

Individual Differences in Offender Reintegration Attitudes: An Empirical Examination

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Abstract

The aim of this research paper was to examine whether there was a relationship between demographic factors such as age, gender and education on people's attitudes towards offender reintegration. It also identifies whether there is a link between legal attitudes and belief in redeemability which is conducted through the use of multiple pre-existing scales in order to gather the data from the public. This paper uses quantitative research methods to collect data through the use of a questionnaire which was made up of demographic questions, a psychopathy scale and then attitudinal questions. The system SPSS was used to analyse the data and create the graphs to highlight key findings within the data

Key Words: *Offender Reintegration; Public Attitudes; Individual Differences; Crime*

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Introduction

Reintegration can be described as the process of transitioning from being incarcerated to being back into society in order to maintain a new lifestyle that is crime free to become a contributing member of society (Davis, Bahr & Ward, 2012). Statistics from June 2023 (Sturge and Carthew, 2023) show that there were around 90,000 people within the prison population within the UK has been on an upwards trajectory since the early 20th century and has almost quadrupled in size (Sturge and Carthew, 2023). There is still a high level of reoffending in the UK as statistics provided by the ministry of justice show that around 24% of those convicted of criminal offences reoffended in 2021 (Ministry of justice, 2023). A variety of factors may explain such recidivism rates. For example, due to the lack of support that some people receive once leaving prison with no employment or income it can lead to reoffending as they do not have enough to be able to support themselves (Broadbent solicitors, 2023). There is often a lot of stigma and misconceptions associated with ex-offenders and their reintroduction back into society, even from those who work within the prison system (Woodfield et al., 2023; 2019). Stigma in this context can be described as a process where an individual is labelled as an offender, so others in society may treat them differently and resultantly they have less access to opportunities for prosocial development (Shoham, & Rahav, 1982). This is still applicable in current society as individuals with a criminal record are discriminated against in the UK labour market (University of Oxford, 2023). One reasoning for this is ex-offenders have to disclose previous criminal records on employment prospects (University of Oxford, 2023).

Studies have shown that societal stigma can mean that there are limitations and less opportunities available for ex-offenders which can make it more difficult for them to be able to succeed and can in some cases lead to further reoffending (Callais, 2009). Research conducted through the use of qualitative data analysed 16 offenders in order to gain an understanding of offender reintegration from their perspective. There were six factors that they believed influenced their ability to reintegrate

which were family support, friends, employment, personal motivation, age and not dealing with substance abuse (Davis, Bahr & Ward, 2012; Filkin et al., 2022). People who were successful with reintegration often had a good support system and wanted to change, so were willing to put in the work to make it happen. However, studies continue to show the importance of factors such as individual motivation to change (Willmott et al., 2018), offender's criminogenic identities (Sherretts & Willmott, 2016) and their desire for this identity to change (Barnett et al., 2021), and even efforts to engage in mindfulness (Thew et al., 2018) impact upon future offending and generally problematic behaviours.

1.1 The importance of understanding attitudes

Whilst much is known the barriers ex-offenders face upon release from a custodial sentence, less is understood about the contemporary public attitudes held towards their successful reintegration back into society. More research is needed in this area to raise awareness on offender reintegration and reduce stigma around the topic. As well as this it is important to gain an understanding of individuals views and of demographic factors such as age, gender and level of education can have an impact on their opinions. Studies have shown that the stigmatization of offenders is a major barrier to successful reintegration as people in society have anxiety and fear about public security (Filkin et al., 2022). This can cause issues with employment, housing and the ability to access opportunities (Sakib, 2022). This is why examining people's attitudes generally (Dlamini et al., 2017), and specifically towards offender reintegration can be important for future research as it can provide a more comprehensive and up to date insight surrounding public perceptions towards ex-offenders and reintegration and help develop an understanding on else can be done to raise awareness and reduce stigma. From more data and studies that are conducted within this topic area it might be able to lead to more organisations being put into place to help support offenders to provide them with more opportunities for employment and help to prevent reoffending. There are already some organisations and systems for support put into place to help ex-offenders when they rejoin society. Some of these include the prison reform trust

who help support ex-offenders and their families in promoting equality and human rights as well as improving treatment and living conditions for when they are incarcerated (Prison Reform Trust, n.d.). Another organisation put into place is the prince's trust which aids ex-offenders with employment and gaining volunteer opportunities as well as providing contact with other programmes to support (Prince's Trust, n.d.). Even though there are increasingly more organisations being created in support of ex-offenders and rehabilitation, this research into people's attitudes might help more people become aware of the obstacles ex-offenders have to face and see that more still needs to be done to reduce stigma and support people attempting to reintegrate back into society.

1.2 Structure of the dissertation:

The dissertation will be made of different chapters to create a clear structure and to make it clear to understand the research and the results that have been collected.

- To begin with the literature review will demonstrate previous literature and research that has been done on offender reintegration as well as looking into previous research on if there is a relationship with different demographic factors such as age, education and gender as well as legal attitudes on offender reintegration. It will also highlight the study rationale and how it fills gaps within the pre-existing research to make a difference.
- The methodology will explain how the data was gathered through the use on online surveys as well as the analytical process that is being used. This chapter also covers the ethical considerations that were taken place in order for this study to happen. It will also address what scales were used to create the full questionnaire.
- The analysis will present the results in tables from the T tests and the regression in order to easily analyse and look back at the aims and how they answer the research questions.
- The discussion section looks at the results further in depth as it begins with interpreting the tables from the previous results section. Then the study strengths and limitations will be

addressed alongside the implications of the research and future suggestions for others looking into the same area.

- The conclusion will summarise all the key points and findings that were made previously and then relate back to answering the overall research question and look at the predicted aims. As well as reiterate once again why this research is important and how the results from this study have answered the research question as well as hopefully allow it to help in future changes.

1.3 Research aims and objectives:

After looking into previous research and the gaps within it the research question was identified as 'what factors explain individual differences in attitudes towards offender reintegration among the UK public?'. This question was created as I thought it was important to look into people's attitudes on offender reintegration as well as identifying whether there is a relationship between demographic factors and individuals' views. The demographic factors include age, gender and education level as well as the individual variables of the pre-trial juror attitudes scale which are system confidence, conviction proneness, cynicism towards defence, racial bias, social justice and innate criminality (see Willmott, 2018 for a review). These factors are all going to be compared to the belief in redeemability variable in order to answer the question. The following aims are what is being addressed within this quantitative study in order to better understand people's attitudes towards ex-offenders and offender reintegration:

Aims

- To examine the relationship between demographic factors including gender, age and education on attitudes towards offender reintegration
- To examine the relationship between legal attitudes and people's belief in redeemability.

