

_____ **Research Report** _____

**Community Employment Characteristics
and Conditional Release Outcome among
Federal Offenders**

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**Community Employment Characteristics and Conditional Release Outcome among
Federal Offenders**

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Executive Summary

Key words: *community employment; community corrections; offender reintegration.*

The role employment plays in reintegration and in reducing recidivism has been widely acknowledged. Much less is known, however, regarding what underlies this relationship and what variables are most likely to affect success. Little research has examined the influence of specific employment characteristics (e.g., quality of work) that deter offenders from criminal activity. The purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between characteristics of work obtained by recently released federal offenders and success on conditional release (as defined by any revocation and a revocation with a new offence). Of specific interest was whether job stability, skill level, or a combination of the two would predict whether an offender would return to custody while on conditional release after controlling for other factors related to recidivism.

Participants were taken from all federal offenders released into the community on conditional release between April 1st, 2010 and March 31st, 2011. To be included, offenders had to be on the first term of their current federal sentence, have a follow-up time in the community of a minimum of 180 days, and be employed at least once during the follow-up time period. Two main community employment characteristics were examined: (1) job stability (defined as having maintained at least one job in the community for 90 days or more); and (2) employment skill level (had at least one job in the community that was high-skilled).

Statistical analyses revealed that, even after controlling for other covariates related to recidivism, those offenders with at least one stable job in the community had a significantly lower likelihood of return to custody on conditional release (for both any revocation and revocation with a new offence) than offenders without at least one stable job during the study's follow-up period. More specifically, offenders who were not employed with a stable job were 3.5 times more likely to return to custody for any reason and 2.5 times more likely to return to custody with a new offence than offenders who were employed with a stable job. Skill level of community employment, however, was not found to be significantly related to conditional release outcomes.

These results further elucidate the relationship between community employment, particularly job maintenance, and reduced likelihood of recidivism. They also suggest that employment-related resources for offenders could focus on assisting offenders in obtaining a job that they will be able to maintain. Furthermore, it is possible that offenders identified as having the potential for difficulties with maintaining stable employment could be targeted for additional employment intervention to further help them with their reintegration efforts. Future research should explore the process by which offenders maintain employment so that interventions can be targeted appropriately.

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Introduction

The relationship between employment needs and criminal behaviour is well-established in the correctional research (e.g., Andrews & Bonta, 2003; Gendreau, Goggin, & Gray, 1998; Sampson & Laub, 1993). Many offenders have unstable job histories and lack the employability skills that employers are seeking in a contemporary workforce. Unemployment at the time of arrest is common among federal offenders in Canada, with approximately 65% of men (Boe, 2005) and 72% of women (Delveaux & Blanchette, 2005) reporting being without a job when they were taken into custody. Employment is also considered by many to be a key indicator of successful community reintegration for offenders upon release. Few individuals would dispute the value of meaningful employment in successful reintegration, allowing offenders to financially support themselves via legal means, develop self-worth, value society, build pro-social relationships, and experience a sense of community (Latessa, 2012).

In response to the established link between employment and crime, correctional organizations worldwide have adopted employment- and employability-based interventions as a key component in strategies to promote offender rehabilitation. Employment interventions are purported to assist offenders in the reintegration process by mitigating the systematic barriers they face as a result of poor employment skills and, in turn, contribute to post-release success and public safety. Examples of these intervention strategies include institutional employment programs that allow offenders to develop generic work skills, acquire on-the-job work experience, and earn vocational certification linked to community labour market needs. For instance, the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) aims to enhance offenders' job readiness and employability skills while incarcerated and upon release via its Employment and Employability Program (EEP). CORCAN is a special operating agency within CSC that aids with the goal of the EEP by offering vocational training and/or certification and providing on-the-job skills training via its production shops.

