

Drug surrenderees in the Province of Pampanga, Philippines: Profile and insights on drug rehabilitation

*Arnel T. Sicat
Ray Victor Y. Apaya
April Rein C. Dalina*

ABSTRACT

The war against drugs in the Philippines has brought enormous sentiments in handling drug addiction among drug surrenderees. Despite allegations of extrajudicial killings and human rights violations, the government's Oplan Tokhang has contributed immensely in identifying drug dependents who can undergo drug treatment. However, drug surrenderees and drug reformists' profiling remained a major gap identified in every province in the Philippines. Hence, the study. The data from this mixed study were procured from the documents of various drug rehabilitation centers and parishes in Pampanga, specifically from Bahay Pagbabago (Transformation House) in San Simon, Pampanga, Philippines. The respondents in the study included reformists from a spiritual-oriented drug rehabilitation facility in the province (n=40), surrenderees from the Philippine National Police's Oplan Tokhang within certain areas in Pampanga (n=4,615), and successful rehabilitees (n=2). The information was obtained through data mining procedures based on proper screening and salient data from questionnaires and interviews. The data was organized, systematized, and subjected to careful review and interpretation through context analysis and statistical analysis using frequency, percentage tables, mean and standard deviation. The study ascertained that males had a higher risk of exposure to drug use compared to females. Most drug dependents come from low-income families and generally fall within 17 to 35 years old. The findings also showed key similarities between the drug reformists and drug surrenderees regarding age, economic status, and other key demographic indicators or risk factors. Shabu or methamphetamine was identified as the most preferred and, at the same time, the most abused drug in the province. An intra-faith approach toward rehabilitation was effective according to two successful drug reformists who were reintegrated into society.

Key words: Oplan Tokhang, extrajudicial killings, rehabilitation, reformists, surrenderees, Bahay Pagbabago

INTRODUCTION

Organized crime related to drug usage and abuse and illegal manufacturing and drug trafficking is a global concern (Sakai, 2005). It is an understatement that illegal drugs are prevalent in Third World countries; it is also true worldwide. In 2015, a projected 250,000,000 million people used drugs- included in this figure - an estimated 29.5 million people, which accounted for 0.6% of the global population, partook in the abuse of illegal drugs (United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime, 2017). Drug addiction is among the world's most pressing issues, endangering citizens' health and lives around the world, regardless of their age, educational attainment, economic status, religion, and ethnicity (Caday, 2017). In the Philippines, an estimated 4.8 million Filipinos aged 10-69 years old used illegal drugs at least once in their lives (Matinez & Guadamor, 2017). This phenomenon poses a threat to any nation (Rusdi, Noor Zurani, Muhammad & Mohamad, 2008).

It is reputed that it is quite problematic to determine the causes or reasons why some people are more susceptible to addiction than others. According to Anthony, as cited in Videbeck (2008, p.371), "the exact causes of drug use, dependence, and addiction are not known, but various factors are thought to contribute to the development of substance-abuse disorders."

With the dawn of the new regime, more importantly, the war against illegal drugs and substance abuse has been various initiatives that the present administration has implemented. One of these is the "Oplan Tokhang," a PNP lead program disseminated to the entire archipelago (Macalalad & Rayco, 2018). There are two options: the need for drug addicts to surrender and be identified and to gamble their lives by hiding and taking the risk of being hunted and exterminated like criminals.

However, with the allegations of extrajudicial killings (EJK) by civil society groups (CSOs), human rights advocates, and even the mainstream media, the initiative of the administration is believed to be considered unviable and downright barbaric, especially to a peace-loving nation (Williams & Palmer, 2016). It has also had its share of criticisms and intrigues from other countries, particularly the UN advocates of human rights. In this regard, there is an urgent need for vital information on the plight of drug surrenderees in the country. The anti-illegal drug campaign is to be put into the spotlight, and people of goodwill must offer viable research-based strategies for rehabilitating drug-dependents.

Moreover, it cannot be denied that the Philippines is no exemption to the ever-growing problem of drug addiction (Caday, 2017). As reported by the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) 2015 Nationwide Survey on the Nature and Extent of Drug Abuse in the Philippines released in September 2016, there are an estimated 1.8 million drug users in the Philippines at that time, around 2.3 percent of the total population. Affecting people of all ages, gender identity, race, and the like.