Literature review

The previous chapter helped identify why this topic is relevant and an issue that needs to be looked into more to help raise awareness as well as addressing the research aims. Here forth the purpose of this literature review will further explore existing literature and research on this topic to provide as insight on individuals attitudes towards crime and how demographic factors might influence people's responses. From examination of existing research, it has been found that there have been similar studies taken place, however to the authors knowledge no prior study has investigated the importance of the psychosocial factors examined in the current research. To begin with, this chapter will address research on attitudes towards crime and how this might affect reintegration. It will then address similar studies that have taken place to do with attitudes on offender reintegration, whilst identifying the differences between this study and the pre-existing research to demonstrate the gaps that are being filled. Finally, it will narrow in on how factors such as age, gender, education levels and legal attitudes can have an impact on people's views of offender reintegration and belief in redeemability and how previous literature supports these claims. It will then go on to explore the study rationales and the aims of this research.

2.1 Attitudes on offenders and crime:

Within society many people have shown to hold negative views on current offenders as well ex-offenders, as research has demonstrated that the majority of people in one study thought that sentences have been too lenient and think there should be harsher punishments (Hough, Bradford, Jackson & Roberts 2013). Recent data has shown an increase in crime throughout the years as there was around 6.7 million crimes reported at the end of 2023 compared to around 6.6 million the previous year (Office for national statistics, 2023). In result of this around one fifth of people have become more fearful of crime and belief they are likely to be a victim of crime (GOV.UK, 2017; Ioannides & Willmott, 2023) and some people even change their habits in order to stay safe even if

they do not have any personal experiences (McIntyre, 1967). One study in the US looked into public attitudes on 6 different types of crime by conducting telephone interviews with 397 adult participants and asking whether they thought punishment or rehabilitation was more relevant for the type of crime (Wood and Gannon, 2013). The researchers found that the participants had quite strong opinions on punishments, however the results also showed that there was a strong support for rehabilitation especially when certain groups such as young offenders were involved. These findings might suggest that participants within this study might be more likely to support rehabilitation and have a positive view on offender reintegration as they want people to have the opportunity to change.

Rehabilitation is used with offenders to help assess, treat and manage the individual, so that they can rejoin society. This occurs whilst they are incarcerated and once they are released with the intention on achieving their maximum potential for participating within society and improve their functions and quality of life (DNRC, 2019). An offender management in custody model was implemented in 2018 to help arrange prisoners' journeys back into society. The goal was to prioritise rehabilitation by supporting work for once they are released to reduce the risk of reoffending as well as providing each individual with a key worker to guide and coach them through their sentence (Custody and resettlement, 2021). Alongside this there are programmes in place to help educate offenders who are incarcerated such as academic options, employment, vocational and offending behavioural programmes (Taylor, 2022). One trust offers 130 different online courses ranging from GCSE level to university modules for prisoners to have access to as well as other courses to further their skills or knowledge (Prisoners education trust, 2024). Programmes can be used to encourage pro-social behaviours and attitudes as offenders can be taught how to manage relationships and problem solving as well as programmes addressed to specific offences (Gov.uk, 2018). Once being back in society there is more support provided in order to guide individuals to stay on the right track through the use of the probation service which helps arrange accommodation, education and aids with employment (Taylor, 2022). In 2023, there were over 200,000 offenders on probation rejoining back into society (GOV,

2023) which explains why the topic of offender reintegration is relevant and why people's attitudes are important to understand due to the high levels of ex-offenders within the general population. A barrier to rehabilitation is negative beliefs and attitudes that people hold about ex-offenders that subsequently can lead to reoffending as they are not provided with the same opportunities as other people are and there is a lot of stigma around the topic (Abdi & Rashidian et al, 2015).

Research conducted by Sims & Johnston (2004) used results from a previous poll that was gathered through the use of telephone surveys with participants who were all aged over 18. To begin with they were asked demographic questions as well as questions to do with possible fears about crimes and rate how regularly they thought about them. They rated it on a scale of 'very frequently, somewhat frequently, seldom and never'. From their results it identified that females for all categories of crime reported being more fearful than the male respondents did. As well as this the categories that people appeared to worry about the most were burglary and sexual assault at 31% (Sims & Johnston, 2004). These results demonstrate that there is still quite a large amount of fear surrounding crime and negative views which helps explain why people might be less positive about offender reintegration due to the fear and stigma surrounding it, despite growing use of contemporary techniques designed to help catch offenders (Willmott et al., 2021).

Some studies look at how different groups of students from different backgrounds and university courses feel towards the media and how it represents crime as well as knowledge on the criminal justice system. The results showed that within their country there was a rise in crime and violence which lead them to express growing fear of crime and a fear that they might experience it themselves (Boda & Szabo, 2011). Fear of crime from high-profile serious and violent crimes, which some studies have focused on (e.g. Willmott, Boduszek & Robinson, 2018; Ryan et al., 2017), also likely contribute to these fears. Similar results were also found in studies looking at rising negative attitudes towards sexual and violent crime in the UK (Conroy et al., 2024; Kirkman et al., 2024). This demonstrates that people can hold negative views on ex-offenders as they are fearful of crime itself and might be scared

of the people that commit them. A lot of research has looked into people's attitudes towards crime and offenders in general, although there is a gap in understanding individuals views on offender reintegration within the UK which provides an explanation on why the topic is relevant and can be useful for further research and awareness.

2.2 Attitudes on offender reintegration:

In general, society holds a lot of negative opinions on offenders and ex-offenders, although there is becoming a more positive approach on pushing for rehabilitation instead of punishment. Based on a poll carried out with 1000 adults within the UK, over 70% of the people agreed that it would be more effective spending tax money on measures to help prevent future crime rather than more on the prison system (OnePoll, 2015). This might mean that the current study finds that a higher percentage of the participants have a more understanding and open view on offender reintegration and support the rehabilitation process, rather than a negative outlook. Another relevant statistic from this poll found that 68% thought that people who have committed minor crimes should be given community service instead of prison sentences as this is significantly cheaper for the government and reduces chances of reoffending due to be incarcerated and surrounded by crime (OnePoll, 2015). These can show a relationship between a positive view on rehabilitation and offender reintegration as if individuals are accepting of rehabilitative programmes and more support for offenders, they might be more accepting to ex-offenders reintegrating back into society. It also demonstrates how people would rather tax money go towards supporting those who have offended and to educate people further to prevent offending from taking place.

