcare provisions exacerbated by the problem of overcrowding and general lack of regard from correctional staff are not conducive to the successful realisation of treatment aims which attempt to promote self-value and teach appropriate cognitive behavioural reactions to stressful situations (Dissel, 2008:162; Van Zyl Smit, 2004:229). These results also highlights that the relationship

between self-esteem and offending behaviour is not as linear as is commonly thought and that not all offenders have a low self-esteem that requires improvement. Adequate screening and assessment of inmates upon entrance into the correctional facilities is therefore essential to determine appropriate, empirically based treatment options to increase the effectiveness of rehabilitative efforts and thereby decrease the prevalence of repeated offending behaviour.

The investigation of demographic, psychosocial and correctional variables in relation to self-esteem and repeated offending behaviour have allowed for the fulfilment of the third and final aim of the study.

## **7.2 Recommendations for Future Research**

In order to improve on the current state of factors related to the correctional environment, the current crime rate and the manner in which offenders are perceived and treated in the correctional setting it is imperative that additional research into the variables associated with repeat offending and self-esteem be conducted. Further research will allow for a more substantial engagement for purposes of the development and implementation of effective policies and practices within the ambit of this study-field in South Africa. Such recommendations based on the findings of this study will be now presented.

### **7.2.1 Longitudinal Research**

The utilisation of longitudinal studies will allow for future researchers to further determine the effect of a number of change related variables associated with self-esteem. As self-esteem is considered a dynamic factor, it is possible that fluctuations may occur. The implementation of longitudinal designs will therefore allow for a more accurate assessment of self-esteem as well as the level of stability. Longitudinal research will also avail for pre- and post-testing focusing amongst others on the possible effects of treatment programmes and other mediating or background variables, both within institutional and community context.

### **7.2.2 Control Groups**

The identification and isolation of variables relating to the contextual nature of self-esteem would render the utilisation of non-offending control groups very useful (Coopersmith, 2002:18). In other words the comparison between non-offending populations and recidivists from similar communities will allow for the identification of demographic and psychosocial factors associated with law abiding behaviour. This could assist in the development of crime prevention strategies that work to promote factors associated with socially accepted behaviour and discourage factors identified to facilitate or promote deviance. Control groups could also include both male and female participants allowing for cross gender comparisons to be made in terms of self-esteem and repeat offending behaviour.

### **7.2.3 Triangulation**

The complex nature of the relationship between self-esteem and repeat offending behaviour demonstrates the need to employ multiple methods of data collection and analysis. Using both qualitative and quantitative data collection procedures and techniques will allow future researchers to obtain a more holistic understanding. It would be crucial to remain sensitive to cultural factors and uniqueness of context. The importance of personal perception from the Rogerian perspective would furthermore necessitate the use of qualitative data collecting instruments such as in-depth interviewing and/or focus groups as aids to better understand the experiential world of the repeat offender. The inclusion of additional assessments to identify the prevalence of psychological defence and coping mechanisms as well as the prevalence and extent of the effect of traumatic experiences would allow for more accurate inferences in terms of self-esteem and repeat offending behaviour.

### **7.2.4 Evaluation of Treatment Programmes**

The variables related to treatment success should be explored in more detail and comparisons between offenders who do not reoffend should be encouraged. The identification of variables associated with individuals who manage to become law abiding and contributing members of society could allow future researchers to more accurately determine the source of factors associated with the cessation of offending behaviour and whether or not they are associated with the outcomes of treatment programmes. The implementation of programmes should also

be evaluated to determine the level of adherence to the purpose and aims of the treatments along with consideration of the experiences of both independent and internal service providers. The identification of such variables may also affect the success or failure of programme participation and should also allow for the development of policies and procedures to neutralise these concerns, thereby raising the norms and standards of treatment programmes provided in correctional centres.

### **7.3 Concluding Remarks**

Self-esteem has been identified as both a behavioural motivator as well as an outcome of experiences in the lives of repeat offenders. The perception an individual has of him or herself as a singular entity as well as a part of a greater phenomenal field is in concert with other aspects of human existence. Therefore, the generally higher degree of negative life experiences and the changing nature of conditions of worth between incarceration and open society could place strain and alter the self-perception of the repeat offender. This disjunction between the real and ideal self and particular social context may render the repeat offender more vulnerable to engage in behaviour considered deviant by greater society. This situation could furthermore create a dependency on psychological defences in attempts to create some notion of consistency but only serve to further diffuse and alienate. Repeat offending could therefore be viewed as an inability to successfully integrate all experiences into a self-concept in order to realise the potential to construct a meaningful law abiding life experience.

