International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)
E-ISSN: 2582-2160 ● Website: www.ijfmr.com ● Email: editor@ijfmr.com

From Captivity to Community: Experiences of Former Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL)

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of former Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) as they navigate the complex transition from incarceration to community reintegration. This answers to their problems regarding their experiences, how they cope with challenges, and their aspiration in improving their lives. The study utilized phenomenological research design involving ten informants subjected to in-depth interviews using purposive sampling method and conducted in the locality of Ormoc City. A validated interview guide was also used during the study. Eventually, the data gathered were treated through Interpretative Phenomenological Approach (IPA) and created eight themes that best represent the lived experiences, coping with the challenges and aspiration to improve their lives: The Seeker of New Beginning, Bridges Beyond the Bars, The Pains of Imprisonment, Impact of Isolation, The Scaffolding of Reintegration, Reclaiming Identity Through Faith, Legacy and Giving Back and View of the Next Chapter. By the first theme answers their life after they found a new hope, second theme acknowledged the help of the agency in providing support, the third theme shows the hardship they had while being imprison, fourth theme conveys the effect of solitude, fifth theme recognize the efforts of the facilities in rehabilitating them, sixth theme describe the ways the programs and having faith help them face adversaries, seventh theme expresses their desire to repay the things they received to others. and lastly the eight theme presents the motivation they have to create a better life. Persons Deprived of Liberty must take steps to change so that those programs can easily benefit them. Families of those deprived of liberty are encouraged to express support, compassion and understanding during the rehabilitation process. The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology plays a significant role in reform, implementation, guidance and direction. Furthermore, collaboration with other essential agencies and communities that provides regulations that contributes to the creation of a safer community for them.

Keywords: Persons Deprived of Liberty, Therapeutic Community, Rehabilitation, Reintegration

INTRODUCTION

Prisons aimed to cure criminals of crime; however, their record has not been encouraging. Prisons produce more harm than good. The pains of prison confinement affect all PDLs differently. In some PDLs, the significant cause of depression would include the loss of communications with family and friends outside the prison. There is also the fear of deterioration — the lack of personal choice within the prison environment which may affect PDLs. After many years of being told on what to do, they may well lose the ability to think for themselves and make their own decisions and choices freely (Tomar, 2013).

In the Philippines, just like in other countries, the welfare of the PDLs becomes a primordial concern. The BUCOR was created as an agency under the Department of Justice that is charged with the custody and rehabilitation of national offenders. Safekeeping and instituting reformation programs for national inmates sentenced to more than three years become the main mandate of the BUCOR. The study of Narag and Jones (2016) asserted that the propensity to use PDL leaders is a critical issue that concerns the Department of Justice (DOJ), which supervises the BuCor. The PDLs had been used to managing other inmates, which translated into PDLs usurping their power, challenging prison authorities, and creating power dynamics that contradicted the goals of reformation. In some prisons, abuse was systemic, prompting victimized inmates to seek redress from the courts by challenging the conditions of their confinement.

Understanding the unique perspectives, needs, and challenges faced by former PDLs through research can shed light on the gaps and barriers in the current rehabilitation programs and support systems. This research can provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of existing interventions, identify areas for improvement, and inform the development of more holistic and person-centered approaches to rehabilitation and reintegration. This research can help develop evidence-based policies, programs, and support networks to promote successful reintegration, reduce rates of recidivism, and allow individuals to start over and make beneficial improvements to their communities by looking into the lived experiences of former PDLs.

In Ormoc city, a total of 221 men and women which considered "low risk drug users" who gave themselves up to the police when President Rodrigo Duterte sat in power last July 2016, had "graduated" on September 25 from the Convalescent and Development Services Community-Based Rehabilitation Program of the Ormoc City government. Mayor Richard Gomez, together with other city officials, welcomed the "graduates" back to the mainstream society, saying they have been given a chance to turn a new leaf, and should not waste it. He told the families of the drug rehab "grads" who were present in the ceremony that they should not waste their love and support given as they went through the tricky process of renewing their lives in the society. Gomez, a known anti-drug advocate and one of the few mayors who supported Duterte in the 2016 elections, said that his administration would support the rehabilitated drug users to get the chance to better their lives.

