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An Assessment of the Therapeutic Community (TC) Program for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) in Manila City Jails

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Abstract

The Philippine maritime industry is a significant The Therapeutic Community (TC) program for People Deprived of Liberty (PDL) in the Manila City Jails is evaluated in this study for its efficacy. The study intends to address the issue of jail overcrowding and how it affects the inmates' access to care, safety, and health. The study uses a mixed-method research approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques, to assess how well the TC program reduces reoffending rates and makes program improvement suggestions. The results underline the need for improved facility administration, better rehabilitation and reentry services, and better sentencing procedures. The study also highlights the lack of statistics on recidivism in the Philippines and the necessity of precise data to support evidence-based policies. The study's findings highlight how well the TC program works to help PDLs develop their own personal growth, change their behavior, and improve their skills. By putting more emphasis on addressing participants' spiritual needs, the program can, however, increase its efficacy. The study comes to the conclusion that the TC program can successfully prevent reoffending and enable successful reintegration into society, thanks to its emphasis on behavioral, psychological, spiritual, and skill-development components.

Keywords: Therapeutic community (TC) program, Persons deprived of liberty (PDL), jail overcrowding, reoffending, program implementation

INTRODUCTION

In the criminal justice system, jail overcrowding has a serious influence on inmates' safety, health, and the standard of services offered (Fazel & Wolf, 2015). Poor sanitation, restricted access to medical treatment, and insufficient resources for inmates are frequently consequences of overcrowding. A multifaceted strategy is needed to address this problem, including stronger sentencing guidelines, the implementation of programs during incarceration, increased funding for services related to rehabilitation and re-entry, and enhanced facility administration and upkeep. Making sure that resources are distributed

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fairly is essential for ensuring equal access to services for people from all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Due to different definitions and monitoring techniques, comparing recidivism rates between nations is extremely difficult (World Population Review, n.d.). Many nations lack enough information on recidivism, and each country has its own definition of the term. Only re-incarceration is counted as recidivism in some nations, whilst others include re-convictions or even re-arrests. Furthermore, it is challenging to make precise comparisons because follow-up times after being released from prison vary greatly. Unfortunately, the Philippines is one of the nation's lacking in-depth statistics on recidivism (Villamor, 2019). There haven't been many comprehensive judicial statistics on recidivism in the nation since 1914. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) states in their report, "Improving Recidivism as a Performance Measure," that taking into account potential changes in the underlying population over time is a necessary component of any analysis of recidivism. This is true even though the Philippines has its own set of standards for defining and recognizing recidivists.

Accurate recidivism data collection and analysis must be given top priority in the Philippines in order to successfully address these problems. By doing this, the justice system's shortcomings would be revealed, and judgments about public policy might be supported by data. The Philippines can work toward putting in place tailored interventions and programs to lower re-offending rates and support effective reintegration into society by having a thorough understanding of recidivism trends.

Literature Review

Varma and Muehlbach (2023) explore the history and evolution of the Therapeutic Community (TC) model in their book chapter, highlighting the model's core values as the cornerstone of the initiative. They emphasize that the therapeutic community, which attempts to support significant behavioral and psychological improvements in people, is fundamentally based on the TC Philosophy. This strategy is based on the concepts of environment therapy and includes group psychotherapy and useful activities as key elements. In many different contexts, such as rehabilitation facilities, sanctuaries, residential group homes, and specialized schools, TCs have been widely used to effectively address a range of problems, including mental illness, substance misuse, and alcoholism. With the primary aim of sustaining abstinence and promoting physical, psychological, social, and spiritual well-being, the fundamental goal of TCs is to create a drug-free residential setting that promotes patient rehabilitation, particularly through social learning and a family model. The literature also provides insight on TCs, which are regarded as intense treatment options for drug and alcohol addiction in Australia. They often last a month or longer and include a variety of therapeutic activities like counseling, relapse prevention methods, and developing living skills. In Australia, TCs have experienced changes that now provide younger people with shorter program durations, more flexibility in the program's guidelines, stronger staff involvement, and active engagement with families.Notably, young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have actively participated in these activities.