President Duterte's war on drugs has triggered allegations of human rights violations and extrajudicial killings, among others. Many civil society groups and Catholic organizations have carried out initiatives supporting genuine drug rehabilitation calls among surrenderees. However, the effect of different treatments and approaches at rehabilitating drug dependents in facilities and centers varies significantly. Pro-actively, some Catholic Church-run organizations such as Bahay Pagbabago ni Apung Pilar (Transformation House of Nuestra Senora del Pilar) at San Simon, Pampanga treated drug surrenderees as "drug reformists" who have more possibilities of being completely rehabilitated given the intra-faith approach. It spells out the mission of the Church to step out into the world by fulfilling its noble mission of helping the least and the lost (Bacani, 2005).

Under the present administration's endeavor to eradicate illicit drugs and help drug surrenderees in their reformation, this study will serve as a reference or guide for improving drug rehabilitation programs and centers in Pampanga and other provinces in the country.

This study was conducted to analyze drug reformists' profiles, surrenderees, and successful drug reformists; and determine the factors that led to their surrender, the unique process of rehabilitation, and reformation of rehabilitees.

Concomitantly, it will also determine the causes and factors that lead to drug use and addiction. Furthermore, this study will produce a summative report on drug reformists' profile at the facility mentioned above and the profile of drug surrenderees in the province. The profile can be used for comparative studies on key demographic indicators of drug addiction and rehabilitation among Pampanga patients.

METHOD

The study conducted a mixed-method, which used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A descriptive survey was utilized to profile the surrenderees, and a simple interpretive qualitative approach was used to interpret the statements and insights of the two successful drug rehabilitees who shared their experiences in a forum.

The data gathered for the study was procured from 1) various drug rehabilitation centers; 2) some parishes in Pampanga; and 3) Bahay Pagbabago in San Simon, Pampanga, Philippines. Three sets of sample populations were used as data: the drug reformists from Bahay Pagbabago (n= 40), the sample of drug

surrenderers from the Province of Pampanga (n=4,615), and lastly, the two successful rehabilitees. The summary of population data varies based on the response of the participants.

The drug reformists in San Simon and drug surrenderers in various barangays of Pampanga (who surrendered to the PNP) were described according to key demographic indicators and other vital drug-related factors such as age, gender, educational attainment, the status of employment, civil quality, nature of drug used, characteristic responsible for the introduction of drugs, drug preference, kind of drug last used, age of drug use, duration of drug use, effects of drugs and drug expenditure per month. Qualitative data were sourced out from the speeches delivered during the local symposium held in a university. Speeches were transcribed and interpreted to create themes and categories. Explicit permission was sought from the committee chair or in-charge of the program to audio-tape the two successful rehabilitees' sharing. Themes were identified through simple content analysis of the texts from the transcript.

Concomitantly, the study used multiple data derived from ready-made questionnaires, reports, and other documents. Careful data mining procedures were utilized to salvage pertinent data for analysis. The steps are 1) analysis of the questionnaires and forms submitted, 2) re-classification of profile based on the basic prevalent common areas of participants' disclosure of information, 3) exclusion of scarce and confusing data, 3) creation of a spreadsheet to input source data; 4) basic data spreadsheet cleaning, and 5) statistical analysis of data using SPSS. Using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, a descriptive summary was obtained.

The first group data were gathered through questionnaires and short interviews administered by competent personnel of

Bahay Pagbabago. During their stay at the drug rehabilitation facility, the reformists were surveyed through an instrument prepared by the personnel in charge. Vital information was sourced out by the facility personnel from various barangays and municipalities in Pampanga.

Through an agreement with the higher education institution (HEI), pertinent documents were forwarded for analysis. Permission to use the data for research purposes was granted through the Director of the Community Extension Office (CEO) and the Head of the Bahay Pagbabago. The data gathering of important documents for analysis was done by the barangay and parish officials engaged and commissioned to gather vital information about drug surrenderees. The data was procured from several religious institutions and local government units around the province of Pampanga. Data were submitted to the HEI research unit, which was then encoded based on the assessed spreadsheet. Available statistical reports initiated by the barangays and religious institutions were also offered. Insights from the aforementioned religious institutions and also from the heads of the barangays were also included.

Likewise, in considering the ethical implications in the conduct of the study and due to the sensitive nature of this undertaking, it was important to handle all relevant data with the utmost care and confidentiality; primarily because drug users, rehabilitated or not, exude a negative persona about the lingering societal stigma that most drug abusers are most likely to commit crimes or engage in illegal activities. Thus, all specific and vital information relative to the respondents' profile was strictly kept confidential. A non-disclosure agreement of the personal data of drug surrenderees was signed for this purpose. Only a summary of the profile was presented in the terminal report.

