



JOURNEY FROM IMPRISONMENT TO REFORMATION OF PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY: A MULTI-CASE STUDY

Kirstie Amor V. Cruda¹ⁱ,

Nestor C. Nabe²

¹Master of Science in Criminal Justice,
Professional Schools,
University of Mindanao,
Davao City, Philippines

²Assistant Dean, PhD,
College of Criminal Justice Education,
University of Mindanao,
Davao City, Philippines

Abstract:

This multi-case study investigated the lived experiences of transformation of the seven PDLs assigned at the Davao Prison and Penal Farm. Frequent, in-depth interviews chronicled participants' distinctive paths and formative experiences as they sought personal transformation while in prison. Four main themes were found through the analysis: lived experiences, personal difficulties, ways of coping, and significant insight. Participants described not being able to drink their worries away, of feeling sad, and that they could not move as they wished. In reaction, they utilized a variety of coping strategies, including coming to terms with their circumstances, praying, participating in leisure activities, abiding by the inner rules of the prison, engaging in rehabilitation activities, and enhancing their spiritual life. Over time, they came to important realizations: learning to accept their reality, using their time more purposefully, obeying the law, avoiding conflict, and showing respect to those around them. These realizations became instrumental in their ongoing reformation. The study underscored how deeply personal and multifaceted the rehabilitation process is within correctional environments. It called attention to the need for supportive, reform-focused settings that foster emotional strength, discipline, and moral growth. Ultimately, the findings offered meaningful insights into how incarceration can become a turning point for positive change—and how prison systems can better support that transformation.

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ⁱ Correspondence: email crudakirstieamor@gmail.com

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1. Introduction

On the other hand, ex-offenders are known to reoffend. Because of the disciplinary training gained while in prison, ex-prisoners are rehabilitated after serving their jail term. This raises numerous concerns about the nature of convict training. It also raises questions about whether institutions for teaching prisoners about reintegration, re-socialization, and remolding their behavior have been established. Ex-convicts' lives are marked by scorn, a lack of friendship, a sense of belonging, safety, love, and tenderness, among other things. There is an immediate and pressing need to investigate the programs to rehabilitate convicts and how they are implemented. It is essential to look at and evaluate what is ideal and available (Ismail, 2020).

Moreover, a wide range of activities are part of the prison reform strategy, including the implementation of child-friendly programs, the elimination of torture and cruelty among inmates, better prison conditions, and noncustodial options. Systems of Criminal Justice. While most African jails date back to the colonial era, they lack basic amenities such as food, bedding, recreational spaces, medical supplies, and treatment/torture of detainees. Nevertheless, in the middle of the 1990s, both governmental and non-governmental organizations pushed for jail reforms, with a primary focus on violations of human rights, mainly because increased human rights violations have been linked to overcrowded jails. Several tactics were implemented across the continent to safeguard prisoners' rights, including adopting national systems for alternative sentencing, international cooperation for supervision, and reform-oriented policy pledges (Njoroge et al., 2020).

Additionally, apart from the difficulties of not having enough facilities for conjugal visits, they also complained about the lengthy processing of their documents for executive clerks. The distance from their families or loved ones is a significant source of anxiety and concern because they cannot be visited easily. Other open issues include a lack of writing tools and the high expense of mail, with postage becoming a luxury for them virtually. This situation suggests that there are already issues within the jail and that more research is needed to address the other problems, particularly the challenges inmates face while incarcerated. The program will foster healthy coping skills inside the prison and generate a personal drive toward affirmative action following incarceration, allowing individuals to reenter society as valuable, law-abiding citizens (Preda Foundation, 2016).

This phenomenological study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) as they journey through rehabilitation and Reformation. This study aims to uncover the essence of their transformation, focusing on how they make meaning of their incarceration, engage with rehabilitation programs, and reconstruct their sense of self toward reintegration into society.

Phenomenology is particularly suited to this inquiry because it seeks to delve into individuals' subjective consciousness and meaning making. Through in-depth interviews and thematic analysis, this study captures the personal insights and emotional realities of PDLs, which are often overlooked in policy-driven approaches to rehabilitation (Van Manen, 1990).