Regarding the Philippine Correctional System, the literature describes the crucial roles that various institutions, such as government agencies, the civil society, and the private sector, play in the confinement, correction, and rehabilitation of people accused or found guilty of delinquent acts or crimes. It talks about how important the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), which is in charge of running municipal, city, and district jails, is. The imprisonment and rehabilitation of national criminals who have received sentences of three years or longer are under the purview of the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor).The review also explores how the Therapeutic Community model has been successfully implemented in the Philippines, particularly in the rehabilitation of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL). This model was introduced by DAYTOP International - USA and has a long history in the nation dating back to the 1970s. The TC approach has been used by government drug programs that are part of the criminal justice system

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as well as private non-profit programs. It has been used in jails, prisons, and with parolees and probationers as well, helping to rehabilitate and reintegrate those who have engaged in criminal activity.

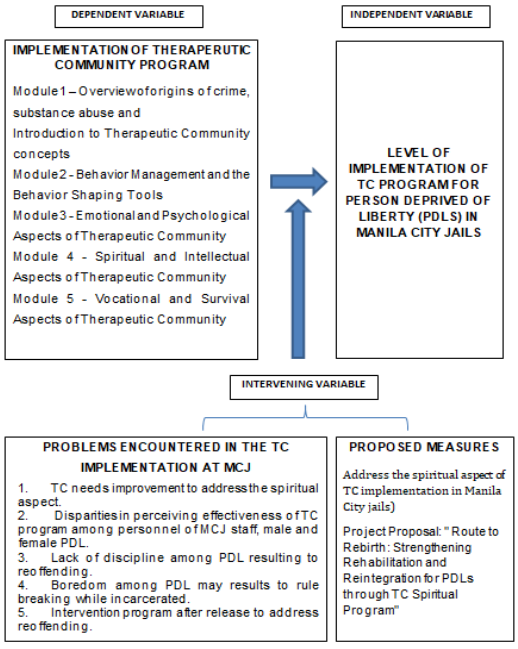
The Therapeutic Community utilizes the "community" as a vehicle to foster behavioral and attitudinal change. In this model, from being part of the community, the client receives the information and impetus to change. The expectations that the community places on its individual members reflect not only the needs of the individual, but also the social and support needs of the community. The community mode provides the social expectations which are parallel to the social demands that clients will confront upon being discharged to their communities. TC provides a well-defined structure for a synchronized and focused implementation of the various intervention strategies and activities with the main objectives of rehabilitating and eventually reintegrating PDL as productive, law-abiding and socially responsible members of their community through (1) well-planned supervision programs for PDL which are aligned to the BJMP program thrust; and (2) establishment of innovative, financially, and technically feasible projects for moral, spiritual, and economic enhancement of BJMP PDL utilizing available resources.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

In consideration of the most updated TC program of the jail bureau, the **Theoretical framework** of this study was based on the BJMP-NHQ SOP No. 2010-01 dated February 4, 2010 signed by Jail Director Rosendo M Dial, CESO I – Chief of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, entitled "Comprehensive Policy on the Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Therapeutic Community Modality Training of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology". The policy sets up a systematic and efficient selection, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all Therapeutic Community programs and activities with a goal that are well-planned, feasible, and supervised towards the rehabilitation and eventual reintegration of PDL into the mainstream of society.

The standard program components of TC training utilize five (5) modules that serve as a guide in the conduct of training for the implementation of the Therapeutic Community Modality Program in jails. The following are the said modules:

CONCEPTUAL PARADIGM



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Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the level of effectiveness of the Therapeutic Community (TC) program at Manila City Jail (MCJ), in terms Behavioral Aspect, Psychological Aspect, Spiritual Aspect, and Skills Development Aspect.
2. To determine the significant differences in the assessment of the 3 groups of respondents on the level of effectiveness of the Therapeutic Community (TC) program at Manila City Jail (MCJ) in terms of the above-cited variables.
3. To investigate the barriers to successful implementation of the TC program against re-offending at MCJ.
4. To identify the roles of peer support in the TC program in addressing re-offending at MCJ.
5. What intervention program may be proposed from the findings of the study.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a mixed method research approach. A research in which the researcher uses the qualitative research paradigm for one phase of a research study and the quantitative research paradigm for another in order to understand a research problem more completely (Creswell, 2005).

In concurrent mixed-methods, qualitative and quantitative data are collected and analyzed simultaneously. This approach allows for an integration of both types of data during the interpretation phase (Teddlie et al., (2015). With this method, both forms of data can be combined at the interpretation stage. With ordinal scaling, hypotheses can be tested by using a large group of nonparametric statistical tests which are sometimes called *ranking statistics* or *order statistics* (Siegel & Castellan, 1988). With regard to the adjectival and numerical treatment of data, the statistics most appropriate for describing the central tendency of scores in an ordinal scale is the median, since, relative to the distribution of score, the median is not affected by changes of any scores which are above or below it as long as the number of scores above and below remains the same.