FINDINGS

Table 1
Demographic profile

Category	f	%	Category	f	%
Age Group			Sex		
<i>Below 18</i>	1	2.5	<i>Male</i>	39	97.5
<i>18 to 35 years old</i>	20	50.0	<i>Female</i>	1	2.5
<i>36 to 50 years old</i>	17	42.5			
<i>51 to 70 years old</i>	2	5.0	Employment status		
			<i>Employed</i>	35	87.5
Educational Attainment			<i>Unemployed</i>	5	12.5
<i>Primary</i>	14	35.0	Civil Status		
<i>Secondary</i>	19	47.5	<i>Single</i>	12	30.0
<i>College</i> /	3	7.5	<i>Married</i>	25	62.5
<i>University</i> /	4	10.0	<i>Separated</i>	3	7.5
<i>Vocational</i> /	4	10.0	<i>Others</i>	0	0.0
<i>Technical</i>					
<i>Masters / PhD</i>	0	0.00			

n= 40

Table 1 presents a statistical summary analysis regarding the drug reformists at Bahay Pagbabago in San Simon, Pampanga, Philippines.

Table 1.1
Mean age of reformists

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	40	17.00	55.00	33.9250	9.28298

Table 1.1 reveals that the mean age of the reformists at the drug rehabilitation facility. It infers that most reformists at *Bahay*

Pagbabago are relatively in their mid-30s and are in their adult years. It shows that majority of the reformists fall within the age group of 18 to 35 years old. It implies that most of the population (n=40) are adults, consistent with the mean age stated in Table 1.1.

Results show that most of the reformists are generally males, consistent with the demographics of other parallel studies and the Dangerous Drugs Board statistics in 2016. It implies that males are more susceptible and frequently exposed to illicit drugs as compared to females.

It can be gleaned from the table that most of the reformists have reached formal secondary education. It also shows that there is only a small percentage of reformists that have achieved higher learning. Moreover, findings suggest that the majority of the respondents are employed. It is crucial to have stable employment or to have the means to support their substance abuse.

There are 62.5 percent of reformists who are married, which is six in every ten individuals. It can be implied that there is no sufficient evidence to support that civil status can be used as the sole indicator of susceptibility to drug abuse since other statistical studies show that single individuals are far more likely to abuse illegal drugs (Single – 48.96%, DDB, 2016).

Table 2
Frequency distribution of drug reformists according to the nature of drug use, drug preference, drug last use, duration of drug use, and motivation to follow treatment

Category	f	%	Category	f	%
Nature of Drug Use			Duration of Drug Use		
Multi-Drug Use	24	60.0	<i>Less than a year / 1 year</i>	11	33.3
<i>Mono-Drug Use</i>	16	40.0	2 to 5 years	14	42.4
Drug of Choice			<i>6 to 10 years</i>	6	18.2
<i>Tobacco</i>	15	19.7	<i>More than 11 years</i>	2	6.1
<i>Alcohol</i>	16	21.1	Motivation to Follow Treatment		
<i>Marijuana</i>	8	10.5	<i>Bad</i>	0	0.0
Drug Last Used			<i>Very Bad</i>	0	0.0
Shabu	37	48.7	<i>Satisfactory</i>	1	2.5
<i>Marijuana</i>	4	10.0	Good	25	62.5
<i>Shabu & Marijuana</i>	2	5.0	<i>No Response / Abstained</i>	14	35.0

Table 2 affirms that most drug users who have initially started taking illegal drugs and started with only one kind of substance (mono-drug use) and, with time, have gradually developed multi-drug use behavior. It can also be deduced from the results that most drug users take multiple kinds of substances.

Moreover, it can further substantiate that out of the illegal or illicit substances, *Shabu* or methamphetamine hydrochloride is the most prevalent drug of choice for most drug abusers in the facility. This result is also similar to other parallel studies in the country and abroad. Likewise, Table 2 clearly shows that it is the most used and abused illegal drug among reformists since it is the most available drug due to its availability and price in the market. Thus, there is

much prevalence, even in communities with lower socioeconomic conditions.

Table 2.1
Mean age of reformists and frequency distribution of reformists' profile relative to the age of first use

Category	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age of First Use	33	13.00	52.00	27.5152	9.71507
Age Group		f		%	
<i>Below 18</i>		7		21.2%	
18 to 35 years old		19		57.6%	
<i>36 to 50 years old</i>		6		18.2%	
<i>51 to 70 years old</i>		1		3.0%	
Total		33		100.0%	

*33 out of 40 responses

Table 2.2 shows that the mean age of the reformists relative to the period on their first introduction and use of drugs. The mean age for the initial drug use, which is 27.51, falls under the age class of 18 to 35 years old. It was an inclusive period when reformists were vulnerable to substance abuse.