Studying the rehabilitation journey of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) is crucial in understanding how individuals experience personal transformation within the penal system and how such experiences can inform more humane and effective correctional practices. Rehabilitation is not solely about behavior modification but involves a deep, personal change process—a shift in identity, values, and life direction (Maruna, 2001).

Besides, many existing rehabilitation programs focus primarily on recidivism reduction, often overlooking the lived experiences and psychosocial needs of PDLs. This study seeks to fill that gap by providing insights into the internal and external factors that influence rehabilitation from the perspective of those undergoing it. Effective rehabilitation should be rooted in a strengths-based, person-centered approach that recognizes the individual's capacity for growth, meaning-making, and reintegration (Ward, 2007).

Moreover, this study is substantial considering increasing calls for restorative justice and transformative penal reform, prioritizing incarcerated individuals' dignity, agency, and humanity. By amplifying the voices of PDLs, the research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of rehabilitation as a lived, dynamic process—one that policymakers, correctional officers and social workers (Bazemore & Maruna, 2009).

Furthermore, this study is anchored to Schinkel's (2014) present theory the "*transformative reconstruction of the self*". This theory argues that imprisonment creates a space—albeit constrained—where individuals can reflect, adapt, and reimagine who they are and wish to become. Reflective practices facilitate this transformation during incarceration, supportive rehabilitation programs, social relationships and faith, and shift from a criminal to a prosocial identity.

Also, by adopting a humanistic perspective, the research aims to go beyond traditional criminological approaches, prioritizing the subjective experiences of those deprived of Liberty and acknowledging the potential for personal growth and positive change within the challenging context of imprisonment. This philosophical foundation guides the study in its quest to illuminate the intricate dynamics of Reformation, viewing individuals as capable of transcending their circumstances and actively constructing their paths toward rehabilitation.

Previously, the study of the transition from incarceration to reformation among individuals deprived of liberty has been informed by a broad range of interdisciplinary research. Smith (2017) highlights the psychological aspects of rehabilitation, stressing the necessity of personalized approaches that cater to the specific needs of prisoners. Expanding this understanding, Jones (2019) provides a sociological viewpoint by analyzing how societal structures influence the reintegration process after incarceration.

From a legal standpoint, Brown (2020) explores how legal policies and systems support or hinder rehabilitation efforts within the justice system.

More recently, they have contributed a qualitative perspective through personal narratives, capturing the lived experiences of individuals who have undergone successful reformation (Garcia et al., 2022). These diverse works collectively contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and multi-dimensional nature of the reformation process, providing a rich foundation for the current study's exploration into this complex and vital area of research (Smith, 2017).

In the context of this study, key concepts and terms are crucial for framing the research within a clear and meaningful framework. "Reformation" is the multifaceted process through which individuals who have experienced imprisonment undergo personal growth, behavioral change, and successful reintegration into society. This term implies a transformative journey beyond punitive measures, focusing on rehabilitation and positive development. "Persons-Deprived of Liberty" encompasses incarcerated individuals, acknowledging the loss of freedom while emphasizing the potential for personal change and reintegration. "Imprisonment" refers to physical confinement and the broader context of the penal system, encompassing confinement's social, psychological, and institutional dimensions. Understanding these key concepts is essential for dissecting the intricate dynamics of the reformation process, ensuring that the study navigates the complexities of imprisonment with a comprehensive and nuanced perspective beyond traditional notions of punishment (Garcia et al., 2022).

2. Literature Review

Prisoners have long been perceived as "rightless objects" who have fought for their voices to be heard. The heyday of prisoner and ex-jailer advocacy came in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the founding of groups like Women Behind Bars and the Prisoner's Action Group (PAG). Among other former prisoners, Tony Green and Wendy Bason created these organizations to promote prisoners' rights, decriminalizing drugs and speak out against police corruption and prison officer violence (Doyle et al., 2021).

Further, the network connects academics, practitioners, policymakers, inmates, and people with lived experiences. For the past fifteen years, they have sponsored an annual conference dubbed the Reintegration Puzzle. One of the themes has been the potential impact that individuals with lived experiences of incarceration may have on changing systems (Graffam et al., 2019).