After Duterte became president, the Ormoc City government recorded 1,338 surrenderers, later classified as follows: Three as "morbid," 64 as "high risk," 485 as "medium risk," and 786 as "low risk." Of the 786 "low risk" drug users, 436 were "enrolled" in the community-based rehabilitation program., but only 221 finished the entire course, with one who dropped out. The city's rehabilitation program was done in collaboration with various government agencies, and the private sector, particularly the Brotherhood of Christian Businessmen and Professionals (BCBP) who took care of the spiritual healing of the drug users. They were also given certificates of rehab completion and Bibles from the organization. (FREEMAN, 2017)

This study has its legal basis on Republic Act No. 10575, also known as The Bureau of Correction Act of 2013. In which an act strengthening the Bureau of Correction and providing funds therefor. provide for the modernization, professionalization and restructuring of the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) by upgrading its facilities, increasing the number of its personnel, upgrading the level of qualifications of their personnel and standardizing their base pay, retirement and other benefits, making it at par with that of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP). It is hereby adopted and promulgated with the intention of formulating and enforcing the appropriate rules and regulations so that the correctional

services may be improved, as it is the policy of the State to promote the general welfare of every prisoner and to safeguard the basic rights of every prisoner who is incarcerated in our national penitentiary. It also acknowledges that it is the state's role to enhance the government's capabilities in order to institutionalize correctional services that are both highly competent and highly efficient. (Philippines Official Gazette, 2016)

This Act provides a modern framework for the administration of the country's correctional system, emphasizing rehabilitation, reformation, and reintegration of PDLs into society. Anchoring research on rehabilitation programs that guide the development and implementation of these programs. It provides a framework for identifying best practices, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing the rehabilitation and reintegration of PDLs in the Philippines.

To be able to evaluate the effectiveness of present programs, enhance rehabilitation program design, facilitate successful reintegration, combat stigma, and inform policy and practice, research on the lived experiences of former PDL on rehabilitation programs is vital. Therefore, the researcher believes that, it is crucial to study the lived experiences of these former PDLs to better understand their situations and challenges they faced during the span of their rehabilitation. In which may aid in creating programs and policies to support the rehabilitation and reintegration of people who have experienced deprivation of liberty.

As a criminologist and a researcher of the study, It believes that it is crucial to study the lived experiences of former PDLs to better understand the challenges they faced during the rehabilitation and advocate a more equitable and humane approaches for a betterment reintegration.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on the Reintegrative Shaming theory by John Braithwaite (1989), and supported by the Transformative Learning theory by Jack Mezirow (1990), and the Social Identity theory by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979). In the review of literature, the laws within the country which governs the implementation of rehabilitation programs are used as the legal basis.

According to Braithwaite's (1989) reintegrative shaming theory, successful reintegration involves the rebuilding of social bonds and the restoration of positive relationships between the individual and various social institutions. This process requires a shift in the individual's self-identity, motivations, and social connections, leading to a commitment to a law-abiding lifestyle. By emphasizing the importance of social integration, restorative justice, and the rebuilding of relationships, this theory offers insights into the processes and principles that facilitate successful reintegration. By applying this theory to the research topic, the study aims to contribute to evidence-based practices and policies that support the successful reintegration of individuals involved in the criminal justice system.

John Braithwaite's reintegrative shaming theory provides a valuable theoretical framework for understanding the experiences of former persons deprived of liberty (PDL) in rehabilitation programs and their journey towards successful reintegration into society. This theory emphasizes the importance of social integration, the restoration of relationships, and the principles of restorative justice in facilitating the reintegration process. According to the theory, there are two types of shaming: disintegrative shaming and reintegrative shaming. Disintegrative shaming involves labeling individuals as criminals and stigmatizing them, leading to their social exclusion and marginalization. This type of shaming can be counterproductive as it often pushes individuals further into criminal behavior and alienates them from society. In contrast, it aims to address the behavior while maintaining the

individual's dignity and potential for change. It emphasizes the importance of social bonds, forgiveness, and the restoration of relationships between the offender and the community. Also focuses on the recognition of wrongdoing, the expression of disapproval, but also the offer of support, opportunities for redemption, and the possibility of successful reintegration.

The Reintegrative Shaming Theory by John Braithwaite provides a valuable framework for understanding the role of shame, social bonds, and the criminal justice system in promoting reintegration and reducing recidivism. By emphasizing the importance of restoring relationships, offering support, and maintaining individuals' dignity, the theory offers insights into how societies can approach crime in a more constructive and transformative way. Continued research and practical applications of the theory can contribute to the development of more effective and humane approaches to criminal justice and rehabilitation.

Braithwaite argues that communication of disapproval can be reintegrative in nature, and furthermore that communication of reintegrative shaming is essential to reducing crime. He observes that there are many occasions and social contexts in which disapproval of behavior occurs while preserving the identity of the offender as essentially good. One of the primary contexts in which this can be observed is in family life and the disciplining of children, where research shows that an authoritative, rather than permissive or authoritarian, approach is most effective.