Overall, research in the area of institutional employment programs suggests that offender institutional vocational training and work programs can have a positive effect on institutional and post-release outcomes, including improved institutional behaviour (as measured by reduced incidents; Maguire, 1996; Taylor et al., 2008), increased likelihood of job attainment in the community (Nolan, Wilton, Cousineau, & Stewart, 2014; Taylor et al., 2008), and decreased

rates of recidivism (Bouffard et al., 2000; Wilson et al., 2000). However, methodological shortcomings, such as the lack of scientifically-rigorous program evaluations, have been noted that limit the ability to draw firm conclusions regarding their efficacy. More consistently, research in the area of offender employment has demonstrated a strong relationship between attainment of community employment post-release and a decreased likelihood of recidivism (Brews, Luong, & Nafekh, 2010; Gillis & Nafekh, 2005; Lockwood, Nally, Ho, & Knutson, 2012; Nolan et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2008).

Attaining employment is one of the most formidable challenges facing newly-released offenders (Visher & Kachnowski, 2007). In addition to unstable work histories, offenders may face several barriers to obtaining employment upon release, including low employability skill levels and formal qualifications, issues related to physical and/or psychological health, lack of supportive conditions (e.g., housing, social ties), legal restrictions, and discrimination. For instance, Holzer, Raphael, and Stoll (2007) found that only 20% of employers surveyed would “definitely” or “probably” consider hiring an offender, while 35% indicated it would depend on the crime. They also found that employers are generally less likely to hire violent offenders or those without work experience. Similarly, Graffam, Shinkfield, and Hardcastle (2008) found that those with a criminal background were rated as less likely than other disadvantaged groups to obtain and maintain employment. These negative employer attitudes may be exacerbated for specific groups of offenders, such as sex offenders (Brown, Spencer, & Deakin, 2007).

Although there is a body of research examining the impact of having a job on reducing the likelihood of recidivism, less research has focused on why this is the case. The relationship between employment and offending is a complex one. While employment is clearly important for offenders, conceptualizing employment as simply something one has or does not have is an overly simplification of the situation. For instance, even after successfully securing community employment, the issues of job retention and advancement remain a concern for many offenders. These issues pose significant challenges given that sustainable employment is a component of successful reintegration and is associated with reduced recidivism (Harrison & Schehr, 2004). For example, level of job stability has been found to be related to recidivism in a much-cited longitudinal study by Sampson and Laub (1993). These researchers found that job instability was associated with future criminality, both for individuals who had previous delinquency and those who did not. Stable employment was found to be associated with desistance from criminal

behaviour even among the most seriously delinquent adolescents.

Notwithstanding the challenges of obtaining and maintaining community employment, there is also the issue of obtaining *quality* employment. For instance, obtaining meaningful employment may allow offenders to build pro-social relationships, gain experience and knowledge, and develop self-worth and agency (Latessa, 2012; Rhodes, 2008). Little research, however, has been conducted regarding what constitutes quality of employment for offenders, or what specific employment characteristics lead to successful reintegration. Many broad definitions and models of quality of work have been proposed in the employment literature among the general population (e.g., Fairlie, 2010; Handel, 2005; Lowe, 2007; Task Force on the Measurement of Quality of Employment, 2010), and more comprehensive definitions usually include some aspects that are difficult to operationalize or quantify, such as intrinsic rewards and relationships with co-workers. Nevertheless, some relatively concrete aspects are included in most definitions, such as wages, job stability, and hours of work (Cloutier-Villeneuve, 2012).

Gillis and Andrews (2005) conducted a study to explore what factors would be related to employment outcomes for federal offenders on conditional release. One of the employment outcomes they examined was quality of employment, which was assessed using a composite variable comprised of the following items: (1) type of occupation (skilled or unskilled), (2) salary meeting needs, and (3) satisfaction with salary. At both one month and six month assessments, analyses revealed positive relationships between quality of employment and the intention to acquire/maintain work, as well as social support for employment. As the primary purpose of the study was to explore the contributions of various personal, interpersonal, and social factors to employment outcomes such as quality, the study did not specifically examine whether higher quality of employment was associated with recidivism.

Expanding upon the findings of Gillis and Andrews (2005), Scott (2010) investigated offenders' perceptions on the value of employment and found that the most common theme identified by the majority of the sample was the priority placed on financial security and materialistic gain. Offenders in this study also discussed the importance of employment for self-development and enhancement, physical/mental health and well-being, and personal satisfaction and fulfillment. Again, however, this research did not examine the impact of these variables on success or failure in the community.

