

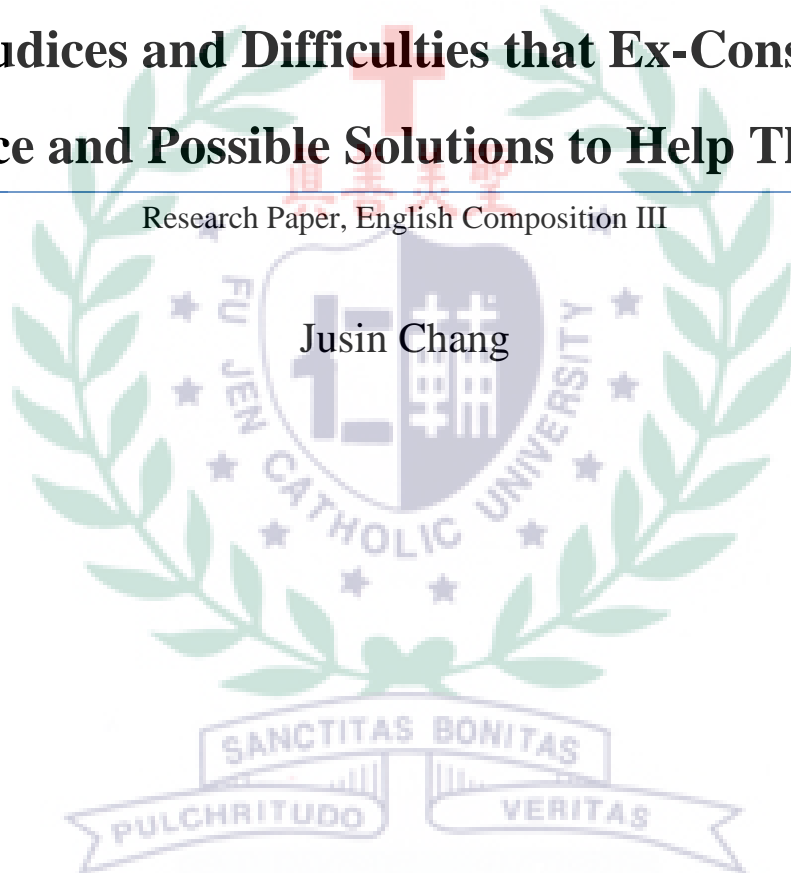
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**An SOS From Ex-Convicts in Taiwan:
Prejudices and Difficulties that Ex-Cons May
Face and Possible Solutions to Help Them**

Research Paper, English Composition III

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An SOS From Ex-Convicts in Taiwan:
Prejudices and Difficulties that Ex-Cons May Face and Possible Solutions to Help Them

Final Draft



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CC III—Section E

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Abstract

Ex-convicts, or prisoners who were released from jail after they finished serving their sentences, often encounter different obstacles when they return to society. It is no easy task for ex-convicts to find jobs, to communicate with others, and to rebuild relationships with people, even with those who used to be close to them. In fact, people who are related to ex-convicts may also experience difficulties similar to those of ex-convicts because of knowing them. Most people think that they have no prejudices against ex-convicts and that they would be willing to help ex-convicts reintegrate, yet most people still seem to avoid having connections with ex-convicts. By analyzing some of the existing literature about ex-convicts, the responses from the author's questionnaires, and interviews with the general public, this paper aims to understand better the reasons that cause Taiwanese people to have prejudices or fears about ex-convicts, which also cause ex-convicts to face different problems when trying to reintegrate. Even though ex-convicts may have done something wrong in the past, they should have an opportunity to integrate into society with the public's help, acceptance or support, if they also wish to reform themselves. Therefore, this paper also aims to provide ways that the general public or the government in Taiwan can use to help ex-convicts successfully reintegrate.



Outline

I. Introduction

- A. Definition of “ex-convicts.”
- B. Ex-convicts face difficulties in different aspects.
- C. Jonas Ruškus points out the reasons why employers may not hire an ex-convict
- D. People have prejudices and fears about ex-convicts.
- E. The government and the general public in Taiwan should take actions to help ex-convicts reintegrate and to solve their difficulties.

II. Different Sections of the Paper

III. Literature Review

A. Thomas K. Kenemore and Ida Roldan

1. Ex-convicts face external and internal difficulties.
2. Ex-convicts are afraid to seek help actively.
3. People still have fears and prejudices about ex-convicts.
4. Counseling programs should give advice and help ex-convicts reintegrate.

B. Joan Petersilia

1. Ex-convicts face barriers when returning to society.
2. The public’s fears about ex-convicts bring difficulties to ex-cons.
3. Reentry programs and parole systems should be reformed.
4. Helping ex-convicts reintegrate may prevent further societal problems.

C. Kaprea F. Johnson

1. Theories related to self-determination and career counseling can help ex-convicts reintegrate.
2. We should enhance ex-convicts’ self-esteem, skills and abilities to help them find jobs.
3. Employment counselors should try some theories to help ex-convicts find jobs.

D. Jonas Ruškus

1. We should help ex-convicts rebuild their self-esteem and support them during the reentry process.
2. Empowerment theory can be used to help ex-convicts find jobs and reintegrate into society.
3. Supports from those who are close to ex-convicts are important in helping ex-convicts reintegrate.

E. Albert R. Roberts

1. Ex-convicts are labeled as those who are “different” from us.
2. Programs should be designed effectively to meet convicts’ special needs.
3. Ex-convicts may benefit from correctional programs but their willingness to reform themselves is also important.

F. Rebecca L. Naser and Nancy G. La Vigne

1. Family’s support is rather important in helping ex-convicts reintegrate.
2. Family’s support can be both a negative influence and a positive influence to an ex-convict.
3. We should provide additional help to ex-convicts who do not receive family’s support.

IV. Methodology

- A. Methods include online questionnaires and interviews with the general public.
- B. The questionnaires are distributed to a wide range of ages of Taiwanese people.
- C. 6 interviewees include three students from different ages, an elder aged 55, a 45-year-old professor, and an employer from a small restaurant.

V. Data Analysis

- A. Taiwanese people still have prejudices and fears about ex-convicts.
- B. Ex-convicts in Taiwan face difficulties.

- C. Taiwanese people think those who are close to ex-convicts (ex: their family members, friends or past colleagues) may not bear similar difficulties to those of ex-convicts.
- D. Taiwanese people think that families' and friends' supports are important for ex-convicts to reintegrate.
- E. Taiwanese people think they would be willing to help ex-convicts reintegrate.
- F. In the author's questionnaires, some of the questions' responses contradict with other questions' responses.
- G. Taiwanese people think the government in Taiwan should pay more attention in helping ex-convicts reintegrate.
- H. Many Taiwanese people do not know any ex-convicts.
- I. Possible solutions to help ex-convicts in Taiwan.

VI. Conclusion

- A. Taiwanese people may have fears about ex-convicts but they are still willing to give them chances.
- B. It is a good sign that Taiwanese people tend to be more aware of issues related to ex-convicts.
- C. The government and the general public in Taiwan should constantly keep working on helping ex-convicts reintegrate, since everyone deserves another chance to reform himself or herself, if he or she wishes to do so.
- D. Limitations, improvements, and possible further research based on the findings.

VII. Works Cited

VIII. Appendix A: Diagram and Illustrations

IX. Appendix B: Questionnaire

X. Appendix C: Interview Questions

XI. Appendix D: Transcripts of the Interview with Ariana Chen

XII. Appendix E: Transcripts of the Interview with Kuei-Ying Lin

XIV. Appendix F: Transcripts of the Interview with Tina Tuan

XV. Appendix G: Transcripts of the Interview with Kevin Chang

XVI. Appendix H: Transcripts of the Interview with Hung-Ren Hsieh

XVII. Appendix I: Transcripts of the Interview with an Employer of a Small Restaurant in Taiwan.



Ex-convicts, or prisoners who were released from jail after they finished serving their sentences, often face difficulties when they return to society. For example, it is hard for ex-convicts to find jobs because employers would be worried about the ex-convicts' working skills and the discomfort that their colleagues may experience when working with ex-convicts (Ruškus 32). What's more, it may also be difficult for ex-convicts to contact with people again and to reintegrate into society. In general, most people still hold prejudices or even fears about ex-convicts. People do not trust and do not feel secure about ex-convicts due to their past criminal records. Therefore, many people are still concerned about whether or not they should accept ex-convicts when they return to society. Due to the difficulties ex-convicts may face, it is important for the government and the general public to come up with possible solutions to help ex-convicts reintegrate into their communities. This study aims to examine what difficulties ex-convicts in Taiwan may face and what strategies normal citizens and the government in Taiwan can employ to help ex-convicts reintegrate successfully. The government and normal citizens in Taiwan should help ex-convicts reintegrate into society by different measures because they may face many obstacles in finding jobs, in communicating with others, and in rebuilding interpersonal relationships after they were released from prison, as shown in the responses from the questionnaires and interviews.

This paper is divided into seven sections: introduction, literature review, methodology, data analysis, conclusion, works cited and appendices. First, this paper will offer some background information about ex-convicts and the difficulties that they may face. Second, this paper will briefly review the existing literature on issues related to ex-convicts, focussing on the difficulties that ex-convicts may face and possible solutions to help them reintegrate in society. Third, the author will explain what kinds of methods are used to gather data. The author will then discuss and analyze the data collected from conducting research and come up with a conclusion. Last, this paper will include a works cited list and appendices which consist of the questionnaire and its results, as well as interview questions and the transcripts.

Nowadays, many ex-convicts can face both external and internal difficulties when they get out of prisons and they are afraid to seek for help (Kenemore and Roldan). Even though ex-convicts may wish to reform themselves, the general public still has negative impressions and perceptions about ex-convicts, thus creating stereotypes and stigmatizing them. “Despite the serious difficulties and challenges ex-offenders face while adjusting to the free world, few access mental health services” (Kenemore and Roldan 18). This shows that ex-cons may be unwilling or afraid to consult counseling programs for support if they encounter any problems. Thomas Kenemore and Ida Roldan believe that there are several ways that clinicians or counseling programs can use to help ex-convicts reintegrate or solve problems during the process of reintegration effectively.

Joan Petersilia also points out several barriers that ex-cons may face and suggests that reentry programs should be reformed to be more effective (66). Due to some policies and public fear, prisoners face many problems such as homelessness, unemployment, limitations of their rights, social and medical problems after their releases. These difficulties prevent ex-convicts from reintegrating into their communities and can possibly increase their chances to commit crimes again. Therefore, the author suggests that improving reentry programs is important for ex-convicts to successfully reintegrate. For example, reconsidering the pros and cons of making criminal records public (68), and making the treatment and work programs more effective (71), are some ways to improve programs. Petersilia emphasizes the importance of reforming by saying that “this should be done not only because it will be good for offenders returning home, but because it will ultimately be good for their children, their neighbors and the community at large” (155). It is rather important for ex-convicts to successfully re-integrate to prevent any further problems as well.