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# Appendix 1

## Coopersmith Inventory Adult Form

Like    Unlike

Me    Me

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Things usually don't bother me.                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. I find it very hard to talk in front of a group.             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. There are lots of things about myself I'd change if I could. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. I can make up my mind without too much trouble.              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. I'm a lot of fun to be with.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. I get upset easily at home.                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. It takes me a long time to get used to anything new.         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. I'm popular with persons my own age.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. My family usually considers my feelings.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 10. I give in very easily.                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 11. My family expects too much of me.                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 12. It's pretty tough to be me.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 13. Things are all mixed up in my life.                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 14. People usually follow my ideas.                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 15. I have a low opinion of myself.                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 16. There are many times when I would like to leave home.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 17. I often feel upset with my work.                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 18. I'm not as nice looking as most people.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 19. If I have something to say, I usually say it.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 20. My family understands me.                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 21. Most people are better liked than I am.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 22. I usually feel as if my family is pushing me.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 23. I often get discouraged with what I am doing.               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 24. I often wish I were someone else.                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 25. I can't be depended on.                                     |

## Appendix 2

### Self-Concept and Multivariate Questionnaire

#### Self-Concept and Multivariate Questionnaire

Please answer **ALL** the questions in this section. Make a tick (✓) over the answer you choose.

#### **EXAMPLE**

Do you go to school? 

Yes	No
-----	----

#### **Please Note:**

- Do not write your name or any identifying particulars on the questionnaire.
- **ALL** Information supplied will be treated as confidential.
- There are **no** right or wrong answers.

#### **A. GENERAL INFORMATION**

##### **1. How old are you?**

##### **2. What is your sex?**

1	2
Male	Female

##### **3. What is your marital status?**

1	2	3	4
Single	Married	Divorced	Widowed

##### **4. Do you have any children?**

1	2
Yes	No

##### **4.1 If yes, how many?**

##### **5. Which ethnic group do you belong to?**

1	2	3	4	5
Asian	Black	Coloured	White	Other (Specify: _____)

##### **6. Which cultural group do you belong to? (tick only one)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Afrikaans	Coloured	English	Ndebele	Pedi	Shangaan	Sotho	Swazi	Tswana
10	11	12	13					
Xhosa	Zulu	Indian	Other (Specify: _____)					

**7. What is your home language?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Afrikaans	English	Ndebele	Pedi	Shangaan	Sotho	Swazi	Tswana	Xhosa
10	11							
Zulu	Other (Specify: )							

**8. What is your highest school education?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
No schooling	Up to grade 4 (std 2)	Grades 5, 6 and 7 (std 3-5)	Grades 8-9 (std 6-7)	Grade 10 (std 8)	Grade 11 (std 9)	Grade 12 (std 10)
8						
Trade e.g. N 1						

**B. CHILDHOOD INFORMATION****9. Do you have any siblings (brothers and sisters)?**

1	2
Yes	No

**9.1 If yes, how many siblings (brothers and sisters) do you have?**

**9.2 Are you the oldest, youngest or in the middle?**

1	2	3
Oldest	In the Middle	Youngest

**10. Were you raised by:  
(please tick all that apply)**

Mother	
Father	
Grandmother	
Grandfather	
Uncle	
Aunt	
Brother	
Sister	
Other (please specify)	

**11. Were any of your siblings (brothers and sisters) ever in trouble with the law?**

1	2
Yes	No

**12. Were any of your parents ever in trouble with the law?**

1	2
Yes	No

**13. Were any of your friends ever in trouble with the law?**

1	2
Yes	No

**14. How important is it for you to feel accepted by your family?**

1	2	3
Very Important	Important	Not Important

**15. How important is it for you to feel accepted by your friends?**

1	2	3
Very Important	Important	Not Important

**16. Was your mother employed?**

1	2	3
Yes	No	Not Applicable

**17. Was your father employed?**

1	2	3
Yes	No	Not Applicable

**18. How close were you to your mother/mother figure?**

1	2	3	4
Very close	Close	Not close	Not applicable

**19. How close were you to your father/father figure?**

1	2	3	4
Very close	Close	Not close	Not applicable

**20. Did you ever experience any form of abuse?**

1	2
Yes	No

**If Yes, please mention what type of abuse you experienced?**

\_\_\_\_\_

### **C. OFFENSE INFORMATION**

**21. For which offense or offenses are you CURRENTLY serving a sentence for? (e.g. theft, rape, murder)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**22. Have you been in prison before?**

1	2
Yes	No

**23. If yes please specify how many times.**

1	2	3	4
Once	Twice	Three times	More (specify):