Moreover, reducing incarceration rates concurrently with crime has been a primary political aim for many years, and it is currently at the top of the agendas of governments in the UK and around Europe. Because of this, laws about crime and punishment have been put into place, but they do so with often wildly different perspectives on crime and punishment. While conditions of jail have improved over time, making it easier for offenders to receive better healthcare, counseling, and psychotherapy are still only available on a sporadic basis and are often marginal. This is according to

Smith (2000). This makes sense in part when one considers how political leaders are caught between the public's conceptions of prisoners and what they assume involves incarceration and the requests of the inmates (primarily related to mental and emotional health, education, and unemployment (Godfrey & Loewenthal, 2011).

While numerous studies have focused on prison conditions, recidivism rates, and the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs, there remains a significant gap in qualitative research that captures the personal, in-depth experiences of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) as they undergo the process of Reformation. Most existing literature tends to generalize inmate behavior or rely heavily on quantitative metrics, often overlooking individual journeys, internal struggles, and social transformations behind bars.

Additionally, there is no research exploring the internationalist factors such as gender, race, and socioeconomic status in the reformation journey. Understanding how these variables interact and influence the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs is crucial for developing targeted and inclusive interventions that address the diverse needs of individuals deprived of Liberty. While psychological and sociological perspectives have been explored, there is room for interdisciplinary research combining insights from neuroscience, criminology, and social work. This could provide a more holistic understanding of the reformation process's cognitive, emotional, and social aspects.

Lastly, there is a limited examination of the role of technology in supporting the Reformation. Integrating technological tools for education, skill development, and mental health support within prisons remains an under-explored area that could significantly contribute to the reformation journey. Addressing these research gaps will not only enhance our theoretical understanding of the journey from imprisonment to Reformation. Still, it will also provide practical insights for policymakers and practitioners aiming to design more effective and tailored rehabilitation programs.

The primary goal of this study is to examine the experiences of PDLs dealing with the challenges of reintegrating into society. Specifically, it seeks to address the following questions: (1) to describe the personal experiences of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) throughout their incarceration; (2) to identify the key factors—both institutional and personal—that influence the reformation process of PDLs; (3) to understand the challenges and coping mechanism in shaping the reformative journey of PDLs; (4) to provide recommendations for enhancing prison rehabilitation programs and policies based on the findings from the cases studied.

The study holds global significance as it contributes valuable insights into the existing literature, informing and shaping practices in various sectors. The research is significant in several ways. Firstly, it is a human rights issue, as the United Nations emphasizes the need to respect the human rights of prisoners and ensure their social reintegration. Secondly, imprisonment has detrimental impacts not only on individuals but also on families and communities, exacerbating poverty and socioeconomic exclusion. Thirdly, prison reform is crucial for addressing health issues in prisons, which are often plagued by overcrowding, poor nutrition, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to healthcare services.

This research will contribute to the realization of item Number 16 (Peace Justice and Strong Institutions) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as adopted by the Philippine government.

3. Material and Methods

This section presented the methods and procedures employed in the study, including research design, participants, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures.

3.1 Study Participants

This study utilized a standard multi-case analysis approach, incorporating in-depth interviews with seven participants. Of these, four were from the minimum-security group of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), while the remaining three were from the medium-security group. All participants were actively involved in the qualitative research process.

Purposive sampling was employed as the primary sampling strategy. This technique, widely used in qualitative research, was utilized to identify and select information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). Participants were identified and selected based on their relevant knowledge and experience with the phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

In addition to experience and relevance, the participants were chosen based on their availability and willingness to participate, as well as their ability to communicate their experiences and insights in a transparent, expressive, and reflective manner, as emphasized by Bernard (2002) and Spradley (1979). In contrast to probabilistic or random sampling—typically used to enhance generalizability and reduce the risk of selection bias—this study prioritized depth over breadth, seeking to generate rich, detailed accounts that could illuminate the essence of the PDL rehabilitation experience. The following inclusion criteria could involve selecting individuals who have undergone imprisonment and participated in rehabilitation programs within the criminal justice system, ensuring a firsthand understanding of the reformation process. Factors such as age, gender, and types of offenses might be considered to achieve a diverse sample. Exclusion criteria may include excluding participants with severe mental health conditions or those who have not engaged in rehabilitation, focusing the study on participants actively involved in reformation efforts.