In order to help with ex-convicts’ difficulties, Kaprea F. Johnson also introduces some theories related to self-determination and career counseling, explaining that these may help ex-offenders in finding jobs after they are released. To enable employment counselors to help

prepare ex-offenders to find jobs, the author integrates “self-determination theory (SDT)” with “social cognitive career theory (SCCT)” and calls it “self-determination cognitive career theory (SDCCT).” He believes “these theories are sensitive to ex-offenders’ special considerations and, therefore are appropriate to inform a model for preparing ex-offenders for work” (87). He offers and emphasizes the importance of five steps of the SDCCT to help ex-cons have more self-esteem when looking for jobs. It is also important for employment counselors to help ex-offenders strengthen their efficacy and ambition when preparing ex-cons for work. Therefore, there are some ways that people such as employment counselors can use to reduce ex-convicts’ difficulties when returning to society.

There are also other ways that help ex-convicts to successfully reintegrate, such as enhancing ex-convicts’ self-esteem and supporting them during their social reintegrations. Jonas Ruškus introduces empowerment theory and offers strategies to help ex-convicts find jobs and reintegrate based on the theory. The author explains that “empowered individuals should perceive themselves as those who have abilities, able to decide and to control their environment and life” (32). Based on empowerment theory, he conducts interviews and observes that some factors such as the support from employers, from family and from close people, can help ex-convicts to successfully reintegrate into society. The author also offers strategies that can help ex-convicts find employment and reintegrate by looking at the interviews’ results. These strategies include helping ex-convicts to develop their independence, their professional competencies, and developing self-assistance. It is believed that punishment and prejudices will only lower the success rate of ex-convicts’ reintegration, when compared to the strategies mentioned above.

In chapter one of *Correctional Counseling and Treatment*, the author Albert R. Roberts mentions that ex-cons are mostly labeled as those who are “different” from normal people. However, he believes that ex-cons can be changed. Roberts think that ex-convicts can become responsible members of society through participation in suitable correctional

programs or counseling before their releases. These reentry programs can change their behavior and help them acquire different skills. Without doing something, ex-cons will likely keep offending. Thus, the author aims to find out which programs are more effective in helping ex-convicts reintegrate. The government should make sure that all inmates can have a chance to participate in the correctional programs. Convicts should also be allowed to choose what programs to join, so that they can select programs that will be helpful for them in the future. Though ex-convicts may benefit from different programs or counseling, they should also be willing to change and to reform themselves. As Roberts claims, “they (ex-convicts) must be aware that to go straight and ‘make it’ in free society depends on a willingness to work towards goals, make sacrifices, and be responsible for themselves and their family” (4).

Support and help from people around ex-convicts are very important for them to return to society effectively as well. Rebecca L. Naser and Nancy G. La Vigne study the importance and positive contribution of family support to ex-prisoners (94). It is believed that family should be involved in the reentry processes of prisoners, supporting them and helping them to face problems. Yet, a gap between prisoners’ expectations of family support before they are released, and what they actually receive after their releases, may lead to some negative consequences. For example, ex-prisoners may exhibit antisocial behavior when family support after their releases fails to meet their expectations (95). Therefore, family support can either work as a negative or a positive influence on ex-prisoners’ reentry processes. By conducting interviews, Naser and La Vigne want to find out whether or not there will be a difference between prisoners’ expectations and what they actually experience after they are released in terms of family support. However, the results show that ex-prisoners’ family support does meet their expectations and sometimes even exceeds them (98). In addition, ex-prisoners consider family support as a positive and important factor in their reintegration, proving that “prisoners with greater contact with family have more positive post-release outcomes” (94). Still, it is important to provide additional support and assistance

to those ex-prisoners without family support.

The research methodology of this paper includes questionnaires and interviews with the general public in Taiwan. To make the questionnaires easily accessible, they are distributed online. By distributing an online survey to a wide range of ages of people in Taiwan, the author receives 82 responses in total. The questionnaires' results help to examine Taiwanese general public's attitudes, feelings and thoughts about ex-convicts, hoping to determine the reasons why ex-convicts face plenty of obstacles when they try to reintegrate into society. The results of the questionnaires will determine whether most Taiwanese people hold positive attitudes, negative attitudes or neutral attitudes towards ex-convicts. The questionnaires also include questions about whether or not the general public wants to play a part in helping ex-convicts reintegrate into society, and what they think they can actually do to help ex-cons reintegrate. Apart from these, the questionnaires' results show whether or not the government in Taiwan is putting enough effort into helping ex-convicts reintegrate.

The interview part aims to determine the reasons why Taiwanese people have different attitudes towards ex-convicts in a more detailed way. By interviewing six Taiwanese people from different ages, it helps to better understand why ex-convicts may face several problems when reintegrating. During the interviews with the six interviewees, which include three students from different ages, an elder aged 55, a 45-year-old professor in Fu-Jen University and also an employer from a small restaurant, more opinions and deeper thoughts about ex-convicts are shared. By looking at the concrete examples or experiences that the interviewees provide, the aim is to find out some specific reasons that cause Taiwanese people to feel afraid of ex-convicts. Even though most respondents feel afraid of ex-convicts, the author chooses to mainly interview those who hold positive or neutral attitudes towards ex-convicts. In that way, the author may learn something from those who are willing to help ex-convicts and try to figure out some possible solutions to help ex-convicts on reintegration.

By analyzing 82 responses from the questionnaires distributed online, the results show

that 79 of the respondents (about 96%) think most people in Taiwan still hold stereotypes or prejudices about ex-convicts nowadays (see fig.1). In addition, a majority of people who filled out the questionnaires believe that ex-convicts in Taiwan would face many obstacles when they return to society. According to the research results, 97.5% of the respondents agree that ex-convicts would face difficulties finding jobs. 91.3% of the respondents agree that ex-convicts would face difficulties rebuilding interpersonal relationships with others, while fewer respondents (66.3%) think it would be hard for ex-convicts to communicate with others when they return to society. As one of the interviewees explains, she thinks some ex-convicts might be eloquent and good at communicating with others, so it may not be a problem to them even though they have been in prison for a period of time. However, another interviewee believes that ex-convicts would have difficulties communicating with others because most people in Taiwan are afraid to have any contact with ex-convicts, not to mention communicating with them. No matter what, the results still show significant numbers reflecting that ex-cons are likely to face obstacles in finding jobs, in communicating with others, and in rebuilding interpersonal relationships when they return to society.

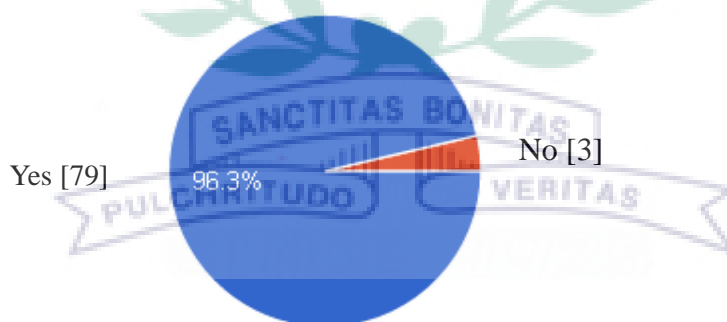


Fig. 1. Do you think most people still have stereotypes or prejudices about ex-convicts?

Even though about 96% of the total respondents think most people in Taiwan hold stereotypes or prejudices about ex-convicts, there are still about 66% of respondents, which is more than a half of the respondents, who believe that the general public would be willing to re-embrace ex-convicts or give them an opportunity to re-integrate into society. In addition, 93.75% of the respondents think they would be willing to help ex-convicts reintegrate if

possible. These results seem to be contradicted because if Taiwanese people feel fear of ex-convicts, they would be unlikely to embrace ex-convicts. Nonetheless, this can still be true and this might be the case because people in Taiwan may feel afraid of ex-convicts, but they are still willing to help ex-cons if they could.

A majority of the respondents from the questionnaires and the interviews think that ex-convicts' family members may be affected more and may bear similar difficulties to those of ex-convicts because they know them. However, not many people in Taiwan think that ex-convicts' friends or past colleagues will face the same difficulties that ex-convicts encounter. This may probably be due to the fact that family members are people who are closer to ex-convicts, when compared to their friends or colleagues. However, from the interview responses, many Taiwanese people are quite rational because they regard ex-convicts' actions or the crimes that they committed as their own acts. They do not think ex-convicts' families, friends or people who are close to them should bear similar responsibilities or difficulties to those of ex-convicts, because the ex-convicts should be responsible for their own deeds.

The results of the questionnaires also correspond to those that other authors have pointed out in their research (Naser and Lavigne), that is—friends' and families' supports are rather important to help ex-convicts effectively reintegrate into society. The results of the questionnaires show that most Taiwanese people (98.75%) agree with this perspective and they would be willing to rebuild relationships with an ex-convict if they happen to be one of their friends or family members. This may show that a number of people in Taiwan may realize how important it is for ex-convicts to have support from people who are close to them during reintegration.

However, there are many contradictions within the responses from the questionnaires. For example, 46 of the respondents agree that they would feel afraid to have contact with ex-convicts and that 68 of the respondents think they would feel afraid of ex-convicts due to

their past criminal records. What's more, 59 of the respondents believe they would not feel comfortable when having contact with ex-convicts. Over half of the respondents also think ex-cons are likely to commit crimes again. These results correspond to the results of existing literature by Petersilia, Kenemore and Roldan, showing that people have fears on ex-convicts. However, 61 of the respondents claim that they believe ex-convicts will try to reform themselves and most people are willing to help them do so. These results could lead to three different interpretations. First, respondents are not honest when filling out questionnaires because sometimes people do not want to admit that they have prejudices against others. Second, this may show an increase in awareness among people in Taiwan about the issues that are related to ex-convicts. This means that the general public in Taiwan may still have fears or stereotypes about ex-convicts, yet, they are still willing to provide them opportunities to reintegrate into society. Third, the questionnaires' options of this research paper may not be thorough or detailed enough, for there are mostly questions that require "Yes" or "No" answers, without providing enough room for the respondents to elaborate on their answers or thoughts about ex-convicts. Therefore, the questionnaires and interview questions may be modified or improved to receive more detailed answers, which may lead to further discussion on topics related to ex-convicts.

Moreover, the research results show that 70.7% of the respondents did not know any strategies that the government in Taiwan is employing to help ex-convicts successfully reintegrate, and that 96.3% of the respondents agree that the government should put more effort into helping ex-convicts re-integrate (see fig. 2). Therefore, it is obvious that the government in Taiwan does not seem to put enough effort because only very few people know about the ways to help ex-convicts that are used by the government. In addition, all of the six interviewees also agree that the government in Taiwan should do more to assist ex-convicts during their reentry processes. Some interviewees think that the government's words weigh much, so it may help to persuade the average citizen to give ex-convicts a hand

during their reintegration. Some other interviewees believe it is the government's responsibility to work harder to help ex-convicts in Taiwan reintegrate into society, or else ex-convicts may do harm to their communities if they feel they are abandoned by the people around them.

