



I AM NEW (NEW BEGINNING, EVOLVEMENT OF PROGRAM, WELCOMING): PHENOMENOLOGY OF DRUG SURRENDEREES TO THE REINTEGRATION PROGRAM OF THE DANGEROUS DRUG BOARD AND THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT: *The main objective of this study is to investigate the phenomenology of the reintegration programs initiated for the drug surrenderers. This study employed a qualitative approach utilizing the phenomenological method of inquiry to investigate the reintegration program of drug surrenderers in Penablanca, Cagayan. The research involved a total of seven (7) drug surrenderers from Peñablanca who served as respondents. A self-structured interview questionnaire consisting of detailed open-ended questions was utilized to capture the personal narratives of the drug surrenderers' experiences. The gathered information was then subjected to thematic analysis, a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and extracting insights into patterns of meaning or themes within the dataset. The findings of the phenomenological study revealed that individuals who surrendered to drug addiction and were interviewed expressed a strong desire for a "New Beginning," which indicates a positive outlook towards life. The concept of New Beginnings offers these individuals the opportunity to make their own decisions and regain a sense of self-worth. It provides a positive feedback and perspective for those who are willing to enhance themselves and enthusiastically embrace new beginnings through their past traumatic experiences as a means to start anew with positive intentions. The results of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of the*



experiences and aspirations of drug surrenderees in Penablanca, Cagayan. By analyzing their personal narratives, this research sheds light on the significance of reintegration programs that facilitate personal growth, self-empowerment, and the rebuilding of lives. The insights gained from the study offer valuable information for the development of effective interventions and support systems aimed at helping individuals overcome drug addiction and successfully reintegrate into society.

Keywords: *drug, surrenderees, reintegration program, evolvment program, phenomenology*

INTRODUCTION

This study centers on the phenomenology of the reintegration program for drug surrenderees in Penablanca, Cagayan. This research was undertaken to address the researchers' curiosity. The objective of the research is to evaluate the initiatives of DDB-DSWD in Penablanca, Cagayan that are geared towards providing assistance to individuals who have surrendered. The researchers aim to investigate the drug surrenderees' experiences regarding the implementation of the DDB-DSWD program. What are the emotions and experiential accounts of individuals participating in the reintegration programs facilitated by DDB-DSWD? Which reintegration program do they prefer and how does the program aid them in the reintegration process? What suggestions can the individuals who have surrendered provide in order to enhance the program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Dangerous Drugs Board?

In accordance with legal statutes, individuals who are apprehended for the act of importing, selling, manufacturing, or utilizing illicit substances and their derivatives may be subject to monetary penalties and incarceration for a minimum of twelve years up to a lifetime, contingent upon the gravity of the offense. Ever since the enactment of the aforementioned legislation, capital punishment has remained a viable sentencing option, representing the most severe penalty authorized by the statute in question. Currently, the issue is irrelevant as the death penalty was eliminated in 2006. The drug campaign of former President Rodrigo Roa Duterte is being guided by this law.

The researchers were motivated to conduct this study to enable the researchers to investigate the reintegration program of the Department of the Interior and Local Government -



Department of Social Welfare and Development in Penablanca, Cagayan. Specifically, the study aimed to examine the implementation of the program and its impact on the lives of drug surrenderees.

In this study, the researchers will assess the reintegration program of drug surrenderees and will propose measures to identify the problems being encountered. The different programs for all the drug surrenderees are a big help for them for they are still trying to figure out things that will help them to be reformed and at the same time to be accepted by the society once again. This is why the researchers are motivated to conduct this research in order to assess the situation and also to address the problems encountered in such municipality.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study assessed the reintegration programs of drug surrenderees in Penablanca, Cagayan. Specially, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How they feel and describe their experiences in the reintegration process
2. How do the respondents describe their experiences in the reintegration programs of DDB-DSWD?
3. What reintegration program they want more and how do the program assist them in the reintegration process?
4. What recommendations can be given by the surrenderees to strengthen the reintegration program of DDB-DSWD

METHODOLOGY

The study is qualitative in nature. It utilized the phenomenological method of qualitative inquiry. It is viewed as the most appropriate method for this study because it allows the embodying lived experience, perception, and feelings of participants about a phenomenon, which, in this case, is the participation and engagement of the drug surrenderees. This method also works well with a small number of participants and a limited amount of time. This research design will help the researchers to establish facts or answers to the why's and how's of the phenomenon in questions.