Uggen (1999) attempted to quantitatively test the relationship between job quality

(satisfaction-based) and criminal behaviour among offenders. He found that higher job quality reduced the likelihood of criminal behaviour among a sample of high-risk offenders, even when accounting for other important variables related to prior criminality as well as factors related to pay and employment duration. A limitation of this study, however, was the use of self-report of offending behaviour. A recommendation was made for future research to identify the distinctive features of high-quality jobs and assess the impact they have on reducing future criminality. Subsequently, Uggen and Staff (2001) have suggested that quality of employment appears to be important for reducing recidivism; however, the authors also noted that it is difficult to make causal inferences based on observational evidence from existing studies.

In a more recent study, Power and Nolan (in press) qualitatively examined released offenders' perceptions on their quality of work, and, more specifically, how they view this work as having an impact on their reintegration into the community. Interviews revealed that, although extrinsic rewards such as pay were considered beneficial, offenders most valued that their jobs were interesting, meaningful, and provided them with a sense of achievement and belonging. Offenders generally attributed their current work success to a positive attitude and strong work ethic, and most agreed that their employment helped them desist from further criminal activity by providing them with a productive and pro-social way to structure their time.

The Present Study

Although the role that employment plays in offender reintegration and reducing recidivism has been widely acknowledged, much remains to be known regarding what underlies this relationship. Little research has examined the influence of specific employment characteristics on deterring offenders from criminal activity, particularly those characteristics that may be indicative of higher quality work. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between several characteristics of jobs obtained by recently released federal offenders and success on conditional release (i.e., any revocation and a revocation with a new offence).

The primary employment characteristics examined were job stability and employment skill level as these are tracked and recorded by parole officers on offenders' files.¹ Also of

¹ Note that these are the only two variables regarding community employment that are currently tracked in an offender's file that have been theoretically linked to quality of work. This will be discussed further in the methodology and discussion sections.

interest in the present study was the relationship between offender demographic and sentence characteristics and community job stability and skill level, as well as the relationship between these employment characteristics and participation in institutional employment activities such as CORCAN.

The research conducted here was largely exploratory in nature. However, the study was guided by the following questions:

- 1) Are offenders who maintain stable employment in the community less likely to return to custody on conditional release than offenders who do not maintain stable employment?
- 2) Are offenders who obtain a high-skilled job in the community less likely to return to custody on conditional release than offenders who obtain a low-skilled job? and
- 3) Is there an optimal outcome associated with a combination of job stability and skill level whereby offenders who obtain a high-skilled job in the community and maintain it for a period of time are less likely to return to custody on their conditional release than those who do not?

Method

Participants

Participants for the present study were taken from federal offenders on their first term of incarceration who were released into the community on a form of conditional release between April 1st, 2010 and March 31st, 2011 ($N = 4,460$). Only offenders who had a follow-up time² in the community of a minimum of 180 days³ and who were employed at least once during that time period were included in the study.⁴ A profile of all participants ($N = 1,741$) is presented in

² Offenders were followed until whichever of the following came first: the end of their current federal sentence, their first date of revocation, their date of death or deportation, or the end-of-study date of July 11th, 2012.

³ One hundred and eighty days was chosen as a sufficient amount of time for offenders to maintain a job that could be considered stable.

⁴ An additional criterion for inclusion was having had the DFIA-R assessment at some point during their incarceration (vs. the DFIA). The rationale for this criterion was that offenders with a DFIA assessment versus those with a DFIA-R assessment had significantly different demographic and sentence profiles, suggesting that their assessments may have differed in a manner which is currently unknown. Given the DFIA-R is currently used operationally, it was decided to focus on offenders who had this measure so that levels of risk and need could be controlled for when predicting conditional release outcomes. This decision resulted in 671 offenders being excluded

Table A1 in Appendix A. Overall, the majority of participants were male (94%) and of non-Aboriginal ancestry (87%). Over 60% of the offenders were convicted of a non-violent offence (67%), had a sentence length of less than three years (62%), and were released on full parole (68%). The greatest proportion of offenders was rated as medium on levels of criminal history risk and criminogenic need (44% and 48%, respectively).