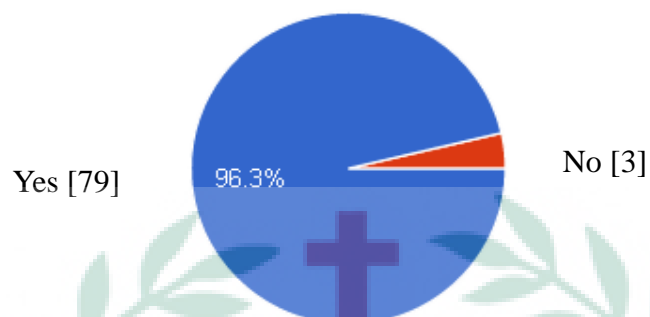


Fig. 2. Should the government in Taiwan put more effort to help ex-convicts reintegrate?

The questionnaires' results show that 80.5% of the respondents do not know any ex-convicts. This can be one main reason that causes the general public in Taiwan to have fears or prejudices against ex-convicts because most Taiwanese people have never encountered an ex-convict at all, so they do not even have opportunities to get to know more about ex-convicts. A lack of real experiences knowing ex-convicts in daily life may decrease Taiwanese people's willingness to help ex-convicts, for many Taiwanese people may think that it will make no difference to them whether or not they help ex-convicts reintegrate into society. Not knowing any ex-convicts may also cause the general public to be really unfamiliar with ex-convicts and the difficulties that they have experienced. Thus, people in Taiwan can feel afraid of ex-convicts due to their unfamiliarity with them. Apart from this, this result can also help to explain why only few Taiwanese people actually know of any strategies that are employed by the government in Taiwan, for Taiwanese people themselves may not actively search for information on how to help ex-cons. Thus, the general public in Taiwan may not want to pay much attention on issues related to ex-convicts, or even strategies that can be used to help ex-convicts reintegrate into society.

By following the examples from some of the existing literature about ex-convicts and

learning from the interviewers' responses, some possible solutions can be implemented by both the government and the normal citizens in Taiwan to help ex convicts in their reentry processes. Suggested by Professor Hsieh who teaches classes in the Department of Sociology, one way to help ex-convicts in Taiwan is to design effective programs before ex-convicts' releases to help them acquire some useful skills and to enhance their self-esteem before they return to society. Some authors, for example Petersilia and Albert, also recommend this helpful strategy. The parole systems or reentry programs in Taiwan should play a part to correct and teach ex-cons to become law-abiding citizens before their releases. The government in Taiwan should also set up more organizations that help to monitor and adjust ex-cons' behavior after their releases, to see whether or not some ex-cons need more time and additional help to adjust to society. Otherwise, they may cause problems to society because they have difficulties re-adjusting into their communities.

By looking into the collected data, another possible solution that the government in Taiwan can use to help ex-cons is by educating the general public. In Taiwan, most people are taught to believe that ex-cons are people who have done something wrong and that they might be dangerous. We are often taught that it is better not to get close to ex-cons. However, some ex- cons may regret what they did and wish to change themselves. It is important to educate people in Taiwan that sometimes the best step to help ex-cons is to have contact with them and to learn more about them to see how we might be able to help them. Through education, the general public may then be more willing to try to understand the lives and the obstacles that ex-cons are facing. In addition, the government and the general public in Taiwan may try to encourage ex-convicts to actively seek help actively whenever they face difficulties during the reentry process, as the two experts Thomas Kenemore and Ida Roldan explain. Ex-convicts may not be courageous enough to seek for counseling help due to their identities as ex-prisoners, and also due to their lack of confidence. The government in Taiwan may also try to create some channels that allow the general public and ex-convicts

to have some communication with each other, which may help people to better understand the harsh obstacles that ex-convicts often face. For instance, some schools or organizations might invite some ex-cons to give talks about their experiences.

According to the responses from the questionnaires and the interviews, people in Taiwan still have fears and prejudices against ex-convicts, even though they would be willing to give ex-convicts a hand when they return to their communities. In addition, ex-convicts do face quite a few obstacles when they return to society. However, it is still a good sign to see from the research results that a number of Taiwanese people are becoming more aware of the issues related to ex-convicts. People are willing to help ex-convicts despite their past criminal records. Therefore, the government and the general public in Taiwan should constantly help ex-convicts reintegrate; otherwise, ex-convicts may face difficulties again and be left out by society, which may lead to further problems that affect the general public's safety. Yet, Taiwanese people's opinions or thoughts about ex-convicts still have a lot to do with what types of crimes the ex-convicts committed. Thus, it would be better to focus on some specific criminals instead of all ex-convicts in general to get more precise and accurate results for any further discussion. In the future research, it would also be possible to compare ex-convicts' lives or difficulties between ex-convicts who committed different crimes, to see how crime types may affect what ex-convicts encounter. The findings might be more accurate and more precise if the questionnaires require more specific or detailed explanations from the respondents, instead of just asking them "yes" or "no".

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Appendix A: Diagrams and Illustrations

Numbers of total respondents: 82

I. Personal Information and General Opinions on Ex-Convicts

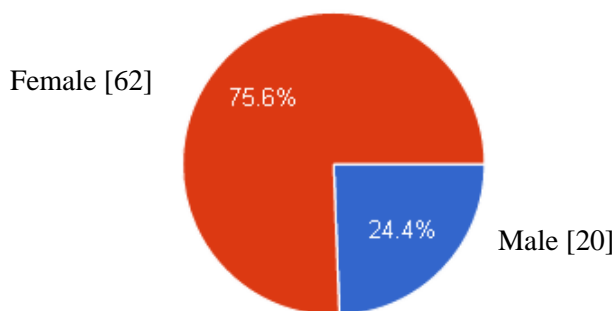
1) What is your age?

Age	Number(s)
18	1
19	5
20	11
21	18
22	6
23	4
24	1
25	5
26	4
27	1
28	3

Age	Number(s)
29	1
32	6
33	3
34	2
36	2
37	3
40	1
42	1
43	1
48	2
50	1

A wide range of ages of people in Taiwan filled out the author's questionnaires. There are 82 of them in total, with a majority of the respondents aged 20 and 17, and a few of different ages.

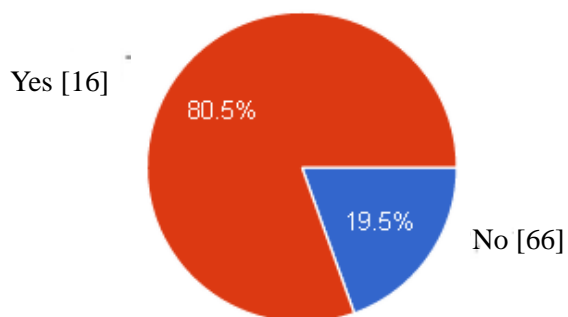
2) What is your gender?



Female	62	75.6%
Male	20	24.4 %

62 out of the 80 respondents are females, while 20 of them are males.

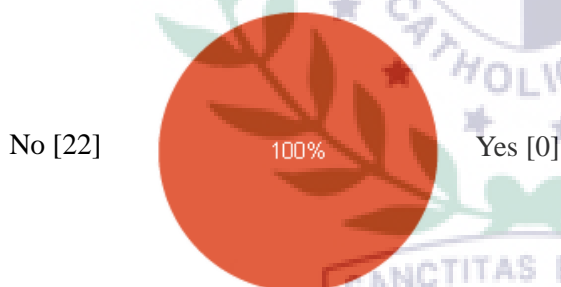
3) Do you know of any ex-prisoners? (If no, skip to no. 6)



Yes	16	19.5%
No	66	80.5%

About 20% of the total respondents know at least one ex-prisoner, while 80.5% of them do not know any ex-prisoners. This result may show that few people in Taiwan have opportunities to get to know more about ex-convicts.

4) Do you think he or she would be willing to be interviewed? (If no, skip to no. 6)



Yes	0	0%
No	22	100%

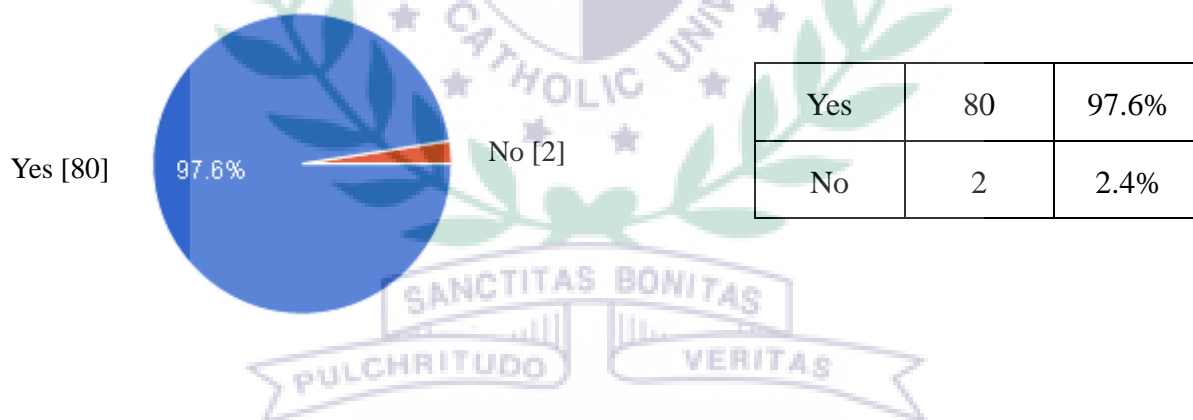
From question no.3, even though about 20% of the respondents know at least one ex-prisoner, none of them think the ex-convict they know would be willing to be interviewed.

5) If available, please leave his or her contact information (phone/email) after obtaining his or her permission to be interviewed.

No answers for this question because no ex-convicts would be willing to be interviewed, according to the responses.

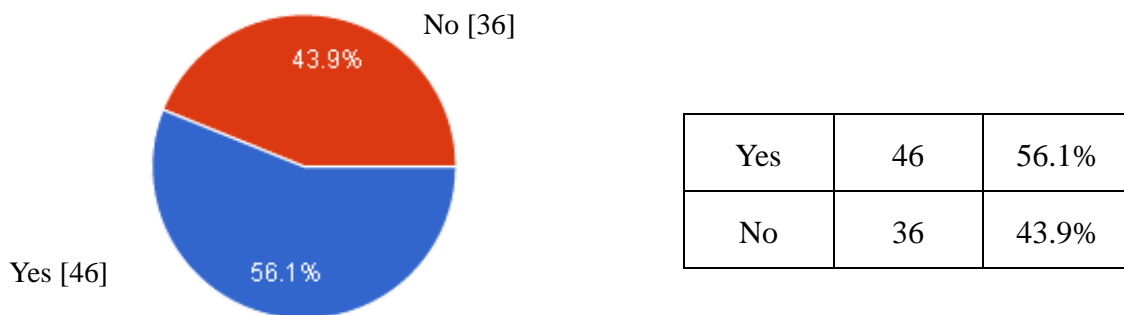
6) Do you think the different crimes committed by ex-convicts would influence your thoughts about them?