Reintegrative Shaming theory, which examines the difference between stigmatization of the individual and reintegrative shaming, or encouragement to stop the behavior without labeling and stigmatizing the individual in society. This theory posits that reintegrative shaming will reduce crime, unlike stigmatization, which, according to labeling theory, essentially increases it by encouraging future deviance.

Reintegrative shaming involves the following: disapproval while sustaining a relationship of respect, ceremonies to certify deviance terminated by ceremonies to decertify deviance, disapproval of the evil of the deed without labeling the person as evil, and not allowing deviance to become a master status trait. Stigmatization involves disrespectful disapproval, humiliation; ceremonies to certify deviance not terminated by ceremonies to decertify deviance; labeling the person, not only the deed, as evil; and allowing deviance to become a master status trait. The distinction that reintegrative shaming theory makes between stigmatization and reintegration suggests three hypotheses about the relationship between shaming and crime. These can be summarized as (1) tolerance (an absence of social disapproval) will increase offending, (2) stigmatizing shaming will increase offending, and (3) reintegrative shaming will decrease offending.

This study was supported by Transformative Learning theory (Mezirow, 1990) rests on the assumption that we are meaning making beings. Learning is a process of utilizing prior interpretations to construe new or revised interpretations of the meanings of one's experiences and using this as a guide to action.

Transformative learning is the process of effecting change in a frame of reference. Adults have acquired a coherent body of experience, associations, concepts, values, feelings, conditioned responses, frames of reference that define their life world.

Frames of reference are the structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences. They selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings. They set our "line of action." Once set, we automatically move from one specific activity (mental or behavioral) to another. We have a strong tendency to reject ideas that fail to fit our preconceptions, labeling those ideas as unworthy of consideration, aberrations, nonsense, irrelevant, weird, or mistaken. When circumstances

permit, transformative learners move toward a frame of reference that is more inclusive, discriminating, self-reflective, and integrative of experience. A frame of reference encompasses cognitive, conative, and emotional components, and is composed of two dimensions: habits of mind and a point of view. Habits of mind are broad, abstract, orienting, habitual ways of thinking, feeling and acting influenced by assumptions that constitute a set of codes. These codes may be cultural, social, educational, economic, political, or psychological.

Habits of mind become articulated in a specific point of view, the constellation of belief, value judgment, attitude, and feeling that shapes a particular interpretation. An example of a habit of mind is ethnocentrism, the predisposition to regard others outside one's own group as inferior. A resulting point of view is the complex of feelings, beliefs, judgments, and attitudes we have regarding specific individuals or groups (for example, homosexuals, welfare recipients, people of color, or women). Frames of reference are primarily the result of cultural assimilation and the idiosyncratic influences of primary caregivers. Habits of mind are more durable than points of view.

Points of view are subject to continuing change as we reflect on either the content or process by which we solve problems and identify the need to modify assumptions. This happens whenever we try to understand actions that do not work the way we anticipated. We can try out another person's point of view and appropriate it, but we cannot do this with a habit of mind. Points of view are more accessible to awareness and to feedback from others.

Another theory supported this study was Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) individuals strive to maintain a positive social identity by seeking to enhance their self-esteem through positive intergroup comparisons. This can lead to in-group favoritism and the tendency to stigmatize and devalue out-group members. Social Identity Theory suggests that individuals derive a significant part of their self-concept and identity from their membership in social groups. It emphasizes the role of social categorization, social identification, and social comparison in shaping individuals' behavior and attitudes.

By fostering a sense of belonging, acceptance, and positive social identification, reintegrative shaming aims to reduce the stigmatization and marginalization of former persons deprived of liberty (PDLs). It recognizes the importance of addressing the negative social identities associated with criminal behavior and facilitating the development of positive social identities that promote reintegration and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

Within its theory, individuals derive a sense of self-esteem and social identity from the groups to which they belong. The theory suggests that people have a natural tendency to categorize themselves and others into groups, and they strive to achieve a positive social identity by enhancing the status and reputation of their own group. The theory identifies three key processes that contribute to the formation and maintenance of social identity: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. Social categorization involves the classification of oneself and others into distinct social groups based on shared characteristics, such as nationality, gender, or religion. Social identification refers to the individual's emotional attachment and identification with a particular group, leading to the incorporation of group values, norms, and beliefs into their own self-concept. Social comparison involves the process of evaluating one's own group positively in relation to other groups, in order to enhance self-esteem and social identity.