Measures/Material

Offender data were extracted from components of CSC's Offender Management System (OMS), a computerized file system maintained by CSC to manage information on all federally sentenced offenders. Information retrieved from the system included: basic demographic and sentence information, information on participation in institutional employment activities, and information on community employment obtained post-release.

At intake to federal custody, a comprehensive evaluation is conducted with all incoming offenders to assess static and dynamic factors – the Offender Intake Assessment (OIA). The Static Factors Assessment (SFA) report is used to provide an overall rating for level of intervention based on static factors. Another component of the OIA is the Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis (DFIA), which is designed to assist Parole Officers in identifying and prioritizing criminogenic needs to be addressed according to seven dynamic risk areas. It also provides an overall rating for level of need. The DFIA was revised and the new version was implemented in 2009 (known as the DFIA-R). The revised version incorporates a new responsivity component to enhance reintegration efforts. The ratings are updated periodically throughout an offender's sentence. Offenders' most recent ratings of levels of risk, need, and motivation prior to release were included in the present study.

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada's (HRSDC's) National Occupational Classification (NOC) 2006 system was used to categorize types of community employment acquired by offenders ("NOC codes").⁵ NOC is the nationally accepted reference on occupations in Canada. It is a tool used to classify occupations according to their skill level and skill type (HRSDC, 2012). CSC currently uses 64 three-digit NOC codes to classify offenders' employment in the community, as well as two additional codes created to represent general

from the study.

⁵ For more information please visit *Human Resources and Skills Development Canada*
<http://www30.hrsdc.gc.ca/NOC/english/NOC/2006/Welcome.aspx>

managerial and professional occupational categories. For the purpose of the present study, the first two digits will be used; the first represents skill type and the second represents skill level.

Procedure/Analytic Approach

Two main community employment characteristics were examined: (1) employment skill level; and (2) job stability. Employment skill level was a dichotomous variable (high vs. low) created by utilizing the NOC code assigned to an offender's community job by his or her Parole Officer or Community Employment Coordinator (CEC). Using the second digit of these NOC codes, jobs were categorized as either low-skilled or high-skilled (see Table 1). Job stability was also a dichotomous variable (yes vs. no) created using the length of an offender's employment in the community. If an offender had at least one job during the follow-up period that was 90 days or more⁶, he or she was considered to have a stable job. However, if an offender did not have at least one job during the follow-up period that was 90 days or more, he or she was not considered to have a stable job. It should be noted that an offender could have had multiple jobs in the community, but would only be considered "stable" if at least one job was maintained for a minimum of 90 consecutive days.

Table 1

Classification of Community Employment based on Skill Level

Low-skilled

- Occupations that usually require secondary school and/or occupation-specific training
- Occupations for which on-the-job training is usually provided

High-skilled

- Management occupations
 - Occupations that usually require university education
 - Occupations that usually require college education or apprenticeship training
-

Logistic regression was used to examine the effects of the employment characteristics (i.e., job stability and skill level) and several other variables known to be associated with re-offending on the likelihood of: (1) any revocation while on conditional release, and (2) a revocation with a new offence while on conditional release. A logistic regression was also used

⁶ Ninety days was used as an indication of stability as this has been noted as a potential indicator of employment success by CORCAN. Correspondingly, the 90 day mark is also used as an indicator for employment assignments in CSC's Corporate Reporting System.

to examine what demographic and sentence characteristics would best predict the employment characteristics. Logistic regression allows the prediction of group membership from a set of predictor variables and for the interpretation of coefficients using odds ratios. An odds ratio is the change in odds of being in one of the categories of an outcome when the value of a predictor increases by one unit. Odds ratios greater than one reflect the increase in odds of an outcome with a one-unit increase in a predictor variable, whereas odds ratios less than one reflect the decrease in odds of that outcome with a one-unit change in a predictor variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). For the purpose of the present study, regression models were built in such a way that each covariate was entered individually, and if a covariate was not found to be significant (at the $p < .05$ level) with the inclusion of the other covariates, it was dropped from the model. The exceptions to this were the job stability and skill level variables, which were kept in the model regardless of their significance.