**24. For which other offense or offenses were you found guilty in the past? (e.g. theft, rape, murder).**

\_\_\_\_\_

**25. How long is your present prison sentence?**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Less than 3 months	3 to 6 months	7 to 11 months	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	4 to 5 years	more than 5 years

**26. For how long have you been in prison now?**

1	2	3	4	5
Less than 6 months	6 to 12 months	12 to 18 months	19 to 24 months	More than 2 years

**27. How were you treated by your community members after serving your previous prison sentence?**

1	2	3	4	5
Very supportive	Supportive	No change	Unsupportive	Very Unsupportive

**28. Do you feel you were treated fairly?**

1	2
Yes	No

**28.1 Briefly explain why or why not:**

---

#### **D. PROGRAMME PARTICIPATION**

**29. Place a tick next to the programmes provided by Phoenix-Zululand that you have completed**

Starting with Us	
Drama and Art Project	
Conversations	
Family Conferencing	
Victim Offender Mediation	

**30. If you have been involved in any other programmes, please specify below**

---

#### **E. PRISON EXPERIENCE**

**31. Have you ever witnessed violence in the prison?**

1	2
Yes	No

**32. Have you ever been victimised in prison?**

1	2
Yes	No

**33. If yes, mention the specific incident or incidents**

---

**34. Are you happy with the prison conditions?**

1	2
Yes	No

**35. Do you get visitors in prison?**

1	2	3
Yes	Sometimes	No

**35.1 If yes or sometimes, please specify who visits you.**

\_\_\_\_\_

**36. How do you react if someone insults or disrespects you in prison?**

1	2	3	4	5
I walk away	I insult them back	I ignore it	I become violent	Other (Specify: _____)

**37. Do any of your friends belong to a prison gang?**

1	2
Yes	No

**38. What is your best characteristic?**

\_\_\_\_\_

-----Thank You-----



## Appendix 3

### Instruments Cover Page

#### General information about the study

1. Dear Participant, thank you for agreeing to participate in this research.
2. The current study aims to assess and compare the level of self-esteem of repeat offenders with variables related to individual demographics, family relations, experiences within a correctional facility and interactions with the community.
3. Participation in this project is completely voluntary and if at any time you wish to terminate participation you are free to do so without any consequence.
4. You will not receive any form of reimbursement for participation as the decision to participate is completely voluntary. The information shared with us will assist to help others in a similar position.
5. The information collected will be completely confidential and will only be seen by the research team. To enhance confidentiality it is important not to record your name anywhere on the questionnaire. You will only record your name on the informed consent form.
6. If at any point you experience any form of discomfort, a social worker will be available for debriefing during or after the project.
7. If you wish to obtain information on your rights as a participant, please contact Ms Phumelele Ximba, Research Office, UKZN, on 031 260 3587

Name	Role	Contact Details
Matthew Cronje	Researcher	Email: <a href="mailto:mattcronje07@gmail.com">mattcronje07@gmail.com</a>
Prof Robert Peacock	Supervisor	Email: <a href="mailto:peacock@ukzn.ac.za">peacock@ukzn.ac.za</a>
Institution		Address
University of KwaZulu-Natal School of Applied Human Sciences		Howard College V King George Avenue Durban 4001

## Appendix 4

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I, THE UNDERSIGNED (state full initials and surname)

---

a major person, **DECLARE** myself willing to participate voluntarily and without remuneration in the proposed research program on self-esteem and repeat offending, which is to be undertaken by M. Cronje.

This undertaking is subject to the conditions that **all** the information will be treated as confidential and that my identity will **be protected at all times**. In addition, I undertake that **all** interviews or surveys **may be recorded** by audio recorder or in a written format. These records may **NOT** be used for purposes other than research.

**CONSEQUENTLY I undertake that I am fully aware of the purpose of the study and further undertake not to institute any actions, lawsuits or claims against the above persons or recover any damages, costs and expenses of any nature from them if they meet the conditions set out above.**

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_  
2012.

As witnesses:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(signature of participant)

## Appendix 5



01 August 2012

**Mr Matthew Cronje 212559802**  
**School of Applied Human Sciences: Criminology**

Dear Mr Cronje

**Protocol reference number: HSS/0581/012M**  
**Project title: A Multivariate Criminological Analysis of the Self-Esteem of Repeat Offenders**

### EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

**Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.**

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

**Professor Steven Collings (Chair)**

/px

cc Supervisor Professor Robert Peacock  
cc Dr Nirmala Gopal  
cc Academic leader Professor JH Buitendach  
cc School Admin. Ms Nondumiso Khanyile

**Professor S Collings (Chair)**  
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