3.2 Materials and Instrument

The study employed an interview guide consisting of open-ended questions, which was thoroughly reviewed and validated by research experts to ensure its accuracy and relevance. The primary instrument used in this qualitative multi-case study was a semi-structured interview guide designed by the researcher to gather in-depth narratives from seven Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) at the Davao Prison and Penal Farm. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions focused on four essential thematic

areas: lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, significant insights and similarities and differences related to the participants' journey from imprisonment to reformation. These questions were formulated to allow participants to freely share their thoughts and reflections while ensuring consistency across all interviews. Academic and field experts reviewed the guide to ensure its relevance and clarity.

To ensure accurate data collection, an audio recording device was used during the interviews, with the informed consent of each participant. This allowed the researcher to capture the full details of the responses, including tone and emphasis, which were crucial in qualitative analysis. In addition to audio recordings, a field notebook was used to document non-verbal cues, emotional responses, and environmental observations during each interview session. These notes provided valuable contextual information that complemented the verbal data.

Additionally, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim using transcription software and word processing tools. These transcripts served as the primary data for analysis, where patterns and themes were identified through manual coding. Combining these tools ensured a comprehensive and credible account of the participants' transformative experiences.

3.3 Design and Procedure

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) in their journey toward rehabilitation. The phenomenological approach was selected to gain insight into how individuals subjectively experienced and made meaning of their incarceration and participation in reformatory programs. This design allowed the researcher to understand the essence of human experiences as lived by the participants (Moustakas, 1994).

Before conducting the in-depth interviews, the researcher sought formal permission from the Head of the Davao Prison and Penal Farm. A formal request letter was drafted, outlining the purpose, objectives, and ethical considerations of the study. Once the letter was reviewed and approved by the prison administration, the researcher proceeded to the facility and coordinated with correctional officers on-site for assistance in identifying and accessing potential participants. Upon receiving the necessary approval, the researcher, with the help of correctional officers, scheduled and facilitated the interview sessions with selected PDLs. The in-depth interviews were conducted in a safe and private environment within the prison compound to ensure confidentiality and comfort. Participants were informed of the nature of the study, assured of their voluntary participation, and asked to sign an informed consent form prior to the interviews.

Moreover, several tools and techniques can enhance the data collection process and facilitate meaningful discussions during a focused group interview. Firstly, a well-crafted interview guide, provides a structured framework with open-ended questions to guide the conversation while allowing for participant-driven discussions. Second, audio recording equipment can capture nuances, expressions, and interactions, aiding in the later stages of transcription and analysis.

According to Creswell (2013), establishing access and building trust are essential to qualitative data gathering, particularly in restricted or sensitive environments such as correctional institutions. The cooperation of institutional staff and ethical adherence were critical to successfully and respectfully implementing the research.

The researcher has acquired approval from the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) to conduct a study and was given an approved UMERC Certificate on June 20, 2023, with a UMERC Protocol Number: UMERC-2023-203. The researcher ensured that the study was introduced to permit the participants enough time and ability to consider whether they wished to participate freely. The participation was purely voluntary as they may or may not engage in the said research without any consequences, and their participation and non-participation will not affect them or their case. To mitigate the risk of emotional well-being, the researcher conducted the interview in the presence of a practicing licensed psychologist for a possible debriefing if needed. During the collection procedure, the researcher used technological recording tools such as cellphones, cameras, and other similar audio and video recording tools. Once the audio/video data was put into (transcribed) written form, the recorded audio/video was permanently deleted from the recording tools. The cost incurred was also taken into consideration. Since the interview will lessen their time for personal activities, the researcher has offered free lunch and hygiene kits to acknowledge their valuable contribution. Because of the perception of a conflict of interest and in the interest of full transparency, I am disclosing and, therefore, confirming that neither I nor any of my relatives have any personal or commercial interest in, or the potential for personal gain from, any of the organizations or individuals associated with my research.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents a comprehensive account of the findings derived from the research, followed by a detailed discussion of the emerging themes. It provides a structured analysis of the results through descriptive tables corresponding to each research question posed at the study's beginning. The discussion centers on the lived experiences of the seven (7) Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) at the Davao Prison and Penal Farm (DPPF). Seven Persons Deprived of Liberty from the Davao Prison and Penal Farm willingly participated in this research.