Table 2.2
Mean years of reformist duration of drug use

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Duration of Use	33	0.50	27.00	4.1818	5.33974

Table 2 shows that the average span (in years) of substance abuse before intervention and rehabilitation is 2 to 5 years. It can also be noted that the reformists' span of use is multi-year, and at an average of 4 years (Table 2.2). It can be concluded that most reformists habitually used illegal drugs for a prolonged period.

Notably, the majority of the reformists were highly motivated to follow treatment. Moreover, most of the respondents were satisfied with the program and have been inspired to observe the regimen and activities of the facility religiously.

Summary Report on Drug Surrenderees based on data from PNP's Oplan Tokhang

Table 3
Frequency distribution based on drug surrenderees' demographic profile

Category	f	%	Category	f	%
Age Group			Economic Status (Household Income per month)		
<i>Below 18 years old</i>	78	1.7	<i>Poor (<8,000)</i>	999	55.7
<i>18 to 35 years old</i>	2,475	53.6	<i>Lower income (8,000 – 16,000)</i>	569	31.8
<i>36 to 50 years old</i>	1,834	39.7	<i>Lower middle income (16,000 – 32, 000)</i>	139	7.8
<i>51 to 70 years old</i>	222	4.8	<i>Middle class (32,000 – 80,000)</i>	56	3.1
<i>No age included</i>	6	0.1	<i>Upper middle class (80,000 – 120,000)</i>	26	1.5
Gender			<i>Rich (>160,000)</i>	3	0.2
<i>Male</i>	4,403	95.4	Total	1,792	100.0
<i>Female</i>	212	4.6	<i>n=1,792</i>		
Religion		Percentage	<i>*68 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>		
<i>Catholics</i>	32	54.2	Civil Status		
<i>Christians</i>	7	11.9	<i>Single</i>	1,319	44.2
<i>Islam</i>	2	3.4	<i>Married</i>	1,498	50.2
<i>Others</i>	18	30.5	<i>Head of household</i>	169	5.7
Total	59	100.0	Total	2,986	100.0
<i>n=59</i>			<i>n=2,986</i>		
<i>(*66 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data)</i>			<i>*32 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>		
Family Type			Educational Attainment		
<i>Nuclear</i>	15	22.4	<i>Primary</i>	1,269	34.2%
<i>Single Parent Household</i>	21	31.30%	<i>Secondary</i>	1,975	53.3%
<i>Sibling Household</i>	20	29.90%	<i>Tertiary</i>	393	10.6%
<i>Extended</i>	5	7.50%	<i>Professional</i>	70	1.90%
<i>One/both parents working abroad</i>	6	9.00%	Total	3,707	100.0%
Total	67	100.00%			
<i>n=67</i>			<i>n=3,707</i>		
<i>*64 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>			<i>*24 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>		

Table 3 shows that 2,475 surrenderees fall under the age group of 18 to 35 years. It is implied that most of the surrenderees are adults, similar to the previous finding, and are aware of the dangers of using illegal drugs might bring. A mean age cannot be determined because the data only showed age groups, and the specific age for each surrenderee was not available.

Results also show a high prevalence of drug use in male surrenderees in comparison with their female counterpart. It is also comparable with the profile of drug reformists at Bahay Pagbabago, particularly with the number and percentage of male drug abusers. Though there were minimal responses to religion, it can be inferred from the data that most drug surrenderees were Catholics. Such a result can be attributed to a large number of Catholics in this country.

Due to the respondents' abstention and lack of responses, the researchers were limited to the minimal data and population of 67. However, the result can be used as an indication that most of the surrenderees lived in a single-parent household. It can also be implied that people who have lived in single-parent homes are more susceptible to drug use than the lack of parental guidance and the heightened level of hate and tension the environment breeds. It can be a breeding ground for depression, resulting in personal alienation through some weak individuals' drug dependency.

Data also show that 50.2 percent of drug surrenderees are mostly married (1,498), with single individuals coming in at a close second (44.2%). There are 53.3 percent of respondents who took secondary education and 34.2 percent primary education. It is a staggering number, suggesting that most surrenderees did not reach the tertiary level and therefore lacked the knowledge and information regarding the perils of illegal drug use might bring.