Similar studies have been completed looking into public attitudes on offender reintegration through a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative research. One study that took place in Australia by O'Sullivan and Holderness et al (2016) explored individuals view on ex-offenders' reintegration by testing their belief in redeemability through the use of a poll shared nationally across Australia. An

aim of their study was to see if people had a strong view on 'belief in redeemability' and whether these will affect their opinions on ex-offenders reintegrating back into society (O'Sullivan and Holderness et al, 2016). There were 1215 people who responded and participated in the research, and they were members of the Australian public who had registered to take part in online surveys. The age ranged from 18-64 and other demographics were asked such as where they were from and their genders. During the survey the questions looked into topics for instance whether they thought offenders could change and live a normal life or if they believed 'once a criminal always a criminal' (O'Sullivan and Holderness et al, 2016). They used multi regression statistical analysis in order to establish their results where they found that there was no significant association between the belief in redeemability scale the demographic variables. This provides more relevance to this study due to the fact that it is important to see whether it will reach a similar conclusion or if it will find a significant link between demographic factors and peoples attitudes on offender reintegration. The results of this study identify why further research needs to be implicated as its just one study conducted in Australia, so the results might not be applicable to the UK as there is a gap in the research, which might mean there are different responses. It also showed that overall people did have a more positive view and thought that people were capable of change, so not everyone has a negative attitude on offender reintegration.

One study that was conducted in the USA asking their participants questions regarding sentences and their views towards the criminal justice system. The study was published by O'Hear and Wheelock (2016) where they interviewed people via a telephone and asked them a series of questions about how good they think the criminal justice system is and what they believe should be prioritised. They gained 804 responses and the results demonstrated that the participants expected a lot from the criminal justice system but felt let down with the results they were currently getting. Around 74% of the participants believed that the systems should be focusing on rehabilitating offenders and helping them to be contributing members of society (O'Hear and Wheelock, 2016). However, they also came

to the conclusion that 88.1% of people wanted to ensure that people who have committed crimes receive an adequate punishment. This presents how although people might want rehabilitation to be effective, they still want people to be equally punished for the crimes that they have committed before reintegrating back into society.

Another contribution towards research on attitudes towards offender reintegration was demonstrated through a mixed-methods study conducted by Ike, Jidong, Ike and Ayobi, (2023). Similarly, to this study they conducted research through the use of an online survey where they collected a total of 1187 participants based in Nigeria with all different demographic backgrounds as well as then conducting thematic analysis for the qualitative aspect. The use of qualitative analysis alongside quantitative allows for in-depth data and can be used to identify themes within the research (Bryman, 2016). Overall, within this study they found that majority of people had a negative view on ex-offenders' reintegration with society as 51% of people strongly disagreed with the statement that they should be provided with housing and supported financially (Ike, T., Jidong, D., Ike, M and Ayobi, E, 2023). This demonstrates how there can be a negative outlook on ex-offenders and stigma, which is why further research is beneficial in order to raise awareness and educate people in the community. Although, this study is similar to this one there are many differences that make it unique due to this taking place in Nigeria, as people might have different responses due to cultural differences. As well as this it is a mixed method study whereas this research focuses on quantitative responses in order to find clear, objective results. The results of this study might help explain that people may still hold a negative view towards offenders and ex-offenders who are rejoining society and that demographic factors play a role within people's attitudes and their belief in redeemability.

A study conducted by Shoham & Timor (2014) that was looking into attitudes on offender reintegration within the Israeli public had a sample group that was inclusive of 3 different groups of people which were representative of law enforcement, employers and members of the general public.

Every participant received a questionnaire however, the employer's questionnaire had 37 questions and both the law enforcement and general public had 30. They defined 3 fields as key perimeters which included the group that the participant belonged to, previous acquaintance with offender and the type of offence that was committed. This study also took into account of demographic factors as each participant was asked for their age, gender and education level as well as other factors. The results concluded that only 12% of employers had hired released prisoners and among those who had not before only 13% were willing to, however 62% of them did believe they could be rehabilitated (Shoham and Timor, 2014). Within the law enforcement category 72% of the participants believed in the statement of 'once a criminal always a criminal' and the results show almost half of their group did not have faith in offender rehabilitation programmes. However, data from the general public group showed that 93% believed that people could be rehabilitated. The data from this study demonstrate how there can be mixed feelings about offender reintegration which further explains why educating people and making them aware on this topic allows for a more positive outlook on rehabilitation and reintegration.

Another study in the USA looked into students' attitudes of offender reintegration through the use of both a survey and an interview. There were 125 students who completed the survey for this study and 5 students were also interviewed alongside this to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. The questions included demographic information as well as questions regarding how comfortable they would feel working with ex-offenders. Their results show that the majority of people at 77% were not fearful of violent crime victimisation and ex-offenders should be given the right to vote once their sentence is completed (Smothermon & Marcos, 2019). However, they did believe that people who have committed a crime should let an employer know when applying for a job. This study allows to see the importance needed in the further exploration of peoples attitudes to offender reintegration as it portrays a positive view on offenders, which contradicts some other studies and suggests there is inconsistent results within this topic area.

No pre-existing literature on this topic has been identified to be based within the UK, which is why it is important that more research is needed to investigate further into attitudes within the UK on offender reintegration. This is because it allows the opportunity to see what people's beliefs and opinions are in this country and it might also allow support with future policies and recommendations to help ex-offenders when reintegrating back into society. Although past research provides an insight on what people's beliefs might be it is not a direct comparison to the UK and individuals attitudes here. The past studies have all reached different conclusions, so due to the inconsistent results that have been identified it further reiterates the need for this study and why it should be conducted.

2.3 Age and attitudes towards crime:

Age can play a role in people's attitudes towards crime as generations are taught different beliefs and values. Köber et al. (2020) looks into the association between fear of crime and old age as earlier studies had shown that elderly people have a heightened risk of victimisation. This can be linked to factors such as reduced physical strength and health impairments, which can leave them more exposed to threats than younger individuals (Köber et al, 2020). Due to these characteristics, it might cause older generations to have more of a negative attitude on ex-offenders reintegrating back into society as they do not feel as safe.

Borg and Hermann (2023) did a study looking into people's attitudes towards crime and their relations to gender, age and personal values. The data was collected through 6 surveys in German cities throughout the years 1998-2020 and they gathered 14,591 participants altogether. Every respondent was asked to rate legal offences on a 'badness scale' where 0 was not bad at all and 10 being very bad. Some examples of the crimes were tax fraud, smoking pot and shop lifting and had people of all different backgrounds share their views. It was found that people with a younger age tend to rate all the offences as less serious compared to older participants, which might link to people of an older age having more of a negative view of ex-offenders. It can also explain why younger people might be more

open and willing to accept ex-offenders reintegrating back into society as previous research has shown that is what normally occurs. However, these findings might not be applicable to my research as this took place within Germany, so this might mean I reach a different conclusion within my study. Although it is conducted in another country, this does not mean that it might help to explain why the younger participants might be more open to offender reintegration and share a more positive attitude towards ex-offenders and rehabilitation than older participants.

Another study that investigated age as a demographic variable conducted a study where the participants were a group of 176 adolescents with the age range of 12-20 years old. The big five inventory model was used to measure the big five personality dimensions, which is a questionnaire made up of multiple questions assessing their extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness (Obi, et al, 2013). They found that the characteristic conscientiousness significantly influences their attitudes towards crime as unconscientious individuals are careless and negligence which could lead to criminal tendencies or a positive attitude towards crime. However, see Willmott and colleagues (2017) critical appraisal of the measuring personality in this way. Due to these characteristics, it might explain why the younger participants in the study might be more accepting of ex-offenders and have more of a positive attitude.