The respondents of the study are the drug surrenderees found in Penablanca. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling. The purposive sampling technique is used to recruit participants who can provide in-depth and detailed information about the



phenomenon under investigation. This is also to identify the individuals related to the phenomenon of interest that is best suited in helping the researchers. The criteria in this paper were to define the research problems, define its characteristics of the paper, collect the data using the method. In other words, units selected “on purpose” in purposive sampling.

The study employed a self-structured interview questionnaire as the primary data gathering tool. The questionnaire consists of a series of detailed open-ended questions which is divided into four sets and each set is consist of two questions wherein the first question on each set pertains to the own thoughts and experiences of the respondents in connection with the reintegration programs, while the second questions support the answer of the respondents on the first one and also give connection to their answers on the first question. The survey questionnaire is designed to capture the personal narratives of the drug surrendereres' experiences.

The data were interpreted based on the answers of the respondents and analyzed through thematic analysis, which a method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insights into patterns of meaning or themes across a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Moreover, the researchers used a self-structured questionnaire as a tool used to assess the respondents extent of knowledge and experiences on the implementations of reintegration programs. The tool used is to be able to let the respondents freely answer on their own thoughts and experiences without any judgement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 Description of Respondents on Reintegration Program

CODES	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGENT THEME
Welcoming	Reformation	New Beginning
Helping		
Acceptance		
Change		
Hope	Optimism	
Thankful		
Happiness		

By embarking on a new start, human beings are granting themselves the authorization to embrace modifications that may prove advantageous to their well-being. The capacity to



begin anew implies the potential to recognize past shortcomings and leverage those setbacks as exemplars to construct a pathway to success in the future.

The table shows that embarking on a new start allows drug dealers to embrace changes that may benefit their well-being while voluntarily seeking rehabilitation. Recognizing past failures can serve as a guide to success in the future, as it implies the ability to start fresh and learn from past mistakes.

REFORMATION- They are effecting a positive change, particularly through modification of their conduct. The individuals in question exhibit a strong commitment towards effecting a fundamental alteration of their societal structure. Through the reformation, they can be able to change themselves in a positive way that can give them a good change for a lifetime. Reformation will give them the sense of starting a new beginning with less judgement from the society.

OPTIMISM- They are engaging in cognitive processes and visual perception that are beneficial for their well-being. Individuals hold a positive expectation for favorable outcomes and possess a sense of self-efficacy in their capacity to generate positive outcomes for their future.

The individuals who have surrendered themselves for drug-related offenses have successfully undergone a six-month rehabilitation program at the IRC. This achievement renders them eligible for a recommendation to be removed from the drug watch list and that they can now be freely trusted once again by the people and the community as well, for the given reintegration program reformed them to become better on the second chance given and the new beginning. As we are conducting this study, one of the respondents said “*mahirap kase ang mag umpisa ulit kase parang hindi ka tanggap ng mga tao sa paligid mo dahil sa pagkakamali na nagawa mo*” [it's hard to start over because people around you don't seem to accept you because of the mistake you made], this shows that to be able for them to start a new beginning, the community should at least learn to accept them.



Table 2 Experience of the DrugSurrenderdees on the Reintegration Program

CODES	CLUSTER THEME	EMERGENT THEME
Engagement	Open arms	Welcoming
Openness		
Helping	Helping Hands	
Change		

Table 2 shows that communities are likely to welcome drug surrenderdees with warmth and sincerity as they have made a positive choice for society. This indicates that having Community-Based Rehabilitation Program(CBRP) is a rehabilitation approach that aims to heal the body, mind, and soul of surrendered drug personalities through counselling and other therapeutic sessions.