[Examples of different crimes; assault, battery, homicide, kidnapping, forgery, adultery, rape, robbery, drunk-driving, drug trafficking or stealing]



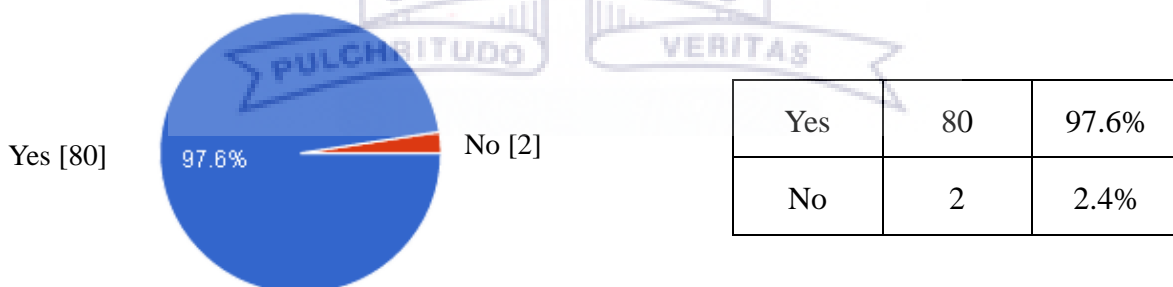
A very large number of respondents (97.6%) think the different crimes committed by ex-convicts would influence their thoughts about ex-convicts, while only 2 out of the 80 respondents disagree with this idea. Therefore, Taiwanese people may have more fears about ex-convicts who committed serious crimes.

7) Are you afraid to have contact with ex-convicts when they return to society?



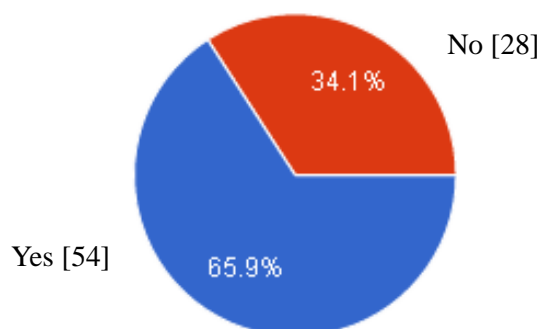
46 of the respondents agree that they would feel afraid to have contact with ex-convicts, while the other 36 respondents disagree. There is no significant distinction between responses in this question. This may be the case because Taiwanese people do not have many opportunities to have contact with ex-convicts, so they may not know how they would feel when having contact with ex-convicts.

8) Do you think ex-convicts would face difficulties finding jobs when they return to society?



A majority of the respondents (97.6%) think ex-convicts will face difficulties finding jobs when they return to society, while only 2.4% of the respondents think the opposite. Taiwanese people believe ex-convicts would face difficulties finding jobs due to the public's prejudices about them.

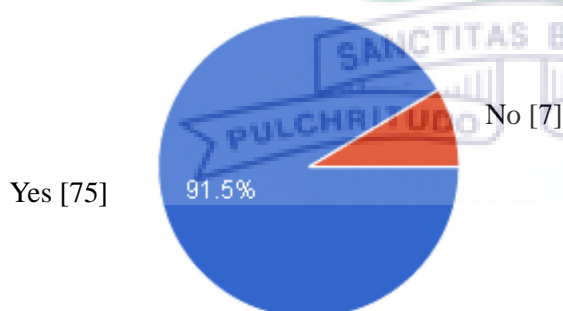
9) Do you think ex-convicts would face difficulties communicating with others when they return to society?



Yes	54	65.9%
No	24	34.1%

54 of the respondents agree that ex-convicts will face difficulties communicating with others when they return to society and 28 of the respondents disagree. Taiwanese people who disagree may think that some ex-cons are eloquent people and that they are good at communicating, so it won't be a problem for them.

10) Do you think ex-convicts would face difficulties rebuilding interpersonal relationships when they return to society?

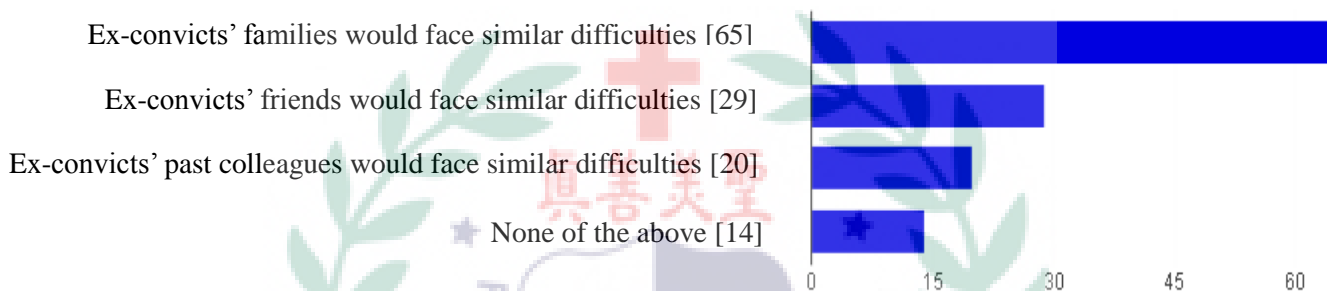


Yes	75	91.5%
No	7	8.5%

A majority of the respondents (91.5%) think ex-convicts will face difficulties rebuilding interpersonal relationships when they return to society due to public doubt and fears about ex-convicts.

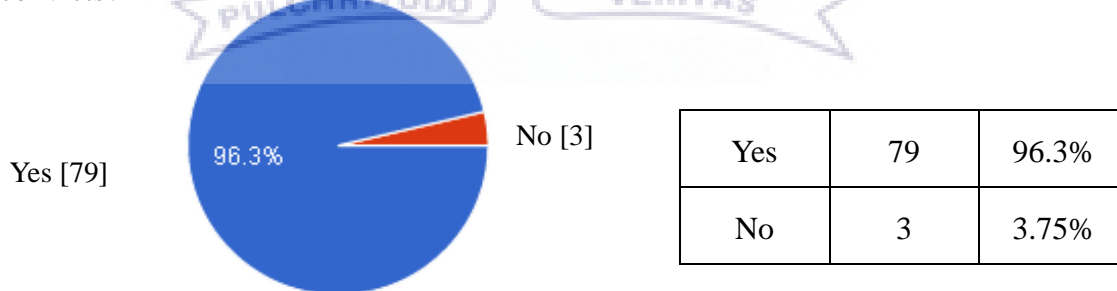
11) Do you think those people who are related to ex-convicts (ex: their families, friends, or past colleagues) would also face similar difficulties in their lives? (Multi-Select)

Ex-cons' family members would face similar difficulties	65	79.3%
Ex-cons' friends would face similar difficulties	29	35.4%
Ex-cons' past colleagues would face similar difficulties	20	24.4%
None of the above	14	17.1%



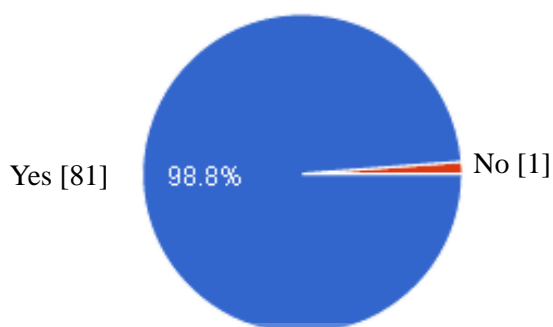
Most respondents think ex-convicts' family members would face similar difficulties to those of ex-cons because of knowing them. However, not many think ex-convicts' friends or past colleagues would face similar difficulties to those of ex-convicts. This may show that family members are those who are closer to ex-cons, when compared to friends or colleagues

12) Do you think most people in Taiwan still hold stereotypes or prejudices about ex-convicts?



79 of the respondents think most people in Taiwan still hold stereotypes or prejudices about ex-convicts. This shows that people in Taiwan are not familiar with ex-convicts. Therefore, they do not have opportunities to learn more about ex-convicts.

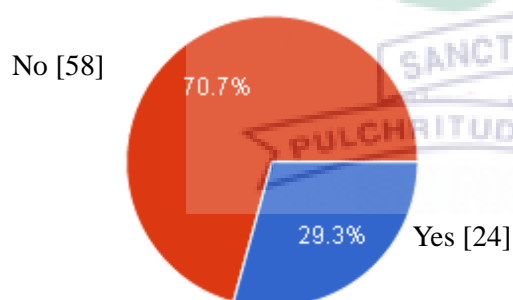
13) Do you think that the families' and friends' supports play important roles to help ex-convicts successfully re-integrate into society?



Yes	81	98.8%
No	1	1.2%

Almost all of the 82 respondents think that families' and friends' supports are rather important to help ex-convicts successfully re-integrate into society, probably because they are the ones whom ex-convicts can rely on after their releases.

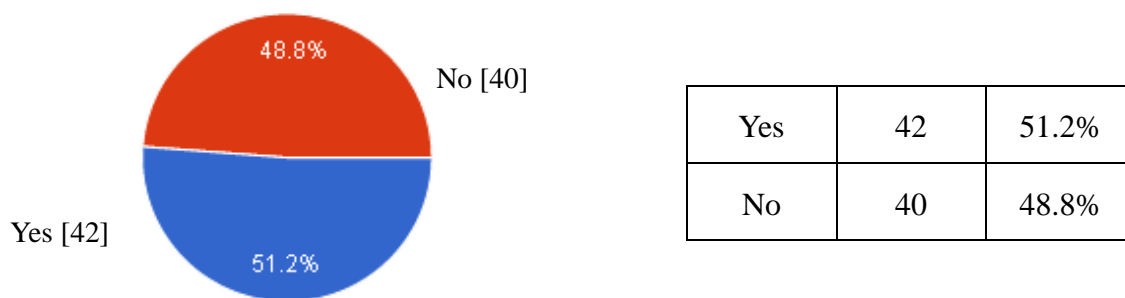
14) Do you know of any strategies that the government in Taiwan is employing to help ex-convicts successfully re-integrate into society?



Yes	24	29.3%
No	58	70.7%

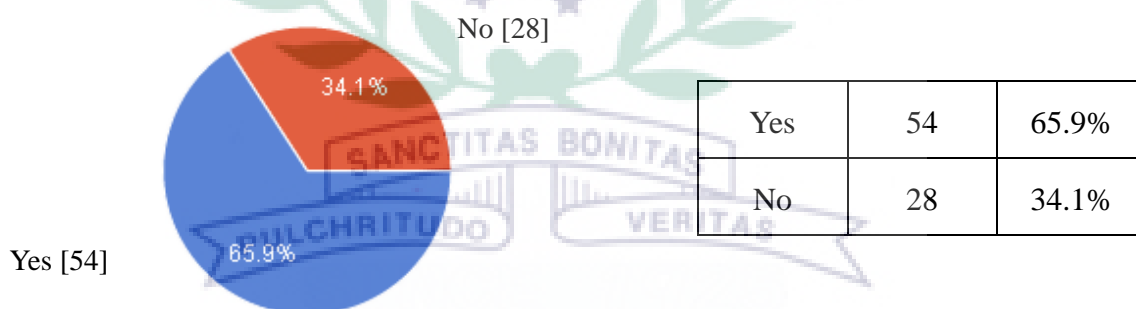
A majority (70.7%) of the respondents do not know any strategies that the government in Taiwan is employing to help ex-convicts successfully re-integrate. This may be the case because the government in Taiwan does not put enough effort to help ex-convicts reintegrate. However, even if the government in Taiwan does put enough effort to help ex-convicts reintegrate, people may not know any of the strategies because they don't really care.