It also highlights the concept of in-group favoritism, which refers to the tendency for individuals to show preferential treatment and positive attitudes towards members of their own group, while displaying

prejudice or negative attitudes towards members of out-groups. This bias towards the in-group serves to strengthen social identity and maintain a positive self-concept. The theory has significant implications for understanding intergroup relations, stereotypes, and discrimination. It suggests that intergroup conflict and prejudice arise when individuals perceive their own group as being threatened or perceive other groups as being superior. This can lead to the development of negative stereotypes, discrimination, and even intergroup violence.

Social Identity Theory has been widely studied and applied in various domains, including organizational psychology, social psychology, and intergroup relations. It has been used to explain phenomena such as group formation, leadership, intergroup conflict, and the impact of social categorization on individual behavior. In summary, Social Identity Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how individuals develop and maintain their sense of identity within social groups. By examining the processes of social categorization, social identification, and social comparison, the theory offers insights into intergroup behavior, stereotypes, and prejudice. Continued research and application of the theory can contribute to a deeper understanding of intergroup relations and inform interventions aimed at reducing intergroup conflict and promoting social cohesion.

This study has its legal anchored on Republic Act No. 10575, popularly known as the Bureau of Corrections Act of 2013, which changes the life and part of a Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) by shifting the focus of the system from punishment to rehabilitation. Republic Act No. 10575 is created into specific sections that define the mandates, operations, and standards for the treatment of Persons Deprived of Liberty. The Bureau of Corrections Act of 2013 defined it's policy of the State to promote the general welfare and safeguard the basic rights of every prisoner incarcerated in our national penitentiary. It also recognizes the responsibility of the State to strengthen government capability aimed towards the institutionalization of highly efficient and competent correctional services. the State shall provide for the modernization, professionalization and restructuring of the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) by upgrading its facilities, increasing the number of its personnel, upgrading the level of qualifications of their personnel and standardizing their base pay, retirement and other benefits, making it at par with that of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

Moreover, the Republic Act No. 10575, Section 3, and 4, defined the responsibility of the system in safekeeping and reformation. Ensuring the public that national inmates are provided with their basic needs, completely incapacitated from further committing criminal acts, and have been totally cut off from their criminal networks while serving sentence inside the premises of the national penitentiary. Also ensures that released national inmates are no longer harmful to the community by becoming reformed individuals prepared to live a normal and productive life upon reintegration to the mainstream society. The Republic Act No. 10575, Section 5, defines the classification of every PDL based on the security risk and sentence, and evaluation of the PDL's skills or talents, physical, spiritual, social, mental, psychological and other behavioral assessments in the preparation of the personalized plan. Shall be also responsible for pre-release and post-release programs which helps them in transition by referring to companies or corporation for job placement based on the skills they learned inside. The Republic Act No. 10575, Section 10, mandates to maintain the ratio of custodial personnel and reformation personnel to ensure that they have an adequate access to the professionals needed for their rehabilitation. (Philippine Laws, Statutes & Codes, n.d).

Another law that collerates to the study was Republic Act No. 10592 which amended several provisions in the Revised Penal Code. Its primary goal was to promote rehabilitation and decongest jails by

increasing the incentives that persons deprived of liberty can earn for good behavior. By shifting the focus of punishment from imprisonment to reformation promoting restorative justice.

Another law that collerates to the study was Republic Act. No. 10707 which amended the Probation Law of 1976, which the primary goal was to make the justice system more restorative by expanding the qualification for probation and its legal consequences. Changing the system, by prioritizing programs focus on rehabilitation over incarceration and empowers the Parole and Probation Administration to supervise Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) through the reformation program, enabling to change much better.

Another law that collerates to the study was Republic Act. No. 10389, which institutionalizes recognizance as a mode for the release of indigent persons in custody who are unable to post bail. Whereas it promotes restorative justice and helps decongest facilities by allowing those who pose low risk to be release under the custody of a qualified member of the community.

Another law that collerates to the study was Republic Act. No. 11928 which establish a separate facility for persons deprived of liberty (PDL) convicted of heinous crimes. This reflects the governments facility to segregate inmates and their rehabilitation requirements to improve security and optimize management.

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules) emphasize in Rule 92 that all appropriate means shall be used to address the individual needs of each prisoner. These means include religious care, education, vocational guidance and training, social casework, employment counseling, physical development, and strengthening of moral character.

Meanwhile our 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article III, Bill of Rights, Section 1 states that, No person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of law, nor shall any person be denied the equal protection of the laws.

According to the study of Jasni MA et al. (2024) coping skills involve the utilization of both personal and environmental resources to manage stress. Essentially, these strategies encompass cognitive and behavioural responses that enable individuals to deliberately draw on their competencies as well as external supports to mitigate conflict and enhance psychological well-being.