Table 4
Frequency distribution of drug surrenderees' in Pampanga according to the drug of choice, frequency of drug use, effects of drugs, influencers in the introduction of drugs, and reasons for doing drugs and drugs expenditure

Categories	f	%	Categories	F	%
Drug of Choice			Influencers on introduction to drugs		
Alcohol	194	5.3	Friends	2,380	77.1
Marijuana	687	18.9	Immediate Family	177	5.7
Cocaine	609	16.8	Classmates	105	3.4
Shabu	2,052	56.5	Co-workers	341	11.0
Signature Drugs	89	2.5	Others	84	2.7
Total	3,631	100	Total	3,087	100
<i>n=3,631, multiple responses</i>			<i>n=3,087</i>		
<i>*21 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>			<i>*28 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>		
Categories	f	%	Categories	F	%
Frequency of drug use			Reason for doing drugs		
More than once a day	38	1.5%	Peer Pressure	731	16.1%
Daily	523	20.7%	Family Problem	425	9.4%
Every 2 to 3 days	519	20.5%	Depression	514	11.4%
Once a week	910	36.0%	Curiosity	3,233	51.3%
Once a month	539	21.3%	Work-related stress	362	8.0%
Total	2,529	100%	Lack of parental guidance	115	2.5%
<i>n=2,529, multiple responses</i>			Others	59	1.3%
<i>*52 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>			Total	4,528	100%
Effect of Drugs			<i>n=4,528</i>		
Physical sickness	349	21.1	<i>*30 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>		
Mental illness	104	6.3			
Turn to theft	156	9.4%	Drug Expenditure per Month		
Turn to crime and violence	128	7.7%	1,000 to 5,000	1,219	81.4%
Vagrancy	46	2.8%	5,000 to 10,000	182	12.1%
Broken Families	286	17.3%	10,000 to 15,000	81	5.4%
Loss of Job	493	29.8%	15,000 to 20,000	11	0.7%
Others	91	5.5%	More than 20,000	5	0.3%
Total	1,653	100%	Total	1,498	100%
<i>n=1,653</i>			<i>n=1,498</i>		
<i>*71 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>			<i>*100 out of the possible 158 institutions and barangays failed to provide or abstained from providing data</i>		

Table 4 only affirms and further asserts that Shabu is the commonly used and abused drug in this country, with a massive 56.5 percent of surrenderees admitting the use of this illegal drug. In terms of the frequency of use, data show that most of the surrenderees only indulge in occasionally using illicit drugs, more specifically once a week.

Based on the findings, the majority of surrenderees were introduced to illegal drugs by friends. Peer pressure might also be a major factor. Thus, in this case, Filipinos tend to be heavily influenced by friends due to the peculiar value of "pakikisama." It is a Filipino trait that sacrifices the will to respond to a perceived "good" for your peers' sake.

Though the government has been very active in disseminating information regarding the evils of substance abuse and also has created initiatives to curb this destructive vice, however, there are still a large number of people who try drugs just because of curiosity and to know how it feels to use illegal drugs, knowing all too well of the possible sanctions that might be imposed upon them.

Table 4 shows the saddening effect of drugs. A majority of surrenderees identified loss of employment due to substance abuse. Currently, there are stringent rules and policies that employers implement and require of their employees. One of these is 'an employee must be free of the influence of drugs.' To date, there have been uncompromised policies against drug use in the workplace. Termination of employment is the sanction for drug use in most, if not all, employees.

It is reflective that most surrenderees could not afford to use drugs regularly and could not spend as much on illegal drugs. Based on the findings, most of the surrenderees are *Poor (>8,000*

monthly income), yet they can still regularly purchase illicit drugs. It can be gleaned from the study that they only use drugs *once a week* and generally allot only *1,000 to 5,000 pesos* per month to purchase illegal drugs.

Insights from 2 Successful Drug Rehabilitees

The two successfully rehabilitated individuals' insights were disclosed during their speech at a local symposium held in the higher education institution. Both graduates of the program at Bahay Pagbabago ng Apung Pilar in San Simon, Pampanga, have unique but common experiences that highlighted the intra-faith approach to self-rehabilitation.

Surrender or Die

Though it cannot be denied that Oplan Tokhang has been the most effective anti-drug campaign in the history of the Philippines, it has also been remarked as the most violent. The two rehabilitees can attest to the previous statement. They attribute their surrender due to the fear of becoming victims of the anti-drug campaign and being salvaged or exterminated by the police. They have openly talked about it and implicated Oplan Tokhang and the fear of being annihilated as the main reason for their surrender.

The government has employed a fear-based strategy to let drug users voluntarily surrender to the Philippine National Police (PNP) or any drug rehabilitation facility or program. Though the turnout of voluntary surrenderees since the conception of Oplan Tokhang was overwhelming, and the results speak for themselves. Still, it cannot be denied that the methods used in this strategy were abhorring based on the family members' testimonies of victims of salvage and extrajudicial killings.