15) Do you know any organizations in Taiwan that aim to help ex-convicts?



About half of the respondents (51.2%) know some organizations in Taiwan that aim to help ex-convicts, while the other half (48.8%) do not know any of the organizations. This may be the case because some people may pay more attention to issues or organizations that are related to ex-convicts due to an increase of awareness.

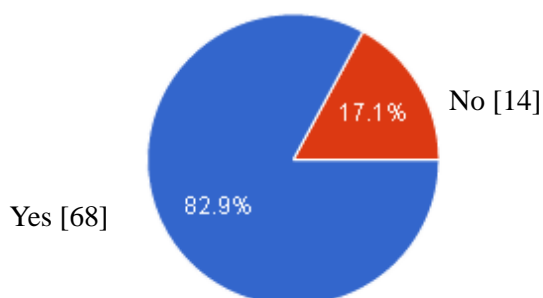
16) Do you think most people in Taiwan would be willing to re-embrace ex-convicts or give them chances to re-integrate into society?



54 out of the 80 respondents think most people would be willing to give ex-convicts an opportunity to re-integrate, while 28 people think the opposite because different people might have different views about ex-convicts.

II. Feelings towards ex-convicts

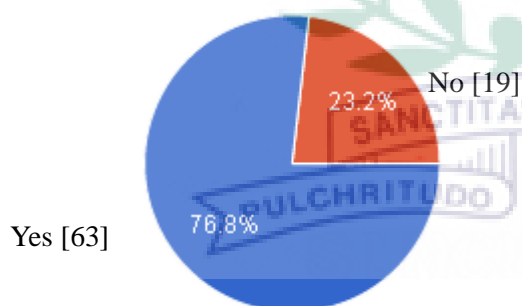
17) I am afraid to have contact with ex-convicts because they have criminal records.



Yes	68	82.9%
No	14	17.1%

82.9% of the respondents are afraid to have contact with ex-convicts due to their past criminal records. This shows that Taiwanese might be afraid that ex-convicts will commit crimes again and do harm to them.

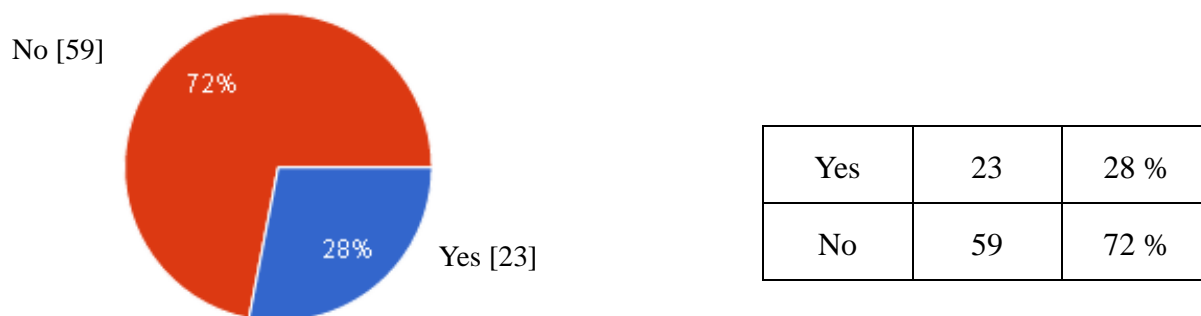
18) I think most ex-convicts will have regrets for what they did and try to reform themselves after their releases from prison.



Yes	63	76.8%
No	19	23.2%

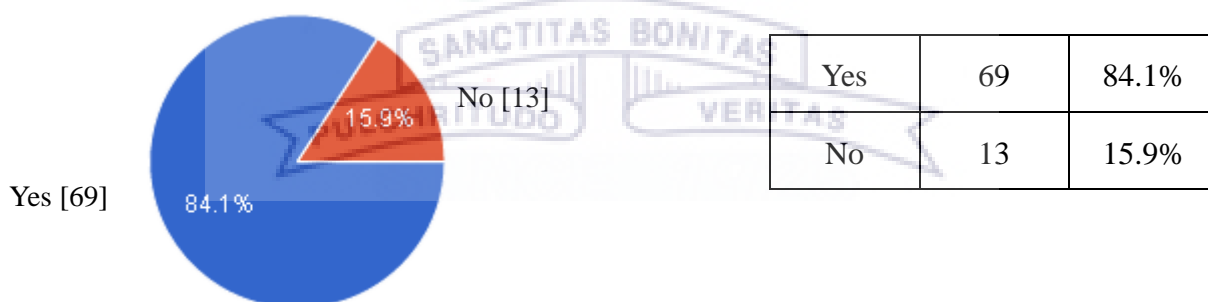
More Taiwanese people (76.8%) of the respondents believe that ex-convicts do regret what they have done in the past and try to reform themselves after they were released from prison. This shows that Taiwanese people might be willing to give ex-convicts chances to reintegrate into society.

19) I would feel comfortable having contact with ex-convicts.



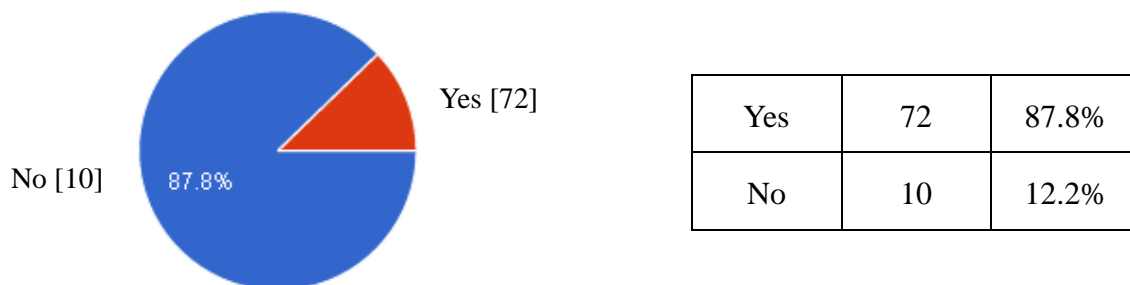
About 72% of the respondents would not feel comfortable having contact with ex-convicts probably because they are not familiar with ex-convicts, while only about 28% of them would feel comfortable. People in Taiwan may feel discomfort when they have contact with ex-convicts because they might be violent in the past.

20) I would be willing to build a relationship with an ex-convict if I did not know him or her before.



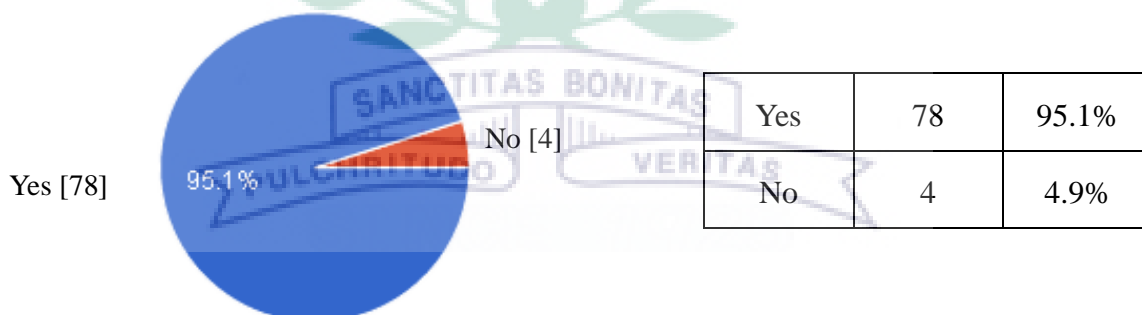
A majority (84.1%) of the respondents would be willing to build a relationship with an ex-convict even if they did not know that ex-convict before, while 15.9 % of the respondents would not do the same thing. This shows a good sign that Taiwanese people might want to help ex-cons reintegrate into society, if they also want to reform themselves.

21) I would be willing to rebuild a relationship with an ex-convict if I were his or her “friend”.



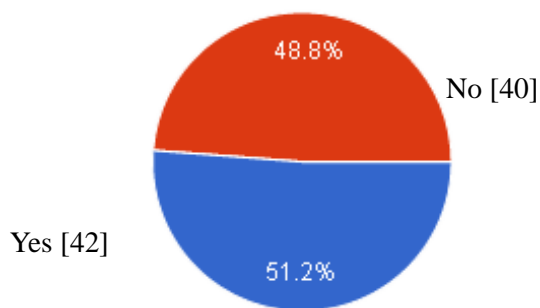
87.8% of the respondents would be willing to rebuild relationships with ex-convicts if they used to be a friend, but 12.2 % of them would choose not to do so. Most respondents to this question would rebuild relationships with ex-cons because friends are the ones who are more familiar with the ex-cons.

22) I would be willing to rebuild a relationship with an ex-convict if I was one of his or her “family members”.



Almost all of the respondents (78 people) say they would be willing to rebuild their relationships with ex-convicts if they used to be a family member, while only 4 say they would not. Most respondents to this question would rebuild relationships with ex-cons because they are quite familiar with the ex-cons.

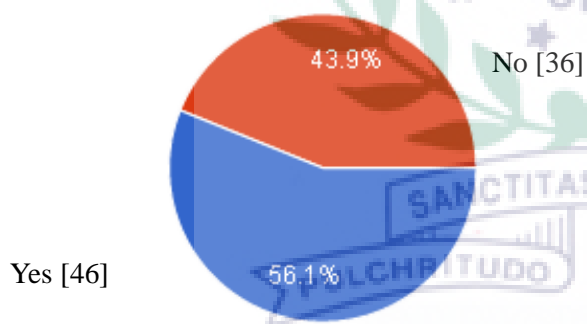
23) I would be willing to rebuild a relationship with an ex-convict if I were his or her “lover”.



Yes	42	51.2%
No	40	48.8%

About half of the respondents think that they would be willing to rebuild a relationship with an ex-convict if he or she were a “lover”, but the other half do not think so. This may be the case because Taiwanese people may feel afraid that an ex-convict might do harm to them due to his or her past criminal records.

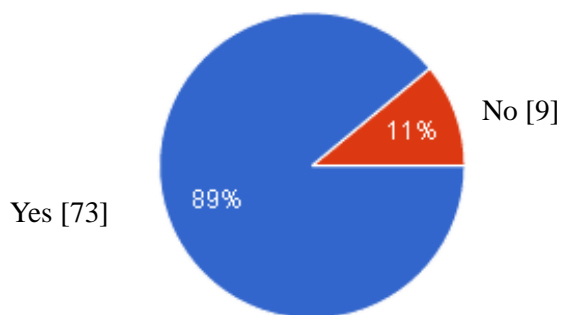
24) I think ex-convicts are likely to commit crimes again.



Yes	46	56.1%
No	36	43.9%

46 out of the 82 respondents are afraid of ex-convicts because they think ex-convicts are likely to commit crimes again, while 36 of the respondents do not think ex-convicts are likely to commit crimes again. This can be one barrier that prevents ex-cons from reintegrating into society successfully.