OPEN ARMS- this means that it is open for the drug surrenderdees to be back to community for they are willing to change. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD, 2019) is the primary agency responsible for overseeing the implementation of Pillar 3 of the National Drug Rehabilitation Program(NDRP). Alongside other national government agencies, the DSWD is mandated to offer a diverse array of aftercare services aimed at strengthening the process of transformation and rehabilitation for individuals who have surrendered due to drug-related issues. The aforementioned initiatives encompass skill-building exercises, psychosocial interventions, and additional community-oriented program aimed at fostering engagement in community service among individuals.

HELPING HANDS- one of the nicest things a person can do for another is to lend a helpful hand. It can come from a variety of people and take on a variety of shapes and forms. There are several opportunities for people to give back to their communities and to others. Drug abuse has a detrimental impact on workplace safety and health. The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD, 2019) has been tasked with the responsibility of providing care, protection, and rehabilitation to individuals who are physically, mentally, and socially disabled, with the aim of promoting effective social functioning. The government, various organizations, and the community are providing assistance to individuals who have surrendered themselves due to drug addiction or are currently using drugs, with the aim of preventing further substance abuse. Drug use may potentially have a detrimental impact on an individual's cognitive processes with respect to drug consumption.



In connection to this, the surrenderees are overwhelmed to be welcomed without any judgement or fear from the community because of the mistake that they have done before. As like to one of the respondents answer on the tool used in conducting the study it says that, knowing that the people are open for any help in making them be welcomed enough in the community helps them in changing fast and for not fearing to be themselves once again.

Table 3 Recommendations of the Drug Surrenderees for the Betterment of the Rreintegration Program

CLUSTER THEME	EMERGENT THEME
More livelihood	Evolvement of Programs
Intensify Implementation	
Spiritual Exercise	
Developing Process	

The table shows that surenderees are needed to be given or to be engaged to an Evolvement Programs. This program will be able to help the surrenderees on their developing process and will be able to lighten up their mental and spiritual health. This program will also be able to give them something to start on even with the smallest profit they can earn. One of the surrenderees said that, *“Hindi mabilis ang makahanap ng trabaho pagkalabas ng rehabilitation center kase tingin ng lahat ng tao sa paligid na masama ka. Kung kaya ang gusto ko lang naman sana magkaroon ng mga programa na kung saan ay makaroon kami ng pagkakakitaan upang makapag simula agad”* [It's not easy to find a job after leaving the rehabilitation center because everyone around you thinks you're bad. So, all I want is to have programs where we can earn money so we can start right away]. Giving them the chance to start all over again with a little support will eventually help them morally, spiritually and financially.



Figure 01: Central Phenomenon of the Study: *I AM NEW (NEW BEGINNING, EVOLVEMENT OF PROGRAM, WELCOMING)*”:

The contrast between darkness and light in the picture suggests a dichotomy between negative and positive aspects of life, and the interconnectedness of all living things. The dark background can be interpreted as a representation of the negative or challenging aspects of life, while the sun above symbolizes hope and positivity.

The fact that the sun is giving light to the bird, plant, and human in the picture suggests that all living things are interconnected and dependent on each other. This can be interpreted as a representation of the relationship between nature, humans, and society, highlighting the importance of recognizing our interdependence on one another.

The bird carrying the plant can symbolize growth and progress, while the humans holding onto the roots of the plant represent our connection to the natural world and our need to



nurture and protect it. This suggests that we need to recognize and acknowledge the importance of nature in our lives, and that we should work towards preserving and protecting it.

The image of the earth below the plant and humans highlights the importance of grounding ourselves in our physical surroundings, recognizing our place within the natural world, and acknowledging our interconnectedness with all living things. The open book above the earth represents knowledge and learning, and the potential for positive change through education.

However, the contents of the open book suggest that there are societal issues that need to be addressed in order for positive change to occur. The presence of the skull with crossbones, marijuana, knife, jail, syringe, and cocaine capsule on the left page highlights various forms of violence, addiction, and social injustice that need to be recognized and addressed. The small lighting bulb in the middle of the open page suggests that even in the face of darkness and negativity, there is always the potential for enlightenment and awareness.