Spiritual-Based Support and Healing

Both rehabilitees have attributed the success of their rehabilitation to the concept of spiritual enrichment or an intra-faith approach to suppress or eliminate their appetite for the use of illegal drugs. According to them, the spiritual formation at Bahay Pagbabago unleashed the drug reformists' will to change for the better. Christ's love became the center of spiritual activities and the reason for self-transformation. The family support group became a significant factor for complete rehabilitation. They have also expressed deep gratitude to the facility's staff, especially to the priests who helped them with their reformation and spiritual journey. As mentioned in related studies, spirituality may administer a drug victim to steer clear from conceitedness and be encouraged to seek a deeper meaning greater than that of their problems in a world full of malevolence (Alvarez, Fabrero, Tanyag & Orbon, 2017).

DISCUSSION

The data that were procured for this study were consolidated and interpreted and have produced a profile for both the drug reformists and drug surrenderees. The research has identified crucial commonalities between the first two groups. Key major demographic factors, including the insights and experiences of drug reformists and rehabilitees, are discussed and presented according to the objectives' sequence.

Age as a Factor in Drug Abuse

The researchers determined the mean age of drug reformists, though the same cannot be said for the drug surrenderees, due to the lack of information and responses in the procured data. Nevertheless, the proponents were still able to

determine the age group where drug addiction was prevalent, which is at the 18 to 35 age class range – still consistent and applicable with the mean age of the reformists, determined at 34 years old.

Moreover, the results also showed that most reformists belonged to the 18 to 35-year-old age bracket. This commonality was identified by the researchers in both the reformists and surrenderees. In the Philippines, the age bracket falls within the age category of Catholic youth, 13 to 35 years old, as long as single.

Likewise, this study has also derived a considerable decline in the rate of drug users as individuals mature and as they get older. Studies have shown that drug use is at its height during a person's teenage years and early maturity and, consequently (Merline, O'Malley, Schulenberg, Bachman & Johnston, 2004). As the middle years of a person start, and individuals become more career, family, and society oriented the benefits and urge to use illegal substances tend to diminish (Merline et al., 2004).

Regarding the mean age relative to the respondents' first drug use, this study has determined that the average age is 28 years old. This number coincides with the data relative to the age group of first drug use of the respondents, which is near to the median age group between 18 to 35 years old.

Though the result is contrary to other statistics on the profiles of drug users in the country, in which most of them stated that the period of most vulnerability to drugs, or the first intake of illicit substances is at the adolescent or teenage years, the mean age that was derived from this study is still relevant, as it is also an indicator that not only younger people are susceptible to the suggestion of using drugs, but adults as well.

In research and practice, one often forgets to realize that it is not only the younger ones affected by drug abuse. According to Koechl et al. (2012), as cited in Li et al. (2017), drug abuse can occur and is not constrained to a definite age category.

Gender

Men and women are confronted with specific drug use problems due to both sex and gender (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2015). The proponents found out that males are more likely to be exposed to drug use than females, as attested in other statistics and studies. In research conducted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (2015), males are more susceptible than females in the use of illegal drugs. A similar result was revealed three decades ago (Anderson, 1997).

In a study conducted by Li and Caltabiano (2017), it was found out that males indeed have higher chances of drug abuse than females.

In this study, 95.4% are males among the surrenderees. It can be said that drug abuse is undoubtedly higher in males. Also, according to Briggs (2011), as mentioned by Li et al. (2017), this result is in unity with other studies proving that frequently males are diagnosed with drug abuse than females, which may be due to the reason that males tend to escape problems by using drugs.

Economic Status

This study showed most of the drug users come from the Poor (<8000 monthly income per month) households category, which suggests that most of the drug surrenderees are from the less fortunate ones. The respondents with a lower monthly income had the largest percentage of substance abuse numbers than the other

income classes. The rates in substance abuse scores in low-income groups were noticeably higher than those of the higher income group. This result provides strong evidence that the lower-income groups may be more susceptible to substance abuse versus their counterparts in other income brackets. Those higher-income groups may have the resources to rig the rules and escape from any penalty arising from their addiction.

It may also be implied that most low-income households turn to illicit drugs to moderate their anguish sentiments and use drugs to escape the unfortunate economic situation. Concomitantly, the increase in monthly income per month also sets the decreasing trend in drug users.