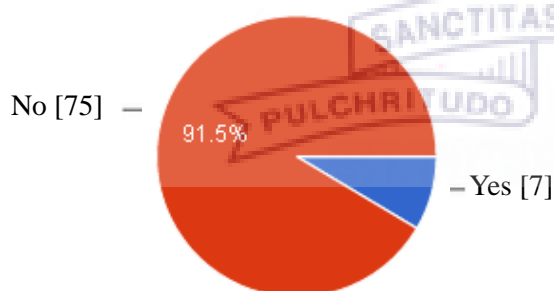
25) I would be willing to communicate or chat with ex-convicts.



Yes	73	89%
No	9	11 %

73 of the respondents would be willing to communicate with ex-convicts when they return to society, while only 9 would not be willing to do so. This shows an increase of awareness about issues that are related to ex-convicts since Taiwanese people seem willing to help ex-cons. Nowadays, Taiwanese people may receive more news and know more stories about ex-convicts due to the prevalence of technology.

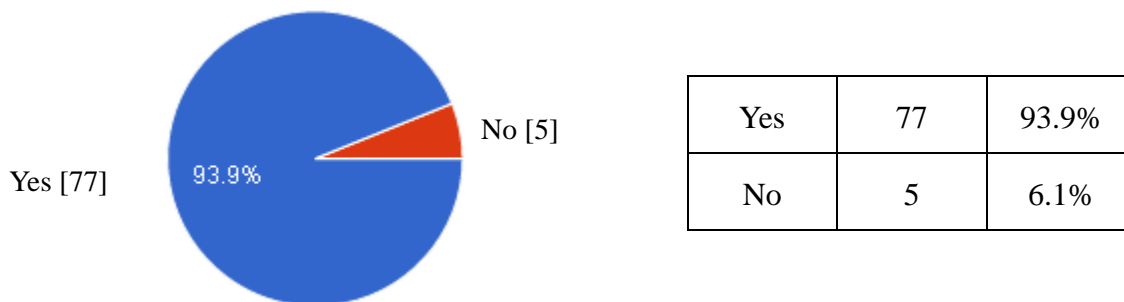
26) I think having connections with ex-convicts would not be a good thing for me.



Yes	7	8.5%
No	75	91.5%

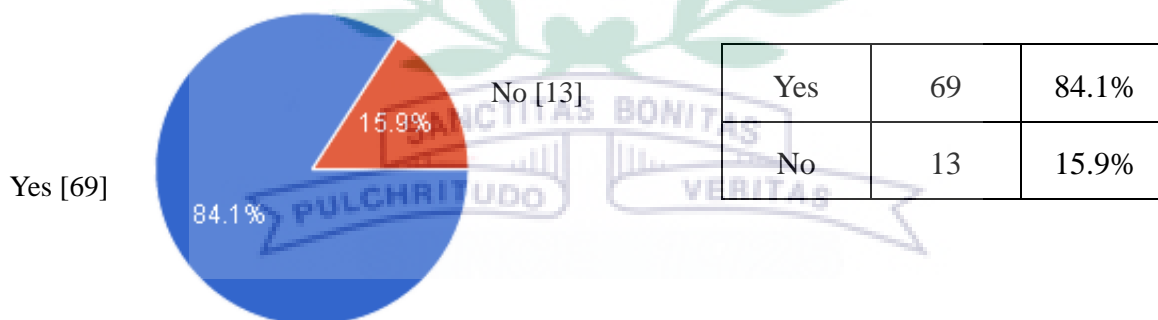
Only 7 of the respondents think that having connections with ex-convicts would not be a good thing for them. This shows a good sign that people in Taiwan may want to know more about ex-cons and help them because they believe ex-convicts would have regrets for what they did.

27) I would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society.



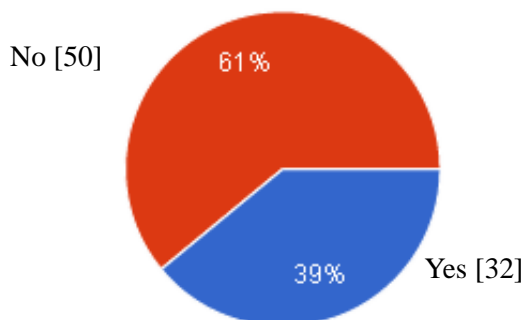
About 94% of the respondents think they would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society if possible. This again shows that many people in Taiwan may be more aware of issues related to ex-cons because they are now receiving more news and more stories about ex-convicts due to the prevalence of technology and mass media.

28) If I were an employer, I would hire an ex-convict if he or she meets the job requirements.



69 out of the 80 respondents in Taiwan would hire an ex-convict if he or she meets the job requirements while 13 of the respondents would not because they might be afraid that ex-cons do not have vocational skills due to their insufficient participation in effective reentry programs in prisons.

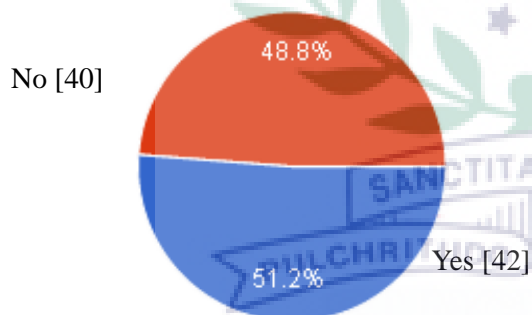
29) I think ex-convicts are likely to hurt me.



Yes	32	39%
No	50	61%

50 of the respondents feel afraid of ex-convicts because they think ex-convicts are likely to hurt them. This may be caused by public doubt and fear about ex-convicts.

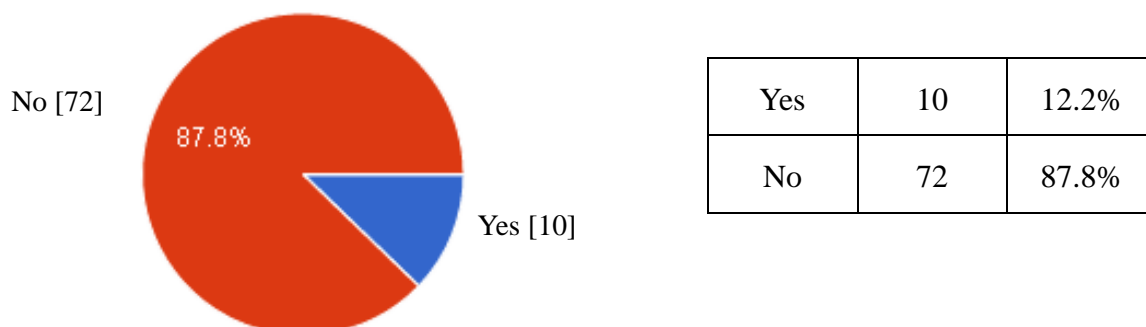
30) I would try to avoid having any connections with any ex-convicts if I did not know him or her before.



Yes	42	51.2%
No	40	48.8%

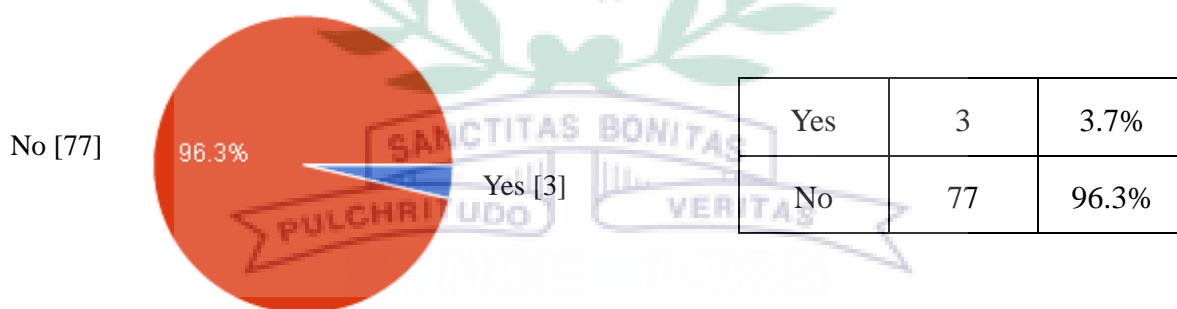
About half of the respondents would try to avoid having any connections with ex-convicts if they did not know them before, while the other half thinks the opposite. This shows that different people in Taiwan regard ex-cons differently. Taiwanese people may think that having connections with ex-convicts is not a good thing at all due to their past criminal records.

31) I would stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if I were his or her “friend”.



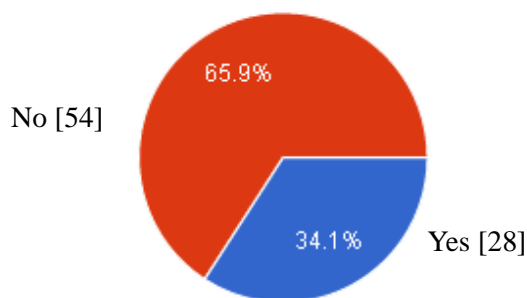
87.8% of the respondents say they would not stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if they were his or her friends. This may be the case because they are people who are close to ex-convicts.

32) I would stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if I were one of his or her “family members”.



About 96% of the respondents say they would not stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if they were his or her family members, and only 3.7% say that they would. This may be the case because family members are people who are close to ex-convicts, and probably the ones whom ex-convicts can rely on.

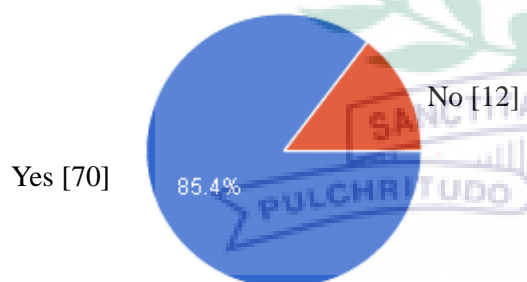
33) I would stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if I were his or her “lover”.



Yes	28	34.1%
No	54	65.9%

More of the Taiwanese respondents (65.9%) say that they would not stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if they were his or her lovers. This may be the case because an ex-con’s lover may be afraid that an ex-con will do harm to him or her.

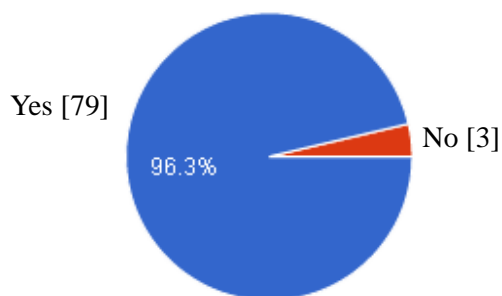
34) I think normal citizens in Taiwan should be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society.



Yes	70	85.4%
No	12	14.6%

About 85% of the respondents think that normal citizens in Taiwan should be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society, and this shows a good sign. However, about 15% of the respondents do not think people in Taiwan should help ex-cons because of fears or prejudices.

35) I think that the government in Taiwan should put more effort into helping ex-convicts reintegrate into society.