Overall, the picture seems to convey a message of interconnectedness, growth, and the potential for positive change. By acknowledging and addressing the challenges and difficulties of life, staying grounded in nature, seeking knowledge, and addressing societal issues, we can work towards a brighter future for ourselves and for all living things.

Evolution of Program- The evolution of programs holds great significance due to the substantial transformations they have undergone throughout their existence. The individuals in question possessed knowledge of the negative consequences associated with drug consumption and made the decision to discontinue such behavior. The individuals received instruction on the teachings of God, maintained regular attendance at a place of worship, and expressed a yearning for a more intimate relationship with the divine.

Research shows that the evolution of programs is crucial due to the significant changes that have occurred in their lifespan. The individuals conducted research on the negative effects of drug use and made the decision to stop. The individuals received teachings on God, regularly participated in church activities, and aimed to strengthen their relationship with Him.

Also, there are different laws and policies, like the Republic Act 9165 as stated in The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 enacted to further intensify the country's



campaign against illegal trade and use of dangerous drugs and controlled chemicals. The pillars to adapt is; drug supply reduction, drug demand reduction, alternative development, civic awareness and response, and the regional and international corporation. This way, drug users can see other positive things way around that lead to preventative, treatment and rehabilitation that mandates DOH on drug abuse prevention and control.

More Livelihood- The aim is to provide support for the national poverty reduction campaign through the implementation of livelihood programmes, training assistance, and job opportunities that are tailored to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including those who have surrendered. On Friday, the city government of Quezon City launched a skills and livelihood training programme, which was attended by nearly 300 individuals who had previously surrendered themselves for drug-related offences. (Mateo, 2018)

The programme was spearheaded by Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte in collaboration with the Quezon City Skills and Livelihood Foundation Inc. and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority. Belmonte concluded the day-long programme by stating that individuals are not evaluated based on their previous experiences. The recipients were part of a large group of individuals who submitted themselves to the municipal authorities and law enforcement personnel subsequent to the escalated anti-narcotics initiatives of the Duterte regime.

Intensify Implementation- The purpose of this is to enhance the implementation process in order to provide support for the DDB-DSWD programme. PDEA-7 is advocating for a dual approach to address the problem of illicit drug consumption and distribution within the Central Visayas region. Apart from prioritising its supply reduction campaign through drug raids and arrests, PDEA-7 is also enhancing its demand-reduction endeavours and affording opportunities for individuals who have been adversely affected by illicit drugs. (Sabalo, 2022)

The agency collaborated with multiple local government units (LGUs) in the region to execute two primary initiatives aimed at offering alternatives for drug users and dealers who have surrendered to the authorities. Leia Alcantara, the information officer of PDEA-7, has reported that the organisation is presently focusing on the "Balay Silangan" initiative and the



Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Programme (CBDRP). The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) Region 7 has commenced the implementation of its priority programmes aimed at rescuing drug victims and surrenderers.

Spiritual Exercise- According to the perspective of some individuals, addiction can be conceptualised as a disruption in the individual's connection with a divine entity or a superior force. Individuals experience suffering as a result of their disconnection stemming from their disregard for divine will or guidance. Therefore, the establishment and development of a connection with a deity or higher power serves as the fundamental basis for the rehabilitation of individuals.

Regular spiritual practises offer a form of support or enhancement that is often essential during the initial stages of recovery from addiction. The mitigation of stress and anxiety can potentially decrease the likelihood of individuals turning to drugs and alcohol as coping mechanisms. The utilisation of such tools has the potential to enhance an individual's perception of their own value and confidence, as well as their sense of direction and significance. The provision of spiritual and religious services aims to foster the ethical and spiritual principles of individuals who are dependent on drugs.

In the study of Lasco, G., & Yarcia, L. E. (2022), Enhancing the spiritual basis would entail a variety of measures, including but not limited to the realignment of ethical principles, revitalization of spiritual practises, engagement in scriptural analysis, and participation in other forms of charismatic worship. The objective is to foster a stronger connection with the divine and enhance interpersonal relationships with others. Several religious and civic entities may be reached out to in order to avail their services. The utilisation of spiritual counselling can be beneficial in facilitating the resolution of personal and familial issues.