According to De Vera et al. (2022), the success of rehabilitation programs in prisons hinges on how well they're implemented. Programs that effectively address inmates' needs lead to higher satisfaction among participants. This makes perfect sense, as people are more likely to feel positive about services that truly meet their requirements. Additionally, prison life is vastly different from everyday life outside. New inmates must learn to adapt to this environment by interacting with other prisoners and following strict rules. Therefore, rehabilitation programs should go beyond prison walls and equip inmates with the skills and knowledge they need to reintegrate successfully back into society upon release.

This corroborates to the study of Gales et al. (2023) categorized his findings into four key areas includes: connection, self-reflection, difficulties and challenges, and adapting for survival. Connection is a strong connection with individuals from outside the jail like family, friends, loved ones and it strengthens the PDLs' sense of self during incarceration. Visitation is particularly important, as it relieves stress and brings happiness. Self-Reflection meaning the incarceration can lead PDLs to reflect on their lives and past mistakes. This can motivate them to turn towards prayer and religious practices. Difficulties and challenges refer to PDLs experience physical and emotional struggles, which can lead to depression. Adapting for survival refers to the peace experience and positive change, PDLs must follow jail rules and maintain respectful relationships with other inmates.

Guitering et al. (2013) found that prisoners face several challenges, including lack of contact with the outside world, family issues, and loneliness. The study also identified how prisoners cope with these challenges, including through religion, participation in activities, and building social connections. Despite some negative influences from other inmates, prisoners can find ways to adjust by accepting their situation, building relationships with others, and participating in programs offered by the correctional facility.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study explored the lived experiences of former Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) in rehabilitation program in Ormoc City, Leyte, Philippines.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions.

1. What are the experiences of the informants in the rehabilitation program?
2. How do the informants cope with the challenges encountered during their rehabilitation?
3. What are the aspirations of the informants to improve their lives within the implementation of the rehabilitation program?

METHODS

Research Design

A qualitative research design was utilized to understand the lived experiences of persons deprived of liberty on the rehabilitation programs. This approach allowed a detailed examination of their perspectives, motivations, and behaviors to gain a comprehensive understanding of their lived experiences during the rehabilitation program.

This research utilized a qualitative approach, specifically employing phenomenological research design. Phenomenology aimed to explore and described the lived experiences of individuals in a particular phenomenon. In this case, it will focus on the experiences of former PDL in rehabilitation programs.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring a diverse range of individuals who have completed rehabilitation programs. In-depth interviews were conducted with the participants to gather rich and detailed information about their experiences. The interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis.

Research Environment and Informants

This study was conducted within the jurisdiction of Ormoc City, Province of Leyte, focusing specifically on those imprisoned in the Ormoc City Jail Ormoc as its research environment. Which the facility operates under the direct supervision of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) and serves as a detention facility housing Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). The respondents were chosen based on the basis that they intertwine with the focal point of the research proper which that have a former persons deprived of liberty in the facility through observation of different occurrences in the respective area.

The informants of this study are ten (10) former Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) who have a sentence of at least one (1) year of imprisonment, completed the rehabilitation program, and participated in the aftercare program, were chosen to be part of this research. The selection of the sample is based on their firsthand experiences prior and subsequent on the rehabilitation program. All ten (10) informants were from the same institution and participated in individual, in-depth interviews to share their qualitative perspective on rehabilitation and community reintegration.

Instruments and Procedures

This study utilized a semi-structured interview as the research instrument in data collection. An open-ended interview was used to the execution of the data collection process with the chosen respondents.

The interviews was conducted in the language the informant's easily understand or prefers and will be conducted by the researcher who is proficient in the language. The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility and exploration of new emerging themes. The interview questions were designed to understand their perceptions, and coping strategies related to their experiences during the rehabilitation program. The interview guide was open-ended and divided into three sections. Part 1 discusses the informants' experiences in the rehabilitation program; Part 2 addresses the challenges encountered by the informants' during their rehabilitation; and Part 3 delves into the aspiration of the informants' to improve their lives. Furthermore the interview guide were validated by the panel and subjected to the ethics committee before the conduct of the interview.

The study utilized a qualitative research design, using a phenomenological approach, and used a semi-structured interview as the research instrument for data collection in this case study. The researchers sampled individuals from the City of Ormoc. Afterwards, the research conducted the interview then interpreted the results. Lastly, the researchers organized the research to be finalized and assured.

Data Analysis

The study was interested in learning the participants' psychological world through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Rather than measuring their frequency, the goal was to grasp the depth and complexities of interpretative capacity (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). While seeking to capture and do justice to the participants' meanings in order to learn about their experiences during the rehabilitation program, those meanings were attained through persistent interaction with the text and a process of interpretation.