Population of the Study

Table 1

Population of the three group of respondents

Respondents	**Population N**	**Sample n**
MCJ Personnel	400	23 (6.25%)
Male PDL	5033	284 ((6.14%)
Female PDL	1022	70 (7.35%)
TOTAL	**6455**	**377 (6.34%)**

Table 1 shows the distribution of the three groups of respondents of the study. 23 are coming from the personnel, 70 are from the the group of female PDL and lastly, the 284 are coming from the male group of respondents. The sampling method utilized was Yamane's method as advised by the statistician since it is the most appropriate formula to be utilized in this study.

Data Gathering Tools

The data gathering instruments used were survey-questionnaires that were formulated by the researcher, with the guidance of the thesis adviser, which was signed, checked, and approved by the members of the panel.

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Data Gathering Procedures

After the research instrument was validated, the researcher personally approached the Manila City Jails' Male and Female Dormitories Wardens and sought the latter's approval to conduct data collection to the PDL and personnel via participation in the research study on a specified time and date. After approval, the researcher disseminated the structured survey questionnaires to the respondents. He personally administered and collected the answered survey questionnaires, then immediately interviewed volunteers who participated in a focus group discussion to validate the data collected.

Treatment of Data

Data of the study were processed, analyzed, and interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Data sets were prepared using MS Excel and were treated using the add-in Real Statistics and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) V.17.

Frequencies and percentages were used in describing the demographic characteristics of the respondents. To assess the level of effectiveness of the Therapeutic Community (TC) Program at Manila City Jail, a 4-point Likert scale was employed.

To determine if there are significant differences in the level of effectiveness of the program among the groups of respondents, a non-parametric test referred to as Kruskal Wallis was employed.

SUMMARY

The Therapeutic Community (TC) program at Manila City Jail (MCJ) is praised for its success in promoting convicts' personal development, behavior reform, and skill improvement. While providing opportunities for education and skill development, the program promotes adherence to the rules, emotional support, and interpersonal ties. It still requires work in terms of meeting the spiritual requirements of prisoners. Despite its potential, those ex-offenders who return to jail after being released frequently do so because they lack discipline and are unable to put what they have learned in the community to use. This lack of control might result in breaching the law and repeat offenses. The study underlines the significance of individual accountability and behavior modification while incarcerated. In the TC program, the importance of self-awareness and responsibility is emphasized through Theme 2, "A Journey of Consciousness." Prisoners are urged to participate fully in their environment and cooperate to resolve problems. This theme emphasizes how TCs can help people grow socially and personally and how they can change prisoners' lives as they move toward rehabilitation. The third theme, "Wasted Knowledge: The Value of Action," underscores how crucial it is to put the knowledge you have learned in TC programs to use. The study emphasizes that in order to promote individual development and make a beneficial impact on society, knowledge alone is insufficient. Prisoners who do not put their knowledge to use may miss possibilities for growth and are more likely to commit crimes again. The fourth theme, "Curbing Recidivism Through Tougher Penalties," explores the use of punishment as a discipline-motivating tool. Although the threat of punishment can dissuade wrongdoing, its value in lowering reoffending is up for discussion. The study recommends that, in addition to punishment, other techniques that address the underlying reasons of criminal conduct and promote rehabilitation be taken into consideration. The fifth theme, "Empowerment through Change: Overcoming Adversity and Embracing Transformation," highlights the value of peer support in TC programs. Sharing experiences and establishing connections with people from like backgrounds can promote accountability and constructive criticism while fostering a sense of belonging. Peer support has a big impact on preventing reoffending and encouraging offenders to change their negative behaviors. The 6th theme, The theme "Rebirth Within Bars: The Path to Productive Freedom" highlights the factors influencing the participation of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) in the Therapeutic Community (TC) program at Manila City Jail. Key factors include motivation and readiness for change, recognition of the program's advantages, free access to education opportunities, and the program's ability to address boredom. PDLs who actively engage in the TC program often do so because they see it as a path to a brighter future, personal development, and skill improvement. Educational programs like ALS and TESDA, offered within the TC program, play a significant role in empowering PDLs and reducing the risk of recidivism. Additionally, the TCMP effectively addresses the issue of boredom by providing structured