Developing Process- The successful implementation of prevention programmes by the DDB-DSWD will prove to be advantageous for drug surrenderees.

In the study of Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, *Church's rehab program, a concrete response*, medical services cover everything from routine physical exams and screenings to diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up. Psychiatric teams deliver chemotherapy, individual and group psychotherapy, family therapy, and occupational therapy to drug



abusers with behavioural and psychiatric issues. Psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers comprise psychiatric teams. Occupational therapists and paraprofessionals are examples. Psychological testing, examination, and therapy/counseling for patients and their families help the team analyse, diagnose, and treat drug addicts. Also, Social service helps drug addicts cope with their difficulties, improve their relationships, and adjust to treatment to improve their physical, social, moral, and spiritual development.

The referral service is a systematic approach to identifying the patient's concerns and directing them to the appropriate agency that can offer the necessary services. Other can be sports and recreation services furnish amenities for sports and recreation with the aim of providing patients with the chance to participate in constructive activities and cultivate peer relationships as a substitute for substance abuse. The primary focus of all endeavours should be directed towards cultivating the necessary self-control to enhance one's abilities and fostering an appreciation for sound physical well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

The research indicates that the interview received positive feedback and perspectives from the respondents. Individuals are willing to enhance themselves and are enthusiastic about adopting new beginnings. The study examines how individuals use their past traumatic experiences as a means to start anew with positive intentions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the phenomenology study findings, the following recommendations can be made:

1. It is recommended that members of the community and Local Government Units (LGUs) must engage in a comparative analysis of the efficacious strategies employed by diverse rehabilitation programmes
2. Local Government Units (LGUs), Rural Health Units, and the Philippine National Police (PNP) should intensify their drug awareness campaigns in their respective areas to prevent individuals who are susceptible to addiction, eradicate social stigma, and promote community assistance.



3. The proposed initiative involves the creation of a Community-Based Rehabilitation Programme (CBRP) that adopts a comprehensive approach towards the recovery of individuals with drug addiction. The PNP received 1,231,894 drug surrenderers to participate in a recovery and wellness programme that spans from one to three months. Among these individuals, the graduates make up 53.11 percent of the total. The PNP must keep on going in pursuing such programs.
4. Programs for drug surrenderees must prioritizes the restoration of the physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being of the affected persons through the provision of counselling and other therapeutic interventions.
5. Programs for drug surrenderees should give more focus on helping them to have a new beginning in a way wherein it will help them to be reformed and to push them through to have a new start once again and that it is worth to do so such as farming and other livelihood programs that will give them big held to start again.
6. There should be activities and programs that is being conducted to different communities targeting in accepting once again the surrenderees and to help them in adjusting to the community rather than thinking to just avoiding them due to their past mistake.
7. The Philippine National Police (PNP) has successfully rehabilitated over 650,000 drug surrenderers, enabling them to reintegrate into society and resume their daily routines. A pragmatic approach that can be adopted by the community to engage young individuals and workplace individuals in order to ensure the effectiveness of anti-substance abuse initiatives.
8. The primary strategies for preventing drug use on a broad scale are demand reduction and supply reduction. These programmes involve interventions in the classroom and efforts to enhance familial relationships that must be adopted by the treatment programs.
9. There must be maintaining a receptive attitude and soliciting input from the community regarding drug-related matters.
10. Examining the demonstration of suitable alcohol consumption practices during school-related occasions. The provision of alcoholic beverages during school events has the



potential to impede drug education and prevention initiatives. It is advisable to adhere to your educational institution's regulations on the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages and verify their compliance with the World Health Organization's (WHO) guidelines on organizing events that are free from alcohol in the presence of minors.

11. The Departments related to drugs should ensure the consistent maintenance and management of the Integrated Drug Testing Operations and Management of Information Systems (IDTOMIS) to facilitate the provision of current information for the purposes of policy formulation and programme execution.
12. Enhance the skills and knowledge of human resources in implementing interventions and treatment programs for individuals with drug dependence.
13. It is recommended that forthcoming researchers to conduct farther evaluative investigations to pinpoint potential areas for further enhancement and expand the participant pool of drug rehabilitation programs to encompass additional communities.

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