Kappes, Greve and Hellmers (2013) conducted research with 2 different study groups in order to compare the data and see if there were any differences. Their questionnaire was made up of three different sections, the first being demographic information as well as some background on views of neighborhood safety. The second part then included 5 vignettes which included everyday situations that had the potential to induce fear and then the last part included questions regarding non-situational measures. In the first sample there were 179 young adults aged 18-30 and then 106 middle aged adults aged 50-64 (Kappes, Greve and Hellmers, 2013). The results of the initial sample stated that the older adults behaved more precautionary than the younger adults. Their second study also

included the same questionnaire; however, their sample was made up of 243 adults and within this study they found that there were no significant differences between age groups in cognitive and affective facet. The results from this study might imply that there might not be a significant difference between participants with different ages responses, however if there are any it may suggest that the older individuals have an increased negative outlook compared to younger respondents.

2.4 Gender and attitudes to crime:

Different genders may respond differently to crime and offender reintegration. There has been multiple studies and research into gender and whether it might affect a person's opinion and most studies found that they did find some sort of differences between genders, yet they were not always significant. A study by Leverentz (2011) also looked at gender as a variable and their results showed that women had a higher rate of punitiveness, which is contradicted by multiple other studies that suggest men tend to be more punitive. However, one study that supports this was taken place by asking participants to rate different crimes on a badness scale such as robbery, assault and vandalism (Borg & Hermann ,2023). They found that overall women's badness rating was significantly higher than the men's except for two of the crimes. These would suggest that women might have a negative view on offender reintegration. However, research done by De Soto & Wiener (2021) compared the attitudes of men and women in American and Australian and they found that men in both countries were more punitive towards offenders than women. This can help understand why men could have a negative outlook on ex-offenders and offender reintegration compared to the female participants. Gender is an important variable to look at in the exploration of its relationship with offender reintegration because from previous research there has been mixed responses, so this study could introduce new results and identify a whether male and females hold different opinions on ex-offenders. The use of this will allow for further research and also help when implementing new ways to help ex-offenders as they can explicitly see who might be holding negative views and impacting the ability to rehabilitate and reintegrate.

One study conducted gathered data from a sample of 610 Dutch high school students as well as their parents and asked them questions about different types of crimes. Once they had collected their data, they used it to compare all the male and female responses and found that females were more fearful of every event, expected every event to be more harmful and feared that there was more chance of them experiencing a crime in the future (Fetchenhauer & Buunk, 2005). Overall, the female participants were significantly more afraid of being involved in a crime than the male participants even if they did not find a higher risk of victimization. These findings may suggest that the female participants might demonstrate a negative view on offenders and offender reintegration due to a higher level of fear around crime and being a victim (Metson & Willmott, 2024).

Another relevant study that looked into women's attitudes towards crime within areas of Scotland sent out questionnaires to over 600 women and received 389 responses back (Pain, 1997). Their group was representative of all different groups of women with varied ages and different social classes, which makes it more applicable to the general population. Once the responses had been gathered for the questionnaire, they conducted 45 detailed interviews on with more women. The results of this study highlighted the fact that the fear of violent crime was a major constraint for a lot of the women and effected where they would go and what they participated in doing. This study reiterates the importance and need in the exploration of its relationship with offender reintegration because it suggests that women are significantly affected by the fear of crime which might reflect in a negative attitude towards offender reintegration and the belief in redeemability.

2.5 Education and attitudes to crime:

Previous literature identifies that different levels of education might have an effect on an individual's attitudes towards offender reintegration as some people might have a better understanding, however not all studies found a significant difference between levels of education in their responses. A study conducted by Ike & Jidong et al (2023) found that a recurring theme in their results was that people

had limited awareness for legal support which significantly raises awareness and provides people with trust in ex-offenders. They analysed that people from certain areas or people that did not access to education might be less aware of these ideas and therefore might hold a negative view on offenders reintegrating back into society. The results of this study might suggest that due to the individuals level of education it might impact their beliefs and opinions on offender reintegration within this current study as people who receiver further education might be better educated on legal attitudes and have a positive attitude towards rehabilitation.

Similarly, a belief in redeemability study in Australia looked into people's attitudes towards offender reintegration and used level of education as one of their demographic variables. This study found that participants who had received a diploma or the equivalent to that had the lowest score on the component 2 which was the 'possibility of change', so statements such as 'once a criminal always a criminal' (O'Sullivan & Holderness et al, 2016). Lower levels in this component means that they disagree with the statements, compared to people without any qualifications who had the highest scores in this area. Due to this characteristic, it can explain why people who have a higher level of education might be more accepting of offender reintegration due to further knowledge on the topic compared to those who received less education.

2.6 Legal attitudes and attitudes to crime:

One study looks in people's attitudes towards crime and legal attitudes and any relations it has to demographic variables. Borg and Hermann (2023) gathered information from various surveys conducted within Germany throughout the years 1998-2020 and gained 14,691 responses overall. Attitudes towards crime were measured on a scale named ALLBUS that was adapted to fit the correct context. One of the results they concluded was that if people were more aware of laws and had lenient attitudes towards crime, they are more likely to participate in criminal behaviour. This might explain that if people are educated on crimes and laws it might result in them being more lenient and

accepting, which could result in some people committing crimes. However, a crime survey taken place in England and Wales contradicts this as it states how 7 in 10 people who are more aware of sentencing guidelines and hold legal attitudes believe that sentencing is too lenient towards offenders (Marsh, McKay, Pelly & Cereda, 2019).

A variable of the pre-trial juror attitudinal questionnaire is racial bias as this factor can be very influential on people's attitudes towards crime. One study had 2 sample groups from a college and a sample of adults all who had a white ethnicity. They were asked a series of questions where a ATB scale would measure for any explicit racial bias (Bass, Choi & Dickter, 2023) and also completed an IAT behavioural task whilst they put stimulus words into categories. The results of this study showed that there was racial bias as some people held negative perceptions and attitudes towards black individuals as well as rating them as more violent and deserving of incarceration (Bass, Choi & Dickter, 2023). This study might help explain that if an individual has racial bias, they might hold a negative view towards other ethnicities and towards groups of ex-offenders and offender reintegration.

2.7 Study rationale and aims:

There is some previous research on offender reintegration, however this study is unique in that it is on public attitudes and based in the UK. The use of different scales put together allows for a different point of view as the scales were all individually selected from other studies or research, which means that no other study is the same as this or will have the same aims and results as this. By having a unique study, it allows for a gap to be filled in this topic area as a lot of previous research that is looked further into within the literature review is not based within the UK, so the results might not be relevant or applicable to this population due to cultural differences.

