Introduction

The current investigation is being developed within the scope of the Master's Degree in Criminology at the Faculty of Law of the University of Porto (FDUP). The main goal is the study of the influence of certain factors, among them deterrence, in light of the intention of prisoners to reoffend.

As crime is a multifactorial phenomenon, this work seeks to foster and contribute to the debate on some variables that affect crime, to a greater or lesser extent, in order to verify its effects, impacts and effectiveness on the purpose of individuals, in this specific case, of those who are in seclusion, to return to crime when they are at liberty and return to social life.

In this way, this research deals with the literature review, conceptualizations and theories about criminal deterrence, makes an analysis of the evolution of this concept, from its emergence through the "Classic Doctrine of Deterrence" to the updates developed over time, as the "Expanded Model of Deterrence", discusses the variables that compose it (severity, celerity and certainty) and other related ones, being brought up in several scientific studies and therefore chosen to compose this investigation, namely: criminal background, self-control, informal sanction, perceived control, fear of apprehension, morality, peer delinquency, group norms, propensity to offend and social norms.

Finally, given the bibliographic review carried out and the gaps found in it, the work proposes a data collection instrument (questionnaire) to measure the correlation of the aforementioned variables and the intention to commit criminal behavior, elaborated based on international scientific production, properly tested in a prison facility that can be used for future investigations.

Aim

For the execution of this study, the general goal was to analyze, through bibliographic research, the effects of criminal deterrence and some related variables on the intention of individuals to commit criminal behavior.

To achieve it, the following specific objectives arise:

a) Analyze, according to the scientific literature, the impact of deterrence variables - severity, certainty and celerity - on the intention of individuals to commit crimes;
b) Measure, according to the scientific literature, the impact of the past trajectory of punishment of individuals in their intention to commit crimes;
c) To identify, according to the scientific literature, the impact of variables related to deterrence on the intention of individuals to commit crimes;
d) Identify, in the scientific literature on criminal deterrence, little explored variables;
e) Develop and test, based on the scientific literature and the gaps found, a data collection instrument to measure the future intention of prisoners to reoffend.

Methodology

Regarding the methodology, it is a bibliographic and documentary research with an empirical component referring to the elaboration of a questionnaire based on international scientific production, composed by the "Brief Self-Control Scale" (BSCS), which contains 13 items, the "Social Desirability Scale" taken from the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire-Revised short form (EPQ-RS; Eysenck & Eysenck, 1998), which contains 12 items and 54 more questions related to the other variables chosen to be studied by the research and which were taken and adapted from several international scientific articles.

It is noteworthy that the prepared inquiry was duly tested and approved by 15 prisoners from the Paços de Ferreira Prison, on April 19 and 20, 2021. This instrument of data collection can be used and subsidize future investigations.

Conclusion

Subsequent to the development of the state of the art, it was found that most studies on criminal deterrence carried out to date, little or nothing explored the variable of emotional fear of being apprehended and that, only in recent years, this element began to be considered by the scientific literature as an important factor to be analyzed and measured, has been the investigation of Roche, Wilson & Pickett (2020), entitled as Perceived Control, Severity, Certainty, and Emotional Fear - Testing an Expanded Model of Deterrence, one of pioneers on the subject at hand.

This study, as the one mentioned above, stands out from the wide range of research on the topic of deterrence by including in the list of factors to be studied in a correlational way to the intention of committing crimes, the "emotional fear of being apprehended". This research also highlights other issues that scholars in the field have completely or largely ignored, such as criminal offenses and economic crime.

To finalize, this work recommends that new researches should be carried out, theoretical and empirical, covering the factors little addressed by the academy (although relevant), as well as suggesting the questionnaire elaborated as a contribution to the development of new studies in the field of criminal deterrence.

References