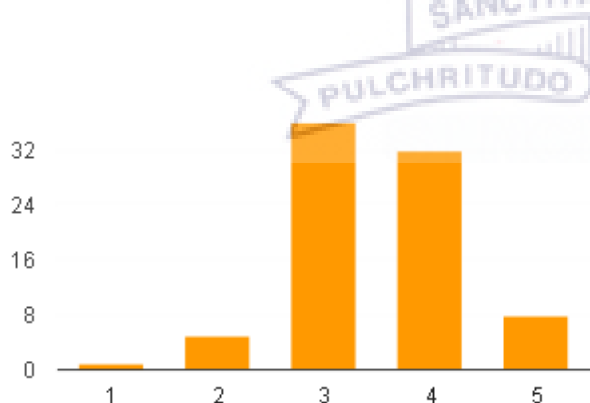


Yes	79	96.3%
No	3	3.7%

Almost every respondent (96.3%) thinks that the government in Taiwan should put more effort to help ex-convicts reintegrate into society. This may be the case because the government in Taiwan does not put enough effort to help ex-convicts reintegrate. This also reflects the truth that ex-convicts in Taiwan need help because they are indeed facing many obstacles.

III. Attitudes about ex-convicts

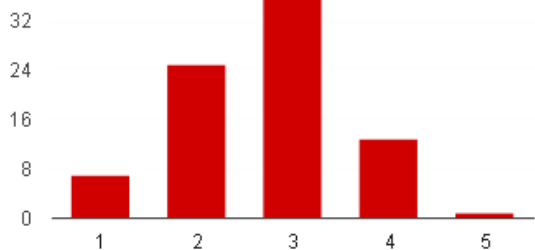
36) Do you hold positive attitudes about ex-convicts?



Strongly Disagree (1)	1	1.2%
Disagree (2)	5	6.1%
Neutral (3)	36	43.9%
Agree (4)	32	39%
Strongly Agree (5)	8	9.8%

A majority of the respondents either hold positive attitudes (48.8%) or neutral attitudes (43.9%) about ex-convicts rather than negative attitudes (7.3%).

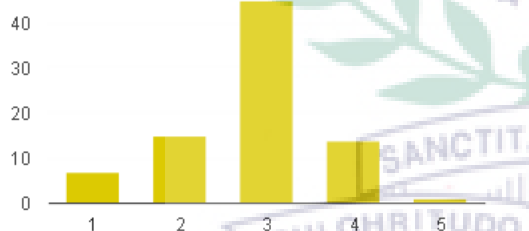
37) Do you hold negative attitudes about ex-convicts?



Strongly Disagree (1)	7	8.5%
Disagree (2)	25	30.5%
Neutral (3)	36	43.9%
Agree (4)	13	15.9%
Strongly Agree (5)	1	1.2%

Only 17.1% of the respondents hold negative attitudes about ex-convicts.

38) Do you hold neutral attitudes about ex-convicts?



Strongly Disagree (1)	7	8.5%
Disagree (2)	15	18.3%
Neutral (3)	45	54.9%
Agree (4)	14	17.1%
Strongly Agree (5)	1	1.2%

More than a half of the respondents do not hold any specific attitudes about ex-convicts.

Appendix B: Questionnaires

Questionnaire on the General Public's Opinions about Ex-Convicts in Taiwan and the
Difficulties that Ex-Convicts May Face

I am a junior from FJU's English Department. This survey is designed to better understand the general public's views about ex-convicts (or prisoners who have been released from jail) in Taiwan, hoping to understand how most people regard ex-convicts in terms of their returns to society. This survey will also determine what difficulties ex-convicts or people who are related to them (ex: their families or friends) may face, and in what ways the general public or government can help them. Your individual responses will only be used for academic purposes and the responses will not be identified with you in any way.

Total responses: 82

Sample of this survey: the general public

Explanation: All the "ex-convicts" in this questionnaire represent ex-prisoners who return to society after serving their sentences.

I. Personal Information and General Opinions on Ex-Convicts

1) What is your age? ____

2) What is your gender?

___ Male

___ Female

3) Do you know any ex-prisoners? (If no, skip to no. 6)

___ Yes

___ No

4) Do you think he or she would be willing to be interviewed? (If no, skip to no. 6)

___ Yes

___ No

5) If available, please leave his or her contact information (phone/email) after obtaining his or her permission to be interviewed.

Phone: _____

Email: _____

- 6) Do you think the different crimes committed by ex-convicts would influence your thoughts about them?

[Examples of different crimes: assault, battery, homicide, kidnapping, forgery, adultery, rape, robbery, drunk-driving, drug trafficking or stealing]

___ Yes ___ No

- 7) Are you afraid to have contact with ex-convicts when they return to society?

___ Yes ___ No

- 8) Do you think ex-convicts would face difficulties finding jobs when they return to society?

___ Yes ___ No

- 9) Do you think ex-convicts would face difficulties communicating with others when they return to society?

___ Yes ___ No

- 10) Do you think ex-convicts would face difficulties rebuilding interpersonal relationships when they return to society?

___ Yes ___ No

- 11) Do you think those people who are related to ex-convicts (ex: their families, friends, or colleagues) would also face similar difficulties in their lives? (Multiple Choice)

___ Ex-convicts' family members would face similar difficulties

___ Ex-convicts' friends would face similar difficulties

___ Ex-convicts' past colleagues would face similar difficulties

___ None of the above

- 12) Do you think most people in Taiwan still hold stereotypes or prejudices about ex-convicts?

___ Yes ___ No

13) Do you think that the family's and friends' supports play important roles to help ex-convicts successfully re-integrate into society?

Yes No

14) Do you know of any strategies that the government in Taiwan is employing to help ex-convicts successfully re-integrate into society?

Yes No

15) Do you know any organizations in Taiwan that aim to help ex-convicts?

Yes No

16) Do you think most people in Taiwan would be willing to re-embrace ex-convicts or give them chances to re-integrate into society?

Yes No

II. For each of the following statements, indicate your feelings towards ex-convicts.

17) I am afraid to have contact with ex-convicts because they have criminal records.

Yes No

18) I think most ex-convicts will have regrets for what they did and try to reform themselves after their releases from prison.

Yes No

19) I would feel comfortable having contact with ex-convicts.

Yes No

20) I would be willing to build a relationship with an ex-convict if I did not know him or her before.

Yes No

21) I would be willing to rebuild a relationship with an ex-convict if I were his or her "friend".

Yes No

22) I would be willing to rebuild a relationship with an ex-convict if I was one of his or her “family members”.

Yes No

23) I would be willing to rebuild a relationship with an ex-convict if I were his or her “lover”.

Yes No

24) I think ex-convicts are likely to commit crimes again.

Yes No

25) I would be willing to communicate or chat with ex-convicts.

Yes No

26) I think having connections with ex-convicts will not be a good thing for me.

Yes No

27) I would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society.

Yes No

28) If I were an employer, I would hire an ex-convict if he or she meets the job requirements.

Yes No

29) I think ex-convicts are likely to hurt me.

Yes No

30) I would try to avoid having any connections with any ex-convicts if I did not know him or her before.

Yes No

31) I would stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if I were his or her “friend”.

Yes No

32) I would stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if I was one of his or her “family members”.

Yes No

33) I would stay away from an ex-convict after his or her release if I were his or her “lover”.

___ Yes ___ No

34) I think normal citizens in Taiwan should be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society.

___ Yes ___ No

35) I think that the government in Taiwan should put more effort into helping ex-convicts re-integrate into society.

___ Yes ___ No

III. For each of the following statements, indicate the attitudes you have towards ex-convicts.

Circle the appropriate number.

36) Do you hold positive attitudes about ex-convicts?

Strongly

Strongly

Disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Agree

37) Do you hold negative attitudes about ex-convicts?

Strongly

Strongly

Disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Agree

38) Do you hold neutral attitudes about ex-convicts?

Strongly

Strongly

Disagree

1

2

3

4

5

Agree



Appendix C: Interview Questions

- 1) What would best describe your attitude towards ex-convicts (or prisoners who have been released from jail)? Positive, negative or neutral? And why?
- 2) Do you think ex-convicts would face a lot of difficulties when they return to society? If so, what kinds of difficulties will they face?
- 3) Do you think you would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society? If so, in what ways do you think you can help them?
- 4) Do you think that the government should put more effort into helping ex-convicts re-integrate into society? Why or why not?



Appendix D: Transcripts of the Interview with Ariana Chen

Q1: What would best describe your attitude towards ex-convicts (or prisoners who have been released from jail)? Positive, negative or neutral? And why?

A1: I would say positive. I think even though ex-convicts did something wrong in the past, there is still a chance for them to turn over a new leaf. I think I would want to know the reasons why they committed crimes in the past, and try to stand in their shoes. However, I surely would not “approve” of what they did in the past. I just want to understand how they feel and what their difficulties are. I think it is rather unfair to judge ex-convicts just by their past criminal records. I would like to know them or talk to them in person before I judge whether or not they are nice enough.

Q2: Do you think ex-convicts would face a lot of difficulties when they return to society? If so, what kinds of difficulties will they face?

A2: Like what you say, I think ex-convicts would face difficulties in finding jobs and rebuilding interpersonal relationships with other people. I think people in Taiwan will have biases against ex-convicts because they are people who used to be prisoners. For example, if something is missing in an office, people may start suspecting the ex-convict who had stolen something in the past, I guess. I think people may give them a chance, but this doesn't mean people will treat them fairly. I'm not really sure about my answer. I think ex-convicts can't find jobs with high salaries, but they can find jobs like garbage collectors or cleaners. As for building interpersonal relationships, I think it has to do with people's views towards them. People may talk to them, but people may not ask them out for dinners or to the movies. However, I don't think they would face any difficulties in communicating with others. I think good communication has to do with one's way of speaking, so maybe some ex-convicts are eloquent people. Yet, there's still a chance that they may fall behind after several years in jail. Apart from finding jobs and rebuilding relationships, I think ex-convicts

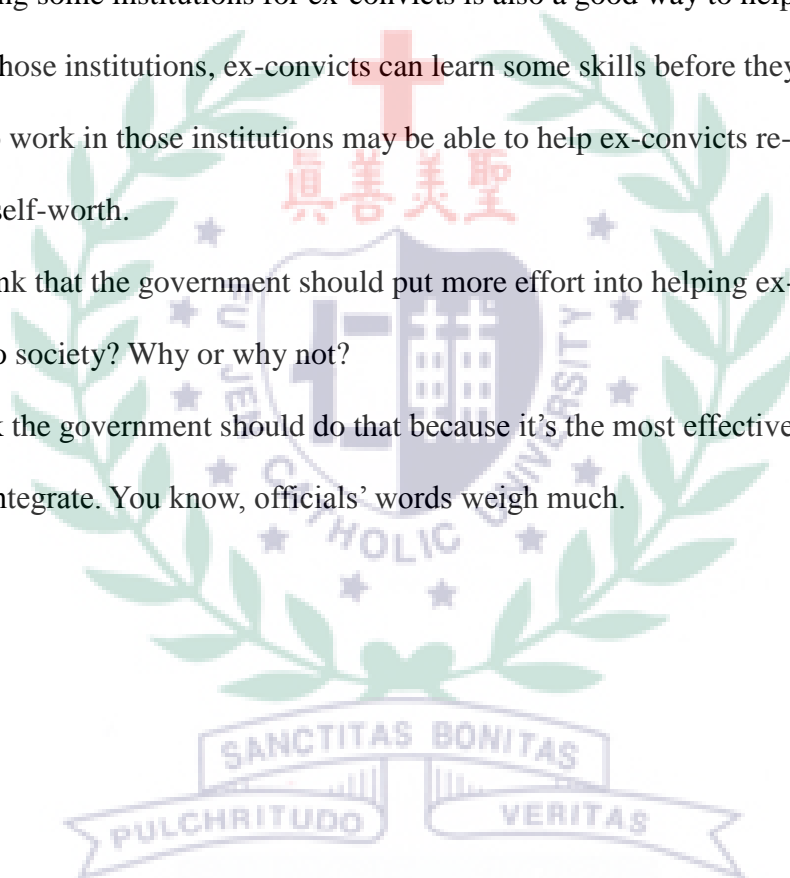
may also face difficulties rebuilding their self-identities. I mean, they may have low self-esteem after they were released from jail because they feel guilty, I guess.