After reviewing pre-existing literature, it appears that whilst there is existing research into attitudes towards offender reintegration, there remains a gap that has failed to investigate this within the UK.

There is little research or studies that look directly into public attitudes towards offender reintegration and how demographic factors might play a role, as most are broader and look at crime itself or rehabilitation rather than specifically reintegration. Previous literature has found a mixture of results; however, many seem to show how people have a positive outlook on rehabilitation and reintegration as a whole. Studies that have used demographic data included in their studies and have come to different conclusions and sometimes they have found that specific demographic factors do not have a significant relationship with attitudes towards crime and offender reintegration. Although, these findings are not within the UK which is why this research will address the gaps within literature through the aims, looking into the results and identifying whether there is a relationship between demographic and egocentric factors and people's attitudes towards offenders. Therefore, the specific aims of this study are to establish whether there is a relationship between demographic factors such as age, gender and education levels with offender reintegration attitudes and the belief in redeemability. As well as identifying whether legal attitudes correlate with people's belief in redeemability levels.

Methodology

3.1 Research design

Within this study a questionnaire design was decided to be the most effective method in gathering data as it allows larger amounts of people to be assessed with ease and it is very simple to create and distribute (Jones, Baxter & Khanduja, 2013). The use of an online questionnaire allows more people to have access to it as participants do not have to travel anywhere to be able to access the survey it can be done from home. It is also an effective method due to the fact that participants will feel more comfortable to be truthful and honest with their responses because it is anonymous, and all the results are confidential (Patten, 2020). Questionnaires are a form of quantitative data collection which will

result in me being able to analyse numerical data in order to develop my findings and to see whether there is any significant difference in the results.

3.2 Sample and sampling procedure

For this research the data was collected through the use of convenience sampling as this allowed access to people that were already available through the use of social media and asking people, I already know to share more widely in order to gain enough responses (Andrade, 2021). An approach used in several recent studies (Lindsay et al., 2023; Sowersby et al., 2022; Williams et al., 2023). This allowed me to get 98 responses in total with ages varying between 18-79 with the mean age being 37.5. As well as 39 of the participants being male 39.8% and 59 females which was 60.2% of the total. The majority of participants were white British as 95.9% made up the total of the group and only 4.1% were of other ethnic backgrounds. They all came from different backgrounds and levels of education, so that I can have enough data to be able to make comparisons with and allows me to see people's opinions on offender reintegration more clearly. From the participant data it identifies that 42.9% of people who took part are less than degree educated and 57.1% are either currently studying for a degree or already have one. Having a bigger sample size allows me to get a better understanding of the topic and it makes it easier to be able to generalise the results more to the general public as there are more people from different age ranges and backgrounds who have participated within the research, so it makes it more applicable (Biau, Kerneis & Porcher, 2008). An issue I faced when gathering my data was that although it was online, I still struggled to get even more responses as not everyone was interested in the topic of offender reintegration or wanted to participate in the research.

3.3 Measures:

My questionnaire is made up of multiple scales, so that I can address different aims to be able to cover more, so that it can be generalised more to the population. The first part of the questionnaire is a

section that asks demographic questions such as age, gender and level of education. This allows for multiple aims to be address such as examining a relationship between demographic factors such as gender or age on attitudes towards offender reintegration. A benefit of asking demographic questions is it can help create more of an understanding of why someone might hold an opinion as this might be due to personal factors about themselves that would not be known without these questions (Ray, R. (2020). It also allows more comparison to take place due to there being more factors that are able to be looked into. By being able to look into the participants demographics it might help explain their attitudinal responses as they are from all different backgrounds which might explain why people hold different opinions and views.

The next set of questions asked in the questionnaire was part of a psychopathy scale, which were questions that helped judge the level of egocentrism in an individual. The whole revised scale was created by Boduszek et al (2021) it was made up of multiple sub-scales, however I did not think all of them were relevant to the topic and thought that the egocentrism subscale was the most applicable one as it can be used to examine the relationship between egocentrism and attitudes towards offender reintegration. Overall, there were 7 questions in this section which asked people to rate from strongly agree=5 to strongly disagree=1 on certain statements such as 'I tend to focus on my own thoughts and ideas rather than what others might be thinking'. The original study had 2 lots of participants as there were 638 adults' male prisoners and 1989 men from the general population in the UK (Boduszek et al, 2021) who answered the psychopathy personality traits questionnaire as they wanted to test whether it was effective. They concluded that the scale was constant across significantly different sample groups and therefore can be used in further research. This scale is useful as it can help predict whether if people agree with the egocentric attitudes, it might explain why they have a negative outlook on offender reintegration as they would not understand peoples point of views and only care about themselves.

After the psychological section it then moved onto the attitudinal part of the questionnaire which was made up of two different scales in order to gain a better understanding of people's views on offender reintegration. The first one is a pretrial juror attitudinal questionnaire by Lecci and Myers (2008) which is made up of 29 questions. It asked people on a scale of 1-5 where strongly agreed was 5 and strongly disagreed was equal to 1, so that it gave people the chance to express how they felt as well as if their opinion was strong or not. There were 6 subscales that the results from the likert scale linked to which were system confidence (CON), conviction proneness (CP), cynicism towards defence (CYN), racial bias (RB), social justice (SJ) and innate criminality (INNCR). Each subscale had a number of questions from the survey that correlated with it, so the participants responses meant they had different attitudes on these categories. This scale is effective in looking at the participants views on offender reintegration as it helps gain an understanding on people's legal attitudes which can directly correlate to their belief in redeemability and offender reintegration.

The other attitudinal scale was on the belief in redeemability by O'Sullivan and Holderness et al (2017) which was made up of 7 'positive' style questions that were about whether they believed offenders could change and be reformed and 3 'negative' statements on offender reintegration such as 'once a criminal always a criminal'. They had a participant group size of 1215 Australian people ranging from 18-64 years old who had completed their anonymous poll. They used demographic factors such as age, sex, highest level of education and what area they lived in as variables too investigate and compare to their responses. To analyse their data, they used a multi regression analysis to look at the total scores and the demographic factors as well. They concluded that demographic factors did not play a significant role in the variance of belief in redeemability scores. This questionnaire is similar to the current study as they were identifying whether demographic variables had a relationship with offender reintegration attitudes and the level of belief in redeemability.

Bringing all these scales together allowed me to create the full questionnaire and permit me to gain a more detailed overview on participants attitudes on offender reintegration as it took into consideration of their backgrounds, psychological traits and attitudes as they can all have an impact on their opinions. Once the scales were decided they played a role in helping develop the aims of the study as I could look into the relationships between factors such as age, gender, education and legal attitudes on attitudes towards offender reintegration.