According to Smith and Shinebourne (2012), the process of IPA involves four stages, which are: (i) looking for the themes in the first case, (ii) connecting the themes, (iii) continuing the analysis with other cases, and (iv) writing up. For the first stage, the transcripts were reviewed several times, with the left-hand margin utilized for comments. The text was separated into meaning units, each unit was commented on, and the emergent themes were listed on paper. Second, the researcher identified the links and connections between them. The emergent themes were ordered or arranged chronologically based on the sequence they came up with in the transcript. For the third stage, a table of themes for the first participant was developed, analysed, and incorporated into the transcript for the second and other participants. The researcher used the themes from the first case to help orient the subsequent analysis. The themes were not chosen solely based on their prevalence within the data. The fourth stage involves transitioning from the final themes to a write-up of final statements summarizing the meanings inherent in the participants' experiences, which are presented in the subsequent discussion. The analysis involving all four stages was reviewed by the experts who validated the interview protocol. The experts' reviews and the good number of participants have helped to ensure that data collected were rich, thick, credible and auditable.

Ethical Considerations and Trustworthiness

When performing research, ethical considerations are necessary, especially when dealing with sensitive topics likely the experiences of these former persons deprived of liberty (PDL) in the rehabilitation program. assuring that participant autonomy, privacy, anonymity, and informed consent are observed; furthermore any ethical queries or concerns brought up during the research process should be addressed

quickly and openly. The researcher must make sure that the study is carried out ethically, respects participant rights and well-being, and adds to the body of knowledge while maintaining standards by following these ethical principles.

Beneficence. The research study will promote the well-being of former Persons deprived of Liberty (PDL) participating in the study. The rehabilitation programs utilize aims to address the needs and support their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. Efforts have been made to ensure that the research process itself is beneficial, including providing access to support services and utilizing findings to advocate for improved programming tailored to the needs of PDLs.

Non-maleficence. Throughout the study, steps have been taken to minimize harm to the informants and their participation was voluntary. Informed consent form was given and explained the purpose of the study, potential risk and rights and the ability to withdraw without consequences. Confidentiality and privacy have been safeguarded through anonymity, and measures are in place to address any discomfort or adverse effects arising from discussing sensitive topics related were approach with empathy to incarceration experiences, with emotional support available if necessary.

Justice. The research promotes fairness and equity to former PDLs by considering their unique challenges and needs. Equal opportunities for participation have been provided and selection was based on the informed consent given. Data analysis was mindful of systemic inequalities within and aims to promote the former Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) the rights and needs of the informants based on their experiences.

Autonomy. The informant's autonomy is respected throughout the research process. Informed consent form provides clear and concise to the informants to make voluntary and informed decisions about their involvement. Informants are provided opportunities to share their experiences in their own words, and their preferences and concerns are taken into account in the research findings was actively sought to ensure authenticity and accuracy of information.

Trustworthiness of Research

The trustworthiness of this qualitative study centers on having reliable and valid data manifested by the research findings. The trustworthiness of research studies is ensured when the findings and results gathered possess the elements of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability.

Credibility. The results and findings of this study were reliable and valid since the ones who provided data were those informants who have direct experiences on the rehabilitation program. The study is trustworthy for it was conducted credibly and involved the personal accounts and experiences of the key informants. The credibility of the study was contained in the transcribed responses of the informants obtained through interviews that provided significant ideas about the problem. These findings were interpreted by the researcher free from any element of bias.

Transferability. Transferability refers to the extent to which the findings of a study can be generalized or transferred to other settings or populations. In the case of the lived experiences of former persons deprived of liberty on the rehabilitation in Ormoc city, the transferability of the research findings can be evaluated based on various factors. Therefore, while there are limitations to the transferability of this research, it is possible for some aspects of the study to be transferred to other populations or settings. Future research should take into account these factors when evaluating transferability.

Dependability. Dependability is an important aspect of any research study as it ensures that the findings are consistent and reliable. Firstly, the research was conducted using a rigorous and systematic approach. The researcher also used a standardized set of questions and prompts to ensure consistency across all

data collection sessions. This helped to reduce the chances of bias or errors in data collection. Secondly, the researcher used a peer review process to ensure that the findings were accurate and reliable. The research team included experts in the field which helped to identify any potential flaws or biases in the study and ensured that the findings were based on sound scientific principles. Finally, the researcher took steps to ensure that the findings were transferable to other contexts. Provided detailed descriptions of the research setting, sampling methods, and data collection procedures so that other researchers could replicate the study in other settings. This helped to increase the generalizability of the findings and ensured that they were not limited to a specific context.