Q3: Do you think you would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society? If so, in what ways do you think you can help them?

A3: Yes. I think if I were one of an ex-convict's colleagues, I would introduce them to my other colleagues and try not to talk about their pasts in front of my friends or colleagues. I think establishing some institutions for ex-convicts is also a good way to help them reintegrate. In those institutions, ex-convicts can learn some skills before they apply for jobs. Volunteers who work in those institutions may be able to help ex-convicts re-establish their self-esteem or self-worth.

Q4: Do you think that the government should put more effort into helping ex-convicts re-integrate into society? Why or why not?

A4: Yes, I think the government should do that because it's the most effective way of helping ex-convicts reintegrate. You know, officials' words weigh much.



Appendix E: Transcripts of the Interview with Kuei-Ying Lin

Q1: What would best describe your attitude towards ex-convicts (or prisoners who have been released from jail)? Positive, negative or neutral? And why?

A1: Positive. I think there is no need to feel afraid of ex-convicts and I would be willing to talk to them or accept them.

Q2: Do you think ex-convicts would face a lot of difficulties when they return to society? If so, what kinds of difficulties will they face?

A2: Yes, they would have difficulties finding jobs because most people would feel afraid of their criminal records in the past, especially the employers. I think they would not have difficulties in communicating or rebuilding new relationships because I would be willing to embrace them. Yet, this is all from my personal viewpoint.

Q3: Do you think you would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society? If so, in what ways do you think you can help them?

A3: I would like to help them if I could; however, I think it would be useless since most people are still afraid of them.

Q4: Do you think that the government should put more effort into helping ex-convicts re-integrate into society? Why or why not?

A4: Yes, of course the government should put more effort; otherwise every ex-convict would be abandoned by the society.

Appendix F: Transcripts of the Interview with Tina Tuan

Q1: What would best describe your attitude towards ex-convicts (or prisoners who have been released from jail)? Positive, negative or neutral? And why?

A1: I think I hold a rather neutral attitude about ex-convicts. I think every ex-convict deserves another chance to reform himself or herself. However, I also feel that different crimes that ex-convicts committed would influence how I think of them. For example, I think a rapist would be unacceptable. Therefore, I think I neither feel positive nor negative towards ex-convicts since it depends on different situations.

Q2: Do you think ex-convicts would face a lot of difficulties when they return to society? If so, what kinds of difficulties will they face?

A2: I think it would be most difficult for them to find jobs. They may also face unfair treatment. If I were the employer, I may hire an ex-convict but I would not trust him or her completely. In addition, if they stayed in jail for a long time, they may be disconnected from society. I think this could be one of the difficulties as well.

Q3: Do you think you would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society? If so, in what ways do you think you can help them?

A3: Well... this is a difficult question for me because I have never met any ex-convicts, so I don't know how to help them.

Q4: Do you think that the government should put more effort into helping ex-convicts re-integrate into society? Why or why not?

A4: I think it is necessary for the government to help ex-convicts reintegrate; otherwise they may start to do bad things again and put society in danger due to their incapability to reintegrate into society. I think my thoughts and opinions are a bit pessimistic here.

Appendix G: Transcripts of the Interview with Kevin Chang

Q1: What would best describe your attitude towards ex-convicts (or prisoners who have been released from jail)? Positive, negative or neutral? And why?

A1: I would say I hold a neutral attitude but a bit prone to a positive attitude about ex-convicts. I don't really have negative impression about ex-convicts because I think everyone makes mistakes. I think we should give them chances to return to society as long as they also wish to change themselves. I think one of the most important purposes of putting criminals in jail is to hope that they can reflect about themselves and to change their behaviors. Then, they can reform themselves and return to society successfully. It would be useless to keep those criminals in prisons forever without allowing them to return to society with some help. Thus, I think we should give ex-convicts chances to reintegrate into society, since they have already reflected about what they have done wrong in the past.

Q2: Do you think ex-convicts would face a lot of difficulties when they return to society? If so, what kinds of difficulties will they face?

A2: The most obvious difficulty that ex-convicts would face is that for those who committed serious crimes, there will be a mark on their ID cards, showing that they have criminal records. I think this happened in the past but I am not sure whether or not they will be marked nowadays. Anyway, it is still quite easy to check whether or not one is an ex-convict at a police station. The police can tell whether or not one is an ex-con simply by typing one's ID card number into the computer. There might be some ways for employers to check records before hiring any new employees. Thus, employers may not hire an ex-convict due to his or her past criminal records. This will be a serious problem because some ex-convicts indeed have sufficient vocational skills, but they are denied jobs because of their criminal records. I think this will be a pity since some ex-convicts might be really good at their jobs and have knowledge. Apart from difficulties in finding jobs, ex-convicts may be marginalized because they spent a long time in prisons. For example, the general public in Taiwan might not know

what to say or how to have a conversation with an ex-convict, causing the ex-con to become isolated. Even for those people who knew an ex-convict before, they may also drift apart from an ex-con because he or she might have stayed in jail for a long period of time. Thus, it would be hard for people to rebuild relationships with ex-convicts.

Q3: Do you think you would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society? If so, in what ways do you think you can help them?

A3: Like I said, I think we should give ex-convicts a chance to reform themselves because a lot of people still have prejudices against ex-convicts. I have a relative who is an ex-con as well, but I think he did not have any problems communicating with others. Yet, he did encounter difficulties in finding jobs. Then, he became sick and passed away in quite a short period of time after his release. It seems that he could not really adjust himself into society, after spending much time in prison. However, I don't think we should help those ex-convicts who committed really serious crimes, such as killing a lot of people.

Q4: Do you think that the government should put more effort into helping ex-convicts reintegrate into society? Why or why not?

A4: Yes, I think the government in Taiwan should put more effort to help ex-cons reintegrate into society. At least from what I know, I don't think the government has put enough effort to help them. Not many people in Taiwan know about the strategies that the government in Taiwan is employing to help ex-convicts. I think those vocational programs in Taiwan's prisons do not really meet convicts' needs because the skills they acquire from jail are not useful when they return to society. I think the government should in fact help ex-convicts to gain some skills that will be useful to them, such as skills in communicating with others or skills that help them to deal with people. Or else, ex-convicts may not be able to get along with people in their communities well.

Appendix H: Transcripts of the Interview with Hung-Ren Hsieh

Q1: What would best describe your attitude towards ex-convicts (or prisoners who have been released from jail)? Positive, negative or neutral? And why?

A1: I think I agree that ex-convicts should return to society with some help, so I hold a rather positive attitude. There is no place for ex-convicts to go if they cannot reintegrate with the public's help. Ex-convicts did something wrong in the past, however, they have already received their punishments. Some ex-convicts may go to jail for about two months because of stealing things, so where else can they go if we do not allow them to return to society? Therefore, we still need to accept them and take actions to help them when they return to society.

Q2: Do you think ex-convicts would face a lot of difficulties when they return to society? If so, what kinds of difficulties will they face?

A2: One difficulty can possibly be ex-convicts' housing problems since most people definitely do not want ex-convicts to live near their houses. Another apparent difficulty for ex-convicts is that people are unwilling to accept or help them. Many people don't like ex-convicts after knowing about their prison records. Ex-convicts will also face obstacles in finding jobs because people may know that they have past criminal records, and how dangerous they might have been in the past. Therefore, it is not easy for ex-convicts to find jobs. This may be a problem because if ex-convicts cannot find jobs, they cannot live their lives. Then, they will likely commit crimes again. So, they will mainly face difficulties in building interpersonal relationships and finding jobs.

Q3: Do you think you would be willing to help ex-convicts re-integrate into society? If so, in what ways do you think you can help them?

A3: I would be willing to help ex-convicts but it depends on how to help them. For example, I would be willing to donate 500 NT\$ per month to them in terms of donations. I will help them as long as I have the abilities to do so. Another thing I might be able to do is probably

giving some talks to ex-convicts to help them know more about how society is like nowadays if they have stayed in prison for a long period of time. In that way, I may help them to adjust themselves to society easily. I would also be willing to have contact with them again.

Q4: Do you think that the government should put more effort into helping ex-convicts re-integrate into society? Why or why not?

A4: Yes, it is surely the government's responsibility to do so. We people have given the authority to the government for them to carry out their policies. The government then sets up some laws and puts felons in jail, allowing them to reflect on their past mistakes before their releases. Thus, the government in Taiwan should have a set of strategies about how to help ex-convicts successfully reintegrate into society. The government should not simply put ex-convicts in jail and then let them return to society without any further plans. When ex-convicts return to society, they will go through a period of time when they have to adjust themselves to society, which can be a whole new experience for them after staying in prison. For example, the government should spend some time to monitor and check whether or not ex-convicts can successfully adjust to their new environments after their releases. If some ex-convicts are not able to adjust, the government should then come up with solutions of how to deal with this problem.



Appendix I: Transcripts of the Interview with an Employer from a Small Restaurant

Q1: Would you be willing to hire an ex-convict if he or she applies for your job?

A1: Maybe.

Q2: What do you mean by “maybe”? Can you elaborate?

A2: I say “maybe” because he or she is applying for a job that needs to deal with money. I have to check and see what kind of crime he or she committed. For example, if he or she was arrested because of stealing, then I may not hire this applicant. This is not some kind of prejudices but I have to think about our company’s money. I would be afraid that he or she might steal our money. Another option is that I may offer this ex-convict a position that does not need to deal with money. However, I would not hire this ex-convict if he or she was arrested because of some serious crimes. For example, if he or she is a drug addict, a thief or a murderer, then I would not consider hiring him or her at all.

Q3: According to your answer, then, under what circumstances would you hire an ex-convict?

A3: To be honest, it is hard for me not to have any worries at all when thinking about hiring an ex-convict. After all, he or she has a past criminal record. Yet, if he or she was found guilty of fraud, then I can understand that he or she might do something wrong accidentally due to the pressures of daily life. Thus, I think I have to give this ex-convict an opportunity to work under this circumstance. As for those who have committed crimes repeatedly, or those who were found guilty because of theft or robbery, I would not hire them.

Q4: Is it correct that you would still consider hiring a non-felon first, if you had to choose between hiring an ex-convict or someone without a criminal record?

A4: Yes, of course. I think most employers would consider hiring a non-felon first. It is human nature.