3.4 Study procedure:

The questions and forms were first manually entered onto the website online surveys which was being used to distribute the questionnaire to the participants. Before being sent out it had to go through the Loughborough ethical committee and be approved, which is spoken about in more detail in the ethics section. First, the participants who clicked the study advert online were directed to online surveys where they were presented with a participant information sheet which included a summary of the study aims, what they are being asked to do and that they could withdraw at any time. Once they had read all the information it then led to a consent form which they had to agree too before being able to move onto the first set of questions. It also explained how they needed to be age 18+ in order to participate in the research as part of the ethical approval and had contact details for the Samaritans in case anyone felt as though they needed someone to talk to as well as my contact details and my supervisors. The first set of questions were demographic questions that asked the participants for their age, gender, ethnicity and the level of education that they have received. Once those were completed, they completed the psychological traits questionnaires and then all the attitudinal questions that followed where they had to provide one answer for each question. After the questions were completed, the participants were directed to a study debrief that thanked them for participating as well as making them aware to any support that they might need. It also provided contact details in case they had any questions or wanted their response deleted from the study. The survey takes around 5-10 minutes to complete all together, so that it did not take people too long to keep them

engaged. I began distributing the survey on the 15/11/23 and closed it on the 15/02/24 in order to analyse the data that had been collected.

3.5 Ethics procedure:

Ethics is extremely important in research, which is why it is crucial that every form was filled out correctly and every precaution was taken in order to follow all the ethical guidelines. It is important that ethics is done properly to protect the rights, dignity and the welfare of all the people participating (WHO, 2023). Before any research was conducted, ethical forms and a copy of the questionnaire were sent off to be approved by the Loughborough university ethics board to make sure it was up to the right standard. Once receiving approval, the distribution of the survey began, which on the first page had a participant information sheet to make them aware of what they would be doing (**Appendix 8.5**) and then a consent form that had to be agreed to before the questions began (**Appendix 8.6**). When creating the survey, it was important to take into account of people's emotions and made sure that there were no offensive questions or ones that asked about personal experiences as well as adding contact information for the Samaritans in case anyone felt as if they needed to speak to someone. There were demographic questions asked within the survey, however their names were not asked for or anything that would be able to identify the individual in order to keep it anonymous. At the end of the questionnaire there was a debrief for the participants to read through (**Appendix 8.7**) which also highlighted support they could access if needed as well as their right to withdraw. All the data that has been collected is being kept confidential on a laptop that is not accessible to anyone else as it is important to protect the privacy in order to have a rapport and trust with the participants and to maintain the ethics within the research (Kaiser, 2009).

3.6 Analytical procedure:

In order to statistically analyse my data, a software called SPSS which stands for statistical package for social sciences will be used. This software is used to analyse data collected that relates to social science

(Williams, 2023), which is why it is a relevant and being used for this set of data collected. The main form of analysis being used is regression analysis which helps look into a relationship between a dependent variable and the independent variables (Taylor, 2023). In this study the dependent variable is the belief in redeemability scale, and the independent variables are the peoples age, gender and education levels as well as the 6 sub PJAQ subscales that are system confidence, conviction proneness, cynicism towards defence, racial bias, social justice and innate criminality. T tests will also be used to identify group differences between education, level of education, the PJAQ subscales with the belief in redeemability attitudes. To be able to do this different tables and graphs will need to be created from the responses on the online survey to observe whether there is a relationship between the DV and the IV as well as whether there is a significant link between demographic factors and attitudes towards offender reintegration.

Findings

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for mean sample total scores for the different variables of the pre-trial juror attitude questionnaire which are system confidence, conviction proneness, cynicism towards defence, racial bias, social justice and innate criminality and belief in redeemability scale as well as mean participant age. Descriptive data display that means participant age was 37.53 (SD= 17.67), with the minimum age of respondents being 18 and the maximum was 79. The table also identifies the mean scores of the PJAQ variables.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Age	37.53	17.68	61	18	79
CON	15.27	3.43	18.00	7.00	25.00
CP	14.22	3.43	17.00	6.00	23.00
CYN	19.98	3.63	17.00	11.00	28.00
RB	10.00	2.80	16.00	4.00	20.00
SJ	12.08	2.74	14.00	4.00	18.00
INNCR	9.05	2.65	13.00	4.00	17.00
BIR	32.25	3.50	20.00	21.00	41.00

Note: CON= System confidence, CP= Conviction proneness, CYN= Cynicism towards defence, RB= Racial bias, SJ= Social justice, INNCR= Innate criminality, BIR= Belief in redeemability

Group differences on offender reintegration attitudes

To investigate whether attitudes towards the belief in redeemability may change based upon demographic group differences such as gender and education, independent sample T tests were conducted. Table 2 below shows the results of a series of t-test's exploring possible gender differences across the study variables. Findings indicate that there were no significant differences between male and female participants on any PJAQ factors or BIR scale scores. There were only 2 genders male and female included in the table as they were the only ones that responded and took part in the questionnaire. Table 3 also explores group differences based on educational attainment in PJAQ and BIR scale scores. Again, no statistically significant differences were found between those who were university educated or not. The group labelled university education means that the participants are either currently studying for a degree or already have a university degree qualification and those in the below university degree are not studying or have never got a degree level qualification.

Table 2. T-test findings for gender differences in PJAQ and BIR scale scores

Scale	Variable	Group	Mean	SD	t
CON	Gender	Male	15.41	4.03	0.338
		Female	15.17	3.01	
CP	Gender	Male	13.90	3.70	-0.765
		Female	14.44	3.28	
CYN	Gender	Male	20.80	4.07	1.830
		Female	19.44	3.23	
RB	Gender	Male	9.90	2.90	-0.297
		Female	10.07	2.69	
SJ	Gender	Male	12.08	3.09	-0.014
		Female	12.08	2.51	
INNCR	Gender	Male	9.30	2.73	0.701
		Female	8.90	2.60	
BIR	Gender	Male	32.82	3.69	1.305
		Female	31.88	3.34	

Table 3. T-test findings for educational attainment differences in PJAQ and BIR scale scores

Scale	Variable	Group	Mean	SD	t
CON	Education	University education	15.18	3.19	-0.287
		Below university education	15.40	3.80	
CP	Education	University education	14.07	3.20	-0.507
		Below university education	14.42	3.75	
CYN	Education	University education	19.50	3.34	-1.521
		Below university education	20.61	3.93	
RB	Education	University education	9.61	2.56	-1.640
		Below university education	10.52	2.96	
SJ	Education	University education	12.40	2.50	1.302
		Below university education	11.67	3.03	
INNCR	Education	University education	8.95	2.50	-0.450
		Below university education	9.20	2.90	
BIR	Education	University education	32.02	3.40	-0.773
		Below university education	32.60	3.70	