Confirmability. Confirmability is an essential aspect of any research study as it ensures the credibility and dependability of the findings. Firstly, the researcher used a reflexive journal to document their thoughts, biases, and assumptions throughout the research process. This journal helped in identifying and addressing any potential sources of bias that could affect the findings. Additionally, the researcher employed member checking, which involved presenting the findings to participants to verify their accuracy and ensure that their perspectives were adequately represented. Furthermore, an external auditor reviewed the research process and findings to ensure that they were consistent with the data collected. The auditor also examined the research design, methodology, and analysis to identify any inconsistencies or errors that could affect the results. Lastly, the researcher maintained a detailed audit trail that documented every step of the research process. This trail included all data collected, analysis conducted, and decisions made during the study. The audit trail provided a transparent account of the research process that could be reviewed by other researchers or auditors. In conclusion, confirmability was achieved in this research study through various means such as reflexive journaling, member checking, external auditing, and maintaining an audit trail. These measures ensured that the findings were credible, dependable, and consistent with the data collected.

Bracketing. Throughout this study, setting aside personal opinion and assumption to ensure the finding is accurate and prone from biases and it is a product from a pure experience of the former Persons' Deprived of Liberty (PDL). Bracketing helps in maintaining the integrity of the researcher. It ensured that the findings are a true reflection of the informants' experiences, free from the researcher's influence.

Reflexivity. Maintaining reflexivity throughout the research process, by continually reflecting on and acknowledging the researcher's positionality and its potential impact on the study, can further enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. They acknowledged their background, experiences, and values, and how they might influence their interpretation of the results. Regular interactions will help to sustain reflexivity by allowing the researcher to openly exchange their thoughts and comments on the research process. This self-reflective method promotes transparency and enables a more nuanced assessment of the informant's experiences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The qualitative analysis yielded eight primary emergent themes categorized across the three main research questions.

Experiences of Informants in the Rehabilitation Program

A. Positive Experiences

Theme 1: The Seeker of New Beginning

This theme describes the positive changes in life of the informants during their rehabilitation. Those who

seek a new beginning must start first, only by then can they find what they're looking for. While we cannot erase the past we can still create a better future, as the informants find hope and purpose through seeking redemption which rewards them to a life of new chapter. Informants described undergoing profound spiritual renewal and finding new purpose during confinement. They noted that embracing spiritual programs allowed them to shift away from wrongful mindsets and experience emotional relief, framing imprisonment not as a dead end, but as a turning point toward personal redemption. This supports Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1990), where critical reflection on past choices prompts a frame-of-reference shift.

Theme 2: Bridges Beyond the Bars

This theme describes the aid of the programs offered by the institution in terms of helping them through rehabilitation. Informants found the programs offered during their rehabilitation even though limited, were very helpful in terms of rehabilitating one's self. By building connections, it eases the rehabilitation of the informants and helps them create a better life. This theme captures the beneficial impact of structured institutional interventions, particularly the Therapeutic Community (TC) modality and religious/faith-based activities. Informants highlighted that group sharing sessions fostered mutual empathy, reduced interpersonal conflicts, and built social networks.

B. Negative Experiences

Theme 3: The Pains of Imprisonment

This theme describes the situations and everyday scenarios they experience during their rehabilitation. They shared their negative experiences, the absence of fundamental resources and needs, which for them are vital support to their rehabilitation. Informants recounted severe material deprivation during confinement, including shortages of basic hygiene supplies, repetitive meal rations, and overcrowded living conditions. Furthermore, internal temptations and occasional collective disciplinary actions aggravate emotional stress. These findings reflect General Strain Theory (Agnew, 1992), wherein resource blockage and negative environmental stimuli induce psychological strain.

Theme 4: Impact of Isolation

This theme describes the separation and loneliness they experienced, as they count the time goes by, for the visits they ought, and ponder circumstances the informant's family may have. Separation from family members and the uncertainty regarding loved ones' welfare caused significant anxiety and loneliness. Severe visitation restrictions particularly during crisis periods like the COVID-19 pandemic, disrupted critical social support bonds, mirroring Social Bond Theory (Hirschi, 1969).

Coping Strategies in Addressing Operational Challenges

Theme 5: The Scaffolding of Reintegration

This theme describes the ways of the programs offered by the institution, supports the informants in terms of rehabilitation providing the needs to rebuild themselves and coped the challenges they have during their rehabilitation. Institutional programs served as structural scaffolding that guided inmates through daily adversity. Spiritual guidance, vocational workshops, and BJMP personnel encouragement provided essential external support, enabling inmates to develop emotional stability and adaptive coping skills.