Drug of Choice

This study ascertained both reformists' preferred drug and surrenderees, which is Methamphetamine hydrochloride, or colloquially known as Shabu. It can be taken in several ways - it can be burnt to produce smoke, then inhaled, crushed and taken nasally, infused or introduced to the bloodstream through injection, or consumed orally (Volkow, 2013). Likewise, this drug is highly addictive and dangerous, given that it can cause psychosis and brain damage (Videbeck, 2008).

In a study of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2005), as cited by Videbeck, in 49 out of 50 states, there has been an incremental increase in the number of patients admitted to using methamphetamine. Relatively, Philippine Shabu addiction rates are massively high. The use of this drug is prevalent in all social degrees, be it low or high. Also, shabu is substantially a low-cost drug ("Shabu Use in the Philippines & Shabu Addiction Treatment at The Cabin," 2012). Along with the convenience and multitude of intake options, researchers believe

that it is popular among drug abusers. Additionally, it is more readily available in communities, especially in urban areas where drug use is prevalent.

The Philippines is still a major source of highly potent shabu, used locally and shipped to our neighbors in the southeast Pacific regions and Australia (UNODC, 2009). Therefore, it is asserted that because of the above-stated reasons, and parallel with other studies, no doubt Shabu is the most commonly abused substance in this country. Such drug use resulting in psychosis becomes a public health issue in the Philippines and the entire Asia Pacific Region (Farrell, Marsden, Ali & Ling, 2002).

Reason for Doing Drugs & Duration of Drug Use

In this research undertaking, curiosity has been identified as the number one reason for doing drugs. In a study made by Jaffe and Anthony (2005), continued use of illegal drugs is attributed to social customs, cultural factors, peer behaviors, drug cost, and availability (Videbeck, 2008). According to Boys (2001), the most popular reasons for drug use among the young are to relax (96.7%), become intoxicated (96.4%), keep awake at night while socializing (95.9%), enhance an activity (88.5%) and alleviate depressed mood (86.8%). In the Philippine setting, peer pressure has topped the list of reasons for indulging in drugs (Caday 2017).

However, those teens who engage and experiment with illicit substances ("Teen Drug Use: From Curiosity to Addiction," 2015) are likely to graduate to casual, then chronic drug use. They also tend to develop drug dependency and addiction in the later stages of substance abuse.

The study identified curiosity as the motivation which led most addicts to try drugs until a prolonged period was sustained,

thus developing into addiction. Further, drug use duration is at four years, inferring that the proponents' curiosity has led them to develop drug dependency and addiction. It was curiosity that killed the cat. However, among the youth, this is embedded in peer pressure and the lack of attention and guidance of parents and guardians (Caday, 2017).

Insights of Drug Reformists Relative to their Treatment

Through the efforts of the local government unit of San Simon, Pampanga, and spiritual-based and religious sectors, the Bahay Pagbabago ng Apung Pilar was conceived to help and eradicate drug addiction.

Through the analysis of responses elicited from the questionnaires and short interviews conducted at the facility, it has been ascertained that the reformists had an overall positive satisfaction with the facility's services. They generally welcome treatments that were provided and extended to them.

It is vital to determine the reformists' motivation and follow through with their rehabilitation journey. The majority of them answered "Good" when asked about their motivation to follow through with their treatment. The reformists also have an overwhelming sense of eagerness to be reintegrated back into their communities after undergoing the program, as evidenced by the high percentage of reformists feeling satisfied with the program. Further, reformists also stated in the interviews that they wanted to change people's perception towards them, as these drug users tend to fall into the stereotype or the common misconception that they are the scum of society. Concomitantly, acceptance from the family and peers would help lessen the risk of relapse among drug surrenderees (Alvarez, Fabrero, Tanyag & Orbon, 2017).

The involvement of the entire community and other partner institutions is necessary for realizing the vision of Bahay Pagbabago. Centered in Christ, every reformist has the opportunity to pray for healing and self-acceptance as a sinner. A therapeutic community is formed through the assistance and support of volunteers who provide treatment in care and unconditional service in their respective professional fields. Developing coping mechanisms, re-learning values, cognitive behavioral therapy, intensive treatment for substance use, empowerment, gradual integration in the community, the family's participation, and the significant others are all means toward the lifelong process of complete recovery (Ramos, 2017).

Currently, the facility also employs an intra-approach or faith-based structured program in which reformists are immersed in religious activities. Aside from spiritual-based interventions and lectures, the facility also applies a holistic approach to treatment by providing reformists with the tools they need to transition back into society through social sessions smoothly. Physical exercises and activities were also conducted to stay true to the holistic approach of drug rehabilitation.