Correlations between study variables

Table 4 helps to answer the question of whether pre-trial legal attitudes have any relationship upon attitudes towards offender reintegration. The table shows all the variables of pre-trial juror attitudes which are system confidence (CON), conviction proneness (CP), cynicism towards defence (CYN), racial

bias (RB), social justice (SJ) and innate criminality (INNCR). The table identifies how a few of the variables show some level of statistical significance those being CON, CP, CYN, SJ and INNCR. However, the most important ones are system confidence and innate criminality as they are statistically significantly related to the belief in redeemability. The numbers with the * are statistically significant due to them being <.05

Table 4. Pearsons correlations between study variables

Variables	BIR	CON	CP	CYN	RB	SJ	INNCR
BIR	X						
CON	.19*	X					
CP	-.02	.63***	X				
CYN	.07	.42***	.520	X			
RB	.07	.41***	.524***	.529***	X		
SJ	-.13	-.18***	-.012***	.262**	.159	X	
INNCR	.19*	.71***	.503	.476	.501	.110	X

Note: BIR= Belief in redeemability, CON= System confidence, CP= Conviction proneness, CYN= Cynicism towards defence, RB= Racial bias, SJ= Social justice, INNCR= Innate criminality. * = <.05

Table 5 shows the multi linear regression results of the six different variables as a part of the pre-juror trial questionnaire. The results show that there was a 10% variance accounted for by this combination of six PJAQ sub-scale variables. The regression results however indicate that the model as a whole is not statistically significant. Despite this, results indicate that Conviction Proneness ($B = .29$) was significantly associated with belief in redeemability scores overall, however this was the only one as no others demonstrated a relationship with offender reintegration attitudes.

Table 5. Multiple Linear regression of six different variables

	R^2	B^*	β	SE	CI
Model	0.101				
CON		.19	.19	.17	-.15/.54
CP		-.29	-.29*	.15	-.58/-.01
CYN		.09	.09	.13	-.16/.34
RB		.05	.04	.16	-.28/.37
SJ		-.19	-.15	.15	-.48/.09
INNCR		.20	.15	.21	-.21/.61

Note: CON= System confidence, CP= Conviction proneness, CYN= Cynicism towards defence, RB= Racial bias, SJ= Social justice, INNCR= Innate criminality

Discussion

5.1 Interpretation of results

The aim of this study was to see whether there was a relationship between various pre-trial legal attitudes and offender reintegration and belief in redeemability. Overall, there were a few variables that showed a significant relation to offender reintegration but as a whole the model was not statistically significant as not many of the variables showed much difference in results. Other similar studies that have taken place have found significant differences within their studies however, different variables have been used as well as different methods used, and they were taken place in different countries.

T tests were used to be able to determine whether there was a relationship between the variables as well as if there are any significant differences (Hayes, 2023). There were 2 T-tests done the first looked into whether there was a significant relationship between gender, legal attitudes and the belief in redeemability, this is displayed in table 2 in the results chapter. In this study there were a significant amount of both males and females who participated as 60.2% were females and 39.9% were male

participants, however it does not apply to other genders as these 2 were the only participants who responded. Overall, there was no significant difference between men and women in belief in redeemability scores which demonstrates that for most questions asked people tended to have the same responses regardless of what gender they were. However, the variable cynicism towards defence one of the variables from the pre-trial juror attitudes questionnaire identified a significant difference between male and females scores as the p value was 0.035. This was the only variable from the legal attitudes questionnaire that showed any statistical significance between the genders as all the others were greater than 0.05. These finding contradicts pre-existing literature that has been identified as one study that compared attitudes between people in Australia and the USA through the use of a survey posted on various platforms in both of the countries. They concluded that men in both countries are more punitive towards attitudes on criminal behaviour than women (De Soto, Wiener, Tajalli & Brookman, 2021), whereas this study discovered that there was no significant difference in the participants responses. Another study that was researching public attitudes on ex-offenders illustrated that through the use of systematic reviews and meta-analysis they came to an understanding that women reported more negative responses to ex-offenders that have no history of sexual offences compared to males (Rade, Desmarais & Mitchell, 2016). However similarly to the current studies results other aspects in their research suggested there was no differences between men and women in certain responses.

A t-test was also used to compare whether there was a relationship with level of education and attitudes towards offender reintegration. These results are displayed within table 3 in the finding chapter as it looks into the participants with a university level education or those below a university education. No individual variable within this t-test demonstrated any significant links between education level and pre-trial juror attitudes questionnaire and belief in redeemability. Overall, there was no statistical significance in the BIR scores between the education groupings, which highlights that the level of education did not impact or predict the participants responses towards the questionnaire.

This contradicts one study that took place in Australia which similarly used an anonymous poll in order to gain an understanding of the public's attitudes on the criminal justice system and offender reintegration in Australia. They found that education did play a role in their participants' answers as those who had a higher level of education were more likely to disagree with the statements that had a negative view on ex-offenders compared to those who had a lower level of education (O'Sullivan, Holderness, Hong, Bright & Kemp, 2016).

The multi linear regression was first used to look into Pearson's correlations between study variables to help analyse whether various pre-trial legal attitudes had any relationship upon attitudes towards offender reintegration. Table 4 in the findings chapter illustrates the correlations and it compared all the components of PJAQ which are system confidence, conviction proneness, cynicism towards defence, racial bias, social justice and innate criminality with the belief in redeemability. The results showed that multiple variables had some level of statistical significance as they were <0.05 . There were 2 variables that had a significant correlation with belief in redeemability and those were system confidence (CON) 0.028 and innate criminality (INNCR) at 0.034. CON variable is the confidence level that the participants have in the criminal justice system and the results demonstrate how people's confidence in the system can correlate to their belief in redeemability and offender reintegration attitudes. As well as this innate criminality also shares a significant relationship with BIR as the participants' views on that variable's questions determined their attitudes towards offenders.

Another regression was run to examine the participants' views on the 6 variables of the pre-trial juror attitudinal questionnaire. It highlighted that there was a 10% variance accounted for with the combination of variables used for this study. However, the overall model as a whole was not found to be statistically significant due to there being a lack of significant relationships between different variables and the individuals' responses. Conviction proneness was the only variable that demonstrated a statistically significant relationship to offender reintegration attitudes with the score of 0.046. This result from the regression means that people who score lower in conviction proneness

are significantly more likely to support offender reintegration than those who scored highly on those questions. Other than conviction proneness no other variables had a significant relationship with offender reintegration attitudes.

5.2 Study strength and limitations

A strength of this study is that it is unique and allows for new data and findings to be established. The sample size has a higher validity due to it being representative of both the genders of male and female that took part as 60.2% were females and 39.8% were males. Although the sample size is not representative of the whole population it shows the attitudes of the genders who participated at an even level. Due to there being a restricted time period to get participants and gather the data the use of convenience sampling was the most effective sampling method as it was a quick and convenient way to access people through the use of social media (Gaille, 2020). This also allowed the participants to remain anonymous which might mean that people would be more comfortable about responding and are more open and honest with their answers (Cleave, 2021). Another strength of the study would be the use of online surveys and quantitative data rather than in person interviews as interviews allow for subjective judgement instead of objective data and they can lead to more social desirability (Fox, 2006), which is why a questionnaire was a better fit for this study.