Theme 6: Reclaiming Identity Through Faith

This theme describes the capacity of the informant to handle any situation or problem they faced during rehabilitation. When the identity built was suddenly lost due to circumstances or issues they have, by having faith they confront those challenges and stand again. As their resilience and fortitude develop

through time, they overcome those challenges and move forward. To overcome solitude, anger, and drug relapse triggers, informants relied heavily on personal faith, regular bible study, and prayer. Reclaiming a positive spiritual identity provided psychological resilience, aiding them in emotional regulation and personal transformation.

Aspirations to Improve Performance and Rebuild Life

Theme 7: Legacy and Giving Back

This theme describes the informants desire to connect to individuals specifically those who shared the same situation or experiences as them. Rather than being free, they served and helped others in the process of changing their lives. An impression left and a promise kept to help others facing the same challenges, as they experience same problems before. A predominant aspiration among former PDLs was returning to correctional facilities as volunteers. Informants expressed a strong desire to mentor current inmates, share their redemption stories, provide practical assistance and support for others.

Theme 8: View of the Next Chapter

This theme describes the informants' aspiration to continue on moving on. Either those things came from their purpose to help their family or to pay back things that also happened to them by giving hope to others. Informants expressed their future goals centered on simple, meaningful milestones such as maintaining steady, legitimate employment, restoring family relationships, and guiding their children away from delinquent paths. Their narratives reflect the desistance process, wherein identity shifts toward long-term cooperative social living.

CONCLUSION

The journey from captivity to community among Former Persons Deprived of Liberty is a complex process shaped by institutional challenges, adaptive coping strategies, and personal determination. While institutional confinement presents significant physical and emotional strains, structured therapeutic programs, spiritual renewal, and active family or community support serve as essential catalysts for long-term desistance and successful reintegration. Former PDLs navigates a complex journey balancing institutional challenges with personal transformation. Achieving sustainable community reintegration relies not solely on institutional custody, but on a balanced combination of personal resilience, structured therapeutic support, family acceptance, and active community engagement.

The researcher was able to formulate eight (8) themes out of the gathered data that best represent the lived experience, coping with the challenges and aspiration to improve their lives. The researcher came up with these themes after carefully analyzing one hundred fifty-six (156) significant statements and formulates the same number of core meaning which was regroup from eleven (11) clustered themes.

The following are the emergent themes, to wit:

For the positive experiences of the informant, two (2) themes created namely: *The Seeker of New Beginning*, and *Bridges Beyond the Bars*.

For the negative experiences of the informant, two (2) themes created namely: *Pains of Imprisonment*, and *Impact of Isolation*.

For the ways the informants cope with the challenges, two (2) themes created namely: *The Scaffolding of Reintegration*, and *Reclaiming Identity Through Faith*.

For the aspiration to improve the informant's life, two (2) themes created namely: *Legacy and Giving Back*, and *View of the Next Chapter*.

Through the findings of this study, the researcher was able to come up with relevant recommendations and suggestions that could be applied to present practice and future studies.

The findings of this study are significant to former and current Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL), the family of the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL), key institutions and communities.

To Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL), they should be encouraged to participate in joining programs and shift from passive compliance to active participation. Whether they choose a vocational or spiritual path they should take possession of the new life they have and select a way that aligns their personal interest rather than just completing a mandatory requirement.

The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) as an organization focus on changing lives, building a better nation should develop and transition from being a facility who isolate to being a facility focus much on reintegration and connecting the jail and the community.

The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) should create policies and standards which share data and responsibility for the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) smooth transition to the community ensuring that it won't revert back to its previous wrongdoings and it must provide support to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) and other agencies.

The Local Government Units (LGUs) should establish a local ordinance that provides employment and opportunity to the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) and provide programs which PDLs can actively participate and engage with.

To the community to practice radical acceptance and create an environment where the PDLs can fulfill their amends, families, friends, and neighbors serves as the primary support to prevent the emotion distress the PDL may feel.

Future researchers plays an important role in furtherance of conducting a study to fill in the gap that is not covered in the study.

Through this study, the researcher was able to discover the lived experiences of former Persons Deprived of Liberty in the course of their rehabilitation. The negative experiences during rehabilitation and how they coped those challenges. As revealed throughout the study, it is observed the lack of allotted programs and facilities, likewise workshops and livelihood, whereas it doesn't just create job opportunity rather it also gives them a leeway to spend time while inside. Increase of personnel involved in the therapeutic community to supervise their rehabilitation progress to reintegration. Additional support given by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) to increase manpower to uphold the ratio, and maintain facilities used by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL). Moreover, it is a great perspective to the PDLs if the society easily accepts them without a single hint of doubt, for a change of life as a new individual without judgment doesn't easily come by.

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