The associations between offenders' employment characteristics and their demographic, sentence, institutional, and post-release information were interpreted using effect sizes (i.e., Cramer's V). Cramer's V ranges from 0 to 1.0 and is interpreted as such that values between .10 and .20 are generally considered to be a weak association, values between 0.20 and 0.40 a moderate association, values between .40 and .60 a strong association, and values above 0.60 indicate a very strong association (Rea & Parker, 1992). For the purpose of the present study, effect sizes above .10 were considered meaningful for interpretation.

Results

Job Skill Level and Job Stability

Fifty-five percent ($n = 961$) of offenders had at least one job in the community that was considered high-skilled and 45% ($n = 780$) did not have a job that was high-skilled. With regard to job stability, 81% ($n = 1,414$) had at least one job that was 90 days or more, while 19% ($n = 327$) did not have a job that was over 90 days.

Conditional Release Outcome

Overall, offenders were followed in the community for an average of 483.0 days ($SD = 151.8$). A total of 23% ($n = 396$) returned to custody within their follow-up period (i.e., prior to their WED, date of death or deportation, or the end-of-study date). The frequencies of returns to custody by skill level and job stability are presented in Table 2. There was no meaningful association between revocations and job skill level. There was, however, a meaningful association between revocations and stability whereby a disproportionately greater number of offenders who did not return to custody had a job that was over 90 days.

Table 2

Frequencies of Revocations based on Job Stability and Skill Level

	Revoked				<i>V</i>
	Yes		No		
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	
Job stability					.39
< 90 days	47	185	11	142	
≥ 90 days	53	211	89	1,203	
Job skill level					.01
Low	46	181	45	599	
High	54	215	55	746	

Multivariable results. A logistic regression predicting returns to custody was also conducted to further examine the relationship between job skill level and job stability and revocation when taking other predictor variables into account. The models predicting any revocation and revocation with a new offence while on conditional release are presented in Table 2. After statistically controlling for the other covariates, results revealed that having at least one high-skilled job in the community (vs. being employed but not having had a high-skilled job) did not significantly predict any revocation or revocation with a new offence. Results did reveal a significantly lower likelihood of return to custody while on conditional release (for both any revocation and with a new offence) among offenders with at least one stable job (that was 90 days or more) in the community.⁷ More specifically, offenders who were not employed with a stable job were 3.5 times more likely to return to custody for any reason than those who were employed with a stable job. Furthermore, offenders who were not employed with a stable job were 2.5 times more likely to return to custody with a new offence than those with a stable job.

⁷ Note that the interaction between job stability and skill level was also tested in both models, and was not found to be significant in either. Thus, the models with the interaction terms are not presented here.

Table 3

Logistic Regression Models Predicting Revocations

Covariate	Any Revocation ^a				Covariate	Revocation with New Offence ^b			
	χ^2	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.			χ^2	Odds Ratio	95% C.I.	
Job stability					Job stability				
No vs. yes	63.6***	3.57	2.61	4.88	No vs. yes	15.96***	2.51	1.60	3.95
Job skill level					Job skill level				
Low vs. high	0.22 ^{n.s.}	0.94	0.71	1.24	Low vs. high	0.45 ^{n.s.}	0.87	0.57	1.31
Time released (days)	128.03***	0.993	0.992	0.994	Time released (days)	5.65*	0.998	0.997	1.00
Type of release					Criminogenic need				
Parole vs. S.R.	84.05***	5.68	3.92	8.24	Medium vs. low	8.15**	2.97	1.41	6.28
Criminogenic need					High vs. low	8.69**	3.29	1.49	7.25
Medium vs. low	12.01***	2.38	1.46	3.88					
High vs. low	28.21***	4.20	2.47	7.13					
Moderate/high criminogenic need domain									
Substance abuse	22.92***	2.13	1.56	2.90					
Associates	11.20***	1.65	1.23	2.21					

Note. C.I. = Confidence Interval. S.R. = Statutory Release.

^aThe overall model was significant ($\chi^2(8) = 343.07, p < .0001$). ^bThe overall model was significant ($\chi^2(5) = 56.66, p < .0001$).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. n.s. = not significant.