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activities and skill development opportunities, promoting meaningful involvement, and supporting mental health. The emphasis switches to peers giving candid and motivating feedback to assist behavior modification and personal growth in Theme 7, "Transform: Embrace Freedom, Avoid Regret, Build anew!" Current convicts are advised by former offenders to embrace the lessons learnt in the Therapeutic Community (TC) program rather than repeating their past errors. Peer support has been regarded as a crucial tool for people trying to effectively reintegrate into society. The eighth theme, "Aftercare: The Road to Renewal," focuses on the continuance of aftercare and peer support services after a person has finished the TC program. These relationships offer continuous support, lower the chance of relapse and reoffending, and promote a successful return to society. The usefulness of aftercare programs in lowering recidivism rates has been demonstrated by research. Theme 9, "Rebirth Within Bars: The Path to Productive Freedom," explores the factors that influence PDLs' decisions to participate in the TC program. Motivation for change, perceived benefits of participating in the TC program, and free access to education are all identified as important factors that influence PDLs' decisions to engage in the program. The TC program also addresses the issue of boredom that PDLs experience by offering scheduled activities and chances for personal growth. In conclusion, these themes emphasize the significance of peer support, role modeling, aftercare programs, and factors that influence participation in TC programs to promote rehabilitation, reduce recidivism, and support people on their path to productive freedom both inside and outside of correctional facilities.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

From the findings of the study, the following conclusions are derived:

The study emphasizes the Therapeutic Community Modality Program's success in helping those who are detained in Manila City Jails. The program's effectiveness in rehabilitating and reintegrating prisoners is suggested by the good results in behavior, psychology, and skill development. These results are helpful for programs of rehabilitation that are similar.

The study highlights how therapeutic communities can help behavioral change and personal development by offering a controlled and encouraging atmosphere. It implies that these initiatives can support prisoners' efforts at rehabilitation and reintegration, albeit spiritual needs must be taken into account.

According to the research, PDL and staff had different perspectives on the program, with inmates believing it to be more successful. This highlights its beneficial effects on the mental health of prisoners. Program improvement depends on ongoing collaboration, evaluation, and participant input.

The study's result highlights the significance of therapeutic communities in encouraging good changes and personal growth among those who are incarcerated. In order to decrease reoffending and promote effective reintegration into society, it emphasizes the need for continual improvement, targeted strategies, and peer support.

Recommendations

Considering the summary and conclusions provided, the researcher recommends the following:

1. The TC spiritual aspect may Increase the emphasis on meeting individuals and assisting personal growth that fosters spiritual development and convictions.
2. The Manila City Jail authority may give MCJ personnel extensive training to improve their comprehension and appreciation of the advantages of the program and harmonize their perspectives with those of the participants to address discrepancies in staff perceptions and to develop strategies inside the TC program to improve members' self-awareness, mindfulness, and personal accountability, fostering positive behaviors and lowering rule-breaking tendencies.
3. The Manila City Jail authority may regularly keep fostering peer support and storytelling inside the TC program since these practices encourage a sense of belonging, empathy, and understanding, which promotes personal development and lowers the risk of reoffending.

4. The BJMP of MCJ authority may create extensive aftercare services that offer ongoing support and assistance to people returning to society, including access to employment opportunities, educational opportunities, substance abuse treatment, mental health support, and community-based resources.
5. The Manila City Jail authority may focus on motivation and perceived benefits: Highlight the advantages of the program, such as a better future, opportunities for personal growth, access to substance abuse treatment, and mental health assistance, to increase participants' motivation and openness to change. Make sure alternate educational options are available and easily accessible.
6. The Manila City Jail authority may encourage meaningful involvement and activities. To combat participant boredom, the TC program should promote meaningful involvement and provide regular activities. This can be accomplished by including recreational activities and therapeutic approaches which improve mental health and overall wellbeing.
7. The Department of Justice (DOJ) may give permission to one of its subordinate agencies to gather statistics on recidivism, quasi-recidivism, and habitual delinquency in the Philippines. This project could substantially help in calculating and supplying correct rates, which would be helpful to academics working on similar studies in the future.
8. The TC program at MCJ may be enhanced to address reoffending, promote rehabilitation, and encourage successful reintegration into society by putting these ideas into practice.

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