Another strength was the use of good, reliable scales to create the questionnaire used in order to gather the results. No other research that was found used the same combination of scales in order to collect their data which makes this study unique as the results found will not be the same as any other research project looking into this topic area. Other scales were considered during the process, but not all of them had the variables needed to be included or were not as relevant towards answering the research question. The use of the pre-trial juror attitudes scale gathered responses on people's legal attitudes and on the criminal justice system as a whole in order to help gain an understanding about whether this impacted their views on offender reintegration and belief in redeemability.

A limitation of this study was the small sample size used. The findings might be relevant but due to the smaller sample size acquired it might not be applicable to the general population as it is not representative of every group of people or have enough to be able to justify it to all (Faber & Fonseca, 2014). It can also mean that there are not enough participants for the number of independent variables that are being included within the study. The reasonings behind a smaller sample size might be down to lack of interest in the topic or people just not wanting to participate as there was less pressure to participate as it was an online survey which led to a lower response rate (Wright, 2017). Another issue related to the sample of participants is that it was not a diverse range of people who took part within the research as 95.9% of people who completed the questionnaire were white British. This is a weakness as it makes it significantly more difficult to generalise the study results as not all groups were included, so not all opinions can be predicted or understood from this research (Palmer & Burchard, n.d.).

Another potential issue that might have occurred is that participants might have changed their answers to fit in with socially desirable views even though it is not their true opinions, however this is more common in face-to-face interviews rather than online surveys (Koivula, Räsänen & Sarpila, 2019). Once gathering and analysing the results, the variable egocentrism was taken out of the final regression as it was no longer relevant to the research and played no important role. This can be considered a weakness as it took up some time when creating the questionnaire, although it did not create any considerable problems. The last point that might have been a potential limitation is that the participants might not have felt comfortable enough to share their opinions or did not understand what the questions were asking, however there were ethical considerations put into place in order to try and prevent this from happening.

5.3 Implications of research

The implication of this study is that it brings a new perspective and unique point of view as there was little research looking into offender reintegration attitudes based within the UK and it allows for further research in this area to occur and progress what has already been found. Although the model as a whole used within this study was not statistically significant, it still demonstrated a few variables that showed a significant link with offender reintegration attitudes, and it further explores people's opinions when there was a gap in the research.

Based on the results of this study and pre-existing literature, people are more open to offender reintegration and hold less of a negative view on ex-offenders and their rehabilitation than previously thought. Even though there is less stigma around ex-offenders and rehabilitation this study aims to further educate people and allow for more research and awareness to be around this topic, so that all ex-offenders are provided with the support they need to reintegrate back into society. Policies that have already been introduced such as the second chance act might help influence public opinions as it can improve people's attitudes and help to reduce any barriers ex-offenders may face when reintegrating (Rade, Desmarais & Mitchell, 2016). From this research it can also conclude that demographic factors might not always play a role in individuals' opinions as every group of people held similar beliefs. This might mean that any future work and methods introduced should not just be aimed towards a certain demographic but as everyone as a whole. Another policy that has previously been introduced that aims to make offender reintegration easier is the police crime, sentencing and courts act 2022. Its goal was to reduce the rehabilitation period for prison and community sentences that were under 4 years as well as allowing for some minor convictions to be spent (Beard, 2023). The use of policies like these alongside research such as this study allows people to see what is already being done to help offenders as well as what still needs to be changed in order to have better rehabilitation and reintegration.

The findings of this study could provide an insight when creating new policies or adapting old ones as it identifies the public's attitudes on offender reintegration and what potential barriers might still be an issue for ex-offenders within society. It could allow for more long-term changes and effects on the current criminal justice system as by understanding what the public attitudes are within the UK it can help educate people more on the topic. As well as this it can aid in making changes to the current system, so that there are lower rates of reoffending when ex-offenders are rejoining society and a more successful rehabilitation programme.

5.4 Future research recommendations

If the study was to be replicated again in the future by other people, the first factor that should be changed is the sample size as it would be beneficial to have a larger group of people in order to gain more data. To be able to achieve this they should allow more time for people to complete the online survey and have access to more people to complete it. As well as this they should aim to get more of a diverse range of people as the majority of participants within this study were white British, so it is not applicable to the general population. Another factor that might increase the validity of the research if it was to be done again is possibly conducting it within a controlled environment to ensure there are no influencing factors and to allow for more accurate conclusions (McLeod, 2022). As well as this a future recommendation to consider could be the use of mixed methods including both quantitative and qualitative data as it allows for stronger evidence and reliability in the findings as well as being able to have more in-depth analysis to take place (GOV, 2020). The use of an interview alongside a survey will allow them to follow up on results and participants' answers to gain a more valuable understanding on people's attitudes towards offender reintegration and why they might hold these beliefs (Jamshed, 2014). A final recommendation that might be beneficial to future research is if they created their own scale that is directly related and applicable to the research question, so that there is not as many variables, and it reduces the time in having to find relevant scales. The use of pre-existing scales could result in low quality data if the measures used are unreliable ones (Hyman, Lamb

& Bulmer, 2006), so by creating their own set of questions it might provide defined and relevant data that clearly answers the research question.

Conclusion

This study showed a new unique perspective as no other studies within the UK looked into demographic variables, legal attitudes and the relationships they might have with belief in redeemability. The research question was 'what factors explain individual differences in attitudes towards offender reintegration among the UK public?' and although the model as a whole did not identify a significant relationship with offender reintegration it helped to identify certain variables that had a correlation or significance. Throughout the study it has helped to answer the question and explain whether different variables did affect people's attitudes. From the results it can be seen that there was no significant differences between male and female responses and there was no statistical significance in the belief in redeemability scores and level of education. There was 1 variable from the PJAQ overall that was found to have a significant relationship with offender reintegration which was conviction proneness as those who scored lower in this are significantly more likely to support offender reintegration. Even though there was there was not a significant relationship between individual differences and legal attitudes towards offender reintegration it still developed a relevant finding that can be used more widely and allows for more future research to occur. Although, the sample used for the study was small it was representative of those who participated as it was equally representative of males and females as well as all different age groups. Lots of pre-existing research was evaluated so that the data could be compared to establish whether there was a pattern within the results and to identify a gap in the research that this study could fill. It is to be hoped that the implications of this study will help develop future policies to ensure less barriers for offender reintegration and allow people to become more accepting of ex-offenders rejoining society. It also demonstrates a new understanding of people's attitudes and their belief in redeemability in order to

better understand how people think and what factors have had an influence on their opinions. Alongside this, it can help to educate people more on this topic and to reduce stigma around ex-offenders and make it easier for them to be accepted as less people have a negative opinion.

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