Characteristics of Offenders Based on Job Stability

Since only job stability, and not job skill level, was found to significantly predict the likelihood of returning to custody while on conditional release, offenders who had at least one stable job were compared on key variables (e.g., demographic and sentence characteristics, risk and need levels) to those who did not. A further examination of the characteristics most associated with job stability may allow for an increased understanding of those offenders who have stable jobs and those who do not, which, in turn, could lead to interventions for offenders who do not have these characteristics in order to aid them with attaining job stability. The frequencies of the various characteristics of offenders that were examined based on job stability are presented in tables in Appendix B.

A logistic regression was conducted to see which variables would best predict job stability group membership (i.e., stable job vs. no stable job). The final model predicting job stability is presented in Table 4. Note that gender, age at release, offence type (i.e., violent or non-violent), type of release (i.e., parole or statutory release), and moderate or high need on the domains of employment, personal/emotional, marital/family, attitudes, and associates were not found to be significant in the building of the model and were, therefore, not included in the final model. Overall, findings revealed the following characteristics to be associated with a significantly less likelihood of having stable employment in the community: being of Aboriginal ancestry, having a medium- or high-level of overall static risk prior to release, having a medium- or high-level of overall criminogenic need prior to release, having a low-level of motivation prior to release, and having a moderate- or high-level of need in the areas of substance abuse and community functioning prior to release.

Table 4

Logistic Regression Model Predicting Job Stability

Covariate	Job Stability		
	χ^2	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Limits
Aboriginal status			
Aboriginal vs. non-Aboriginal	9.16**	0.59	0.41 0.83
Criminal history risk			
Medium vs. low	4.18*	0.65	0.43 0.98
High vs. low	9.08**	0.48	0.30 0.78
Criminogenic need			
Medium vs. low	17.78***	0.30	0.17 0.53
High vs. low	29.45***	0.18	0.10 0.34
Motivation level			
Low vs. high	9.26**	0.46	0.28 0.76
Medium vs. high	0.85 ^{n.s.}	0.87	0.64 1.17
Moderate/high criminogenic need domain			
Substance abuse	7.03**	0.67	0.50 0.90
Community functioning	11.64***	0.55	0.40 0.78

Note. The overall model was significant ($\chi^2(9) = 187.62, p < .0001$).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$. *n.s.* = not significant.

Discussion

The primary purpose of the present study was to explore the relationship between several job characteristics of recently released federal offenders and their success on conditional release. Of specific interest was whether job stability, skill level, or combination of the two would predict an offender's return to custody on conditional release once controlling for other factors related to recidivism.

Results supported the importance of job stability, but not skill level, in reducing the likelihood of return to custody on conditional release. Even after controlling for other variables related to recidivism, obtaining employment, and time at risk in the community, offenders with at least one stable job in the community (i.e., who maintained a job for 90 days or more) were significantly less likely to return to custody on conditional release (for both any revocation and revocation with a new offence) than offenders without at least one stable job (i.e., who were employed, but in a job less than 90 days). More specifically, offenders who were not employed with a stable job were 3.57 times more likely to return to custody for any reason and 2.51 times more likely to return to custody with a new offence than offenders who were employed with a stable job. Meanwhile, skill level of community employment (i.e., having at least one job that was higher-skilled) was not found to be significantly related to conditional release outcomes.

Based on results that found that only job stability was a significant predictor of returning to custody on conditional release, we also examined which demographic and sentence variables would best predict an offender's likelihood of job stability. Overall, findings indicated that self-identifying as Aboriginal, having a medium or high level of risk or need prior to release, having a low level of motivation prior to release, and having a moderate or high level of need in the areas of substance abuse and community functioning prior to release were meaningfully associated with a lower likelihood of having stable employment in the community. These findings reflect the type of individual who is able to maintain a job – one who has an overall greater potential for reintegration. Given the significance of job stability that was found in the present study, it may be beneficial for employment interventions to target individuals with the characteristics associated with a lower likelihood of job stability. It should be noted, however, that other characteristics that we did not investigate such as the extent of the offenders' support systems and their location of release may have also been related to their ability to maintain a job for a significant period of time. Future research may want to explore such factors in more detail.