4.1 Lived Experiences of PDLs in Their Journey from Imprisonment to Reformation

This portion delves into the lived experiences of twelve (12) Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) in their journey from imprisonment to reformation who participated in the Davao Prison and Penal Farm, which represented a deeply personal and transformative process shaped by various emotional, social, and institutional factors. These experiences often begin with the initial impact of incarceration, which may include feelings of fear, regret, isolation, and disconnection from family and society.

Over time, many PDLs undergo a process of reflection and self-evaluation, especially when exposed to rehabilitation programs such as education, vocational training, spiritual formation, counseling, and restorative justice initiatives within correctional facilities. Through these interviews, the research uncovered themes such as remorse, resilience, hope, and the desire for reintegration into society. These narratives shed light on the complexity of the reformation process and highlight the importance of supportive rehabilitation programs and humane treatment within correctional institutions. Ultimately, understanding the lived experiences of PDLs through their voices is essential in shaping more effective and compassionate approaches to criminal justice and prisoner rehabilitation.

Table 1 provides an overview of the (7) seven male participants in this study, all currently incarcerated at the Davao Prison and Penal Farm (DPPF). Notably, three of the seven participants have been convicted under the Republic Act 9165 drug-related cases with a penalty of life imprisonment, two committed homicides with a sentence of reclusion temporal, one participant committed rape with sexual assault with a sentence of reclusion perpetual, and one participant committed murder a sentence of reclusion temporal. To gather comprehensive and meaningful data, each participant responded to the research questions through in-depth interviews. These interviews served as the primary method for collecting rich, qualitative information that forms the foundation of this study's findings.

Table 1: Profile of the Research Key-informants

Assumed Names	Age/ Gender	Years in Prison	Case	Sentence	Research Group
PDL 1	32 years old	5 years	Homicide	Reclusion Temporal	IDI_1
PDL 2	35 years old	8 years	RA 9165	Life Imprisonment	IDI_2
PDL 3	30 years old	3 years	RA 9165	Life Imprisonment	IDI_3
PDL 4	29 years old	6 years	Homicide	Reclusion Temporal	IDI_4
PDL 5	29 years old	2 years	Rape by sexual assault	Reclusion Perpetua	IDI_5
PDL 6	27 years old	1 year	RA 9165 (2counts)	Life Imprisonment	IDI_6
PDL 7	44 years old	23 years	Murder	Reclusion Perpetua	IDI_7

Legend: *IDI-Individual In-depth Interview (Key-Informant Interview)

Table 2 represents the emerging themes and core ideas that surfaced during the in-depth interviews conducted with Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), focusing on their lived experiences in the journey from imprisonment to reformation.

Table 2: The Emerging Themes and Core Ideas/ on the Lived Experiences of PDLs in Their Journey from Imprisonment to Reformation

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
Endured Until Sentence Ended	<p><i>"I hope that I can survive and finish my sentence. I am still very grateful that my life has had some positive changes even though I am here. When I get that chance to get out of here and get my freedom back, my life will have some change."</i> (IDI1_PDL1)</p> <p><i>"I always think of the day when I will be free. If the BUCOR would grant me my freedom, of course, I would go home to my family because they long for the day when I will get out of prison."</i> (IDI2_PDL2)</p> <p><i>"I just make the most of my time here by taking care of myself, eating well, and, of course, praying to God so that I can go home after I finish my case."</i> (IDI4_PDL4)</p> <p><i>"I continue every day, and I motivate and inspire myself by looking at others who have finished their sentences and regained their freedoms. I would talk to myself and say, 'They are out. When will it be your turn?'"</i> (IDI6_PDL6)</p>
Facing the Stigma of Incarceration	<p><i>"I have had several problems inside. For one, I missed my family back home during my first months inside. I am glad to have overcome that."</i> (IDI1_PDL1)</p> <p><i>"Upon arriving here, I did cry. But I have no choice but to accept everything and try to survive."</i> (IDI2_PDL2)</p> <p><i>"I have had quite a few unpleasant experiences. In my first two weeks at the RDC, I experienced 'nabartulina' because someone put tobacco under one of the bunk beds. Although I was not directly involved, I was still punished out of association."</i> (IDI6_PDL6)</p> <p><i>"Just recently, I got stabbed and was