In some facilities, complete rehabilitation does not take place due to so many factors and variables. Accordingly, drug rehabilitation is a moving variable when faced with many extraneous situations such as poor rehabilitation facilities and the lack of qualified personnel who have the heart to mobilize treatment and care for offenders. In some cases, offenders only graduate from a lower level of crime to a higher level due to increased crime networks and drug affiliations. This phenomenon happens in the rehabilitation facility where no faith-based approach is considered.

According to the findings, the other factors that led the reformists to change was their persistence to make it up to their families. Drug users can overcome the effects of drug withdrawal

and inhibit themselves from drug use through strong determination and will to change (Martinez & Guadamor, 2017). Such strong determination and resolve are grounded on the healing process of drug reformists. Other factors identified were employment, health, and education-related. All these factors are geared toward crime prevention and treatment of offenders (Sakai, 2005).

Conclusion

The desire of these reformists and surrenderees at Bahay Pagbabao to change is exceptional and astounding.

The study has provided a descriptive profile of drug dependents in Pampanga's province, the drug reformists at Bahay Pagbabago, and the drug surrenderees from Oplan Tokhang. This undertaking provided vital information through frequency and percentage distribution on the demographics of those currently exposed to drug addiction.

This study aimed to produce such profiles to paint a demographic picture of drug reformists and surrenderees. Both confirmed and found similarities for gender, age, income, economic status, and drug choice. The data analysis concluded that males falling within the age bracket of 18 to 35 years and those coming from low-income households are the most affected and most vulnerable to drug abuse.

Furthermore, another important intention of this research was to evaluate the insights of the drug reformists. Understanding their experiences during their rehabilitation was important to improve the processes of related programs around the country. This study has also concluded that most reformists, particularly in Bahay Pagbabago, were satisfied with the rehabilitation programs they have attended.

Notably, it was revealed that the Oplan Tokhang was the main reason for the surge of drug surrenderees. This program was proven to be effective in President Duterte's war against drugs.

However, the study concludes that reformation, rather than extermination is the key to saving people from drug abuse and addiction. The study concluded that rehabilitation through the intra-faith approach proved to be the most humanitarian form of the anti-drug campaign. It re-incorporates rehabilitees into society and their respective communities. Most people may not understand most of the life choices that these individuals have made that led them to use drugs; nonetheless, these choices do not disqualify them of the right to live a life with dignity, happiness, and security. The family, community, and society must have an important role in offering possible treatment and support for recovery and rehabilitation.

Limitations

One of the limitations of the study is that it is confined solely in this province of Pampanga. Admittedly, time and financial constraints hindered the researchers from covering the entirety of Pampanga. Only documents that were submitted and available were processed.

Regarding the data procurement, the accuracy of the research instruments used in this study could have been more certain if the proponents were provided with a uniform and standard interview or questionnaire guide.

Moreover, this study could have fielded more transcripts from other successful drug rehabilitees to ensure that the qualitative data derived from the source would be richer and more consistent.

Further, the study was constricted to the reformists at the aforementioned spiritual-based drug facility. The researchers could have interviewed and sampled more respondents from other facilities besides Bahay Pagbabago to strengthen the findings and observations rather than concentrate on one model facility.

Recommendations

It is recommended that rehabilitation centers in the country consider adopting the same or integrating elements from the program of Bahay Pagbabago to existing drug rehabilitation facilities in this country. The success rate of rehabilitation at that facility is remarkable. The intra-faith approach is highly recommended for genuine restoration. This kind of program rehabilitates drug addiction sufferers and enriches them spiritually, emotionally, physically, and socially. This approach may free them from the shackles of drug addiction.

Truth be told that when drugs take hold, it is hard to break free. Still, the researchers believe that rather than following the traditional and medically accepted rehabilitation process, it is recommended that a pro-active and eclectic standard drug rehabilitation program be designed specifically for Oplan Tokhang surrenderees. Since their journey and experiences differ and vary, their faith would be the center and interlink for complete healing. It would be the community where they must be unchained from the stigma of being identified as drug addicts but as normal human beings capable of positivity and change.

Further, this study may be considered to develop national and local policies about drug abuse, specifically for Oplan Tokhang surrenderees. The research findings may be baseline data to strengthen drug awareness in basic education (primary and

secondary) and prevention efforts, particularly among Pampanga's poor sectors.

It is recommended that a standard survey questionnaire or interview guide be developed to provide more systematic processing of data for future researchers. It is advised to observe caution on the results' generalizability since missing data needs to be verified.

It is strongly recommended that similar research undertakings be proposed in other provinces to provide a much broader perspective on the effects of the war on drugs in the country.

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