The results found no meaningful association between having at least one stable job in the community and having participated in institutional employment activities such as CORCAN or CSC employment, or having obtained a vocational certificate. This is consistent, however, with research that has found that institutional employment does not significantly predict job maintenance/retention in the community (Nolan et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2008).

Overall, the findings of the present study further elucidate the relationship between community employment and reduced recidivism. While this relationship has been well-established (e.g., Brews et al., 2010; Gillis & Nafekh, 2005; Lockwood et al., 2012; Nolan et al., 2014; Taylor et al., 2008), there is little information on whether the type of employment is important or through what mechanism employment affects recidivism. Our findings are consistent with a previous study that found that job instability was associated with future criminality (Sampson & Laub, 1993). The present research suggests that job maintenance in the community is associated with a decreased likelihood of return to custody while on conditional release. The research also suggests that skill level of employment as defined by this study does not have an impact on conditional release outcome. Indeed, results suggest that obtaining *any* job that the offender is capable of maintaining is critical to success on release. The lack of relationship with skill level is in contradiction to a previous study by Uggen (1999) who found that higher job quality was related to a reduced likelihood of offending; however, the data used for that study was from several decades ago and offending behaviour was self-reported. The incongruent findings may also be due to the different method of determining what constitutes a high quality job.

A potential limitation of the present study is that we considered stable employment to be one continuous job that was maintained for more than 90 days. Some, however, may argue that stable employment should be considered maintenance of employment over time, even if it constitutes multiple jobs. Nevertheless, it is likely that the ultimate employment goal for most offenders is stability within one job. Because we did not take into consideration the reasons that jobs were left, we considered it most appropriate to examine length of time in one job. Future research may want to investigate the impact of one stable job versus multiple jobs over a period of time, as well as what factors contributed to an offender not being able to maintain a job for 90 days or more (even though they were released for at least six months). Such research could tease out the reasons that were and were not within the offenders' control (e.g., quitting versus being

laid off from seasonal work). It could also examine the reasons that are negative (e.g., fired, quit because lack of motivation, relapsed, suspended for technical violation); neutral (e.g., required to take programming, psychological counseling, halfway house restrictions); and positive (e.g., taking a higher paid position, going back to school).

Another potential limitation of the present study is that, although our findings demonstrate the importance of job stability in predicting conditional release outcome, we were restricted by the type of information available to us. More specifically, while there are many factors that could be included as measures of quality of work, few of these variables are available in the databases currently maintained by CSC (i.e., OMS) and, thus, only two dichotomous variables were examined (i.e., job stability and skill level). It is possible that other variables associated with quality of work are more important in promoting offender reintegration than those captured here. Related information, such as level of salary, could also provide important context to the assessment of quality of work. Moreover, it is unclear which aspects of employment are most valued by the offenders themselves. Further research could assess what aspects of employment are most valued by offenders (for example: financial gains, relationships with co-workers, feeling of belonging) and whether those variables are related to success on conditional release. In fact, as previously noted, a recent small scale study conducted by Power and Nolan (in press) qualitatively examined offenders' perceptions of their quality of work in the community and how they perceived it to affect their reintegration. Overall, the results suggested that intrinsic rewards were of primary importance in the offenders' assessment of the quality of their work on release, and although extrinsic rewards such as pay were considered beneficial, offenders most valued that their jobs were interesting, meaningful, and provided them with a sense of achievement. The majority also agreed that their employment helped them desist from further criminal activity by providing them with a productive and pro-social way to spend their time.

Conclusions

These results suggest that offenders' community job stability, but not job skill level, is related to successful community reintegration. Employment services for offenders may want to focus on assisting offenders in obtaining a job that they will be able to maintain. Furthermore, it may be beneficial for offenders identified as having difficulties with maintaining stable

employment to receive additional employment intervention to further help them with their reintegration efforts. Future research should further explore how best to help offenders maintain community employment so that employment interventions can be targeted appropriately.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Overall Participant Profile

Table A1

Overall Participant Profile

	%	<i>n</i>		%	<i>n</i>
Gender			Criminal history risk		
Men	94	1,639	Low	31	524
Women	6	102	Medium	44	753
			High	25	433
Aboriginal status			Criminogenic need		
Non-Aboriginal	87	1,505	Low	19	328
Aboriginal	13	230	Medium	48	843
Major offence			High	33	570
Violent	33	584			
Non-violent	67	1,157	Moderate/high need		
			Substance abuse	41	711
Sentence Length			Community functioning	12	211
< 3 years	62	1,084	Personal/emotional	46	795
3 - 10 years	35	614	Marital/family	19	327
10 - 25 years	1	24	Employment	45	789
Indeterminate	1	19	Attitudes	36	628
			Associates	43	748
Age at release			Type of Release		
18 - 30 years	40	704	Day parole	68	1,179
30 - 50 years	50	867	Full parole	2	46
> 50 years	10	170	Statutory release	30	516

Note. *N* = 1,741; percentages are based on data available (excluding missing values).

Appendix B: Profile based on Job Stability

Table B1

Demographic and Sentence Characteristics by Job Stability

	Stable Job (> 90 days)				V
	Yes		No		
	(n = 1,414)		(n = 327)		
	%	n	%	n	
Gender					.04
Men	95	1,338	92	301	
Women	5	76	8	26	
Aboriginal status					.13
Non-Aboriginal	89	1,253	77	252	
Aboriginal	11	156	23	74	
Major offence					.20
Homicide	5	69	3	8	
Sexual	7	98	4	14	
Drug	71	576	21	70	
Assault	7	102	11	37	
Robbery	10	147	20	66	
Other Violent	3	35	3	8	
Other Nonviolent	27	387	38	124	
Sentence length (years)					.06
< 3 years	61	866	67	218	
3 - 10 years	36	508	32	106	
10 - 25 years	2	23	0	1	
Indeterminate	1	17	1	2	
Age at release					.06
18 - 30 years	39	551	47	153	
30 - 50 years	51	720	45	147	
> 50 years	10	143	8	27	

Table B1 continued...

	Yes		No		<i>V</i>
	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	
Type of release					.17
Day parole	71	1,004	54	175	
Full parole	3	43	0	3	
Statutory release	26	367	46	149	

Table B2

Risk, Need, and Motivation Level Ratings at Release by Job Stability

	Stable Job (> 90 days)				V
	Yes		No		
	(n = 1,414)		(n = 327)		
	%	n	%	n	
Criminal history risk ^a					.20
Low	35	481	13	43	
Medium	43	598	48	155	
High	22	311	38	122	
Dynamic need					.21
Low	22	306	7	22	
Medium	50	707	41	136	
High	28	401	52	169	
Motivation level ^a					.17
Low	5	64	13	43	
Medium	54	755	59	190	
High	41	571	27	87	
Moderate or high criminogenic need					
Substance abuse ^b	43	606	66	217	.18
Community functioning ^c	12	165	25	82	.15
Personal/emotional ^d	53	742	70	229	.14
Marital/family ^d	19	269	32	104	.12
Employment	38	535	52	169	.11
Attitudes ^e	48	672	59	194	.09
Associates	56	797	65	213	.07

Note. Moderate or high need was collapsed to include the DFIA-R indicators ‘moderate need for improvement’ and ‘high need for improvement’.

This is in contrast to no or low need, which was collapsed to include the indicators ‘asset to community adjustment’, ‘no need for improvement’, and ‘low need for improvement’. ^an = 31 missing. ^bn = 1 missing. ^cn = 4 missing. ^dn = 3 missing. ^en = 2 missing.

Table B3

Institutional Employment Activities by Job Stability

Stable Job (> 90 days)					
Yes			No		V
(n = 1,414)			(n = 327)		
	%	n	%	n	
Employment					.02
CORCAN					
(only)	6	87	6	20	
CSC (only)	57	801	54	178	
Both					
(CORCAN &	22	318	25	81	
CSC)					
None	15	208	15	48	
Vocational					
certification					
Yes	52	729	48	157	.03
No	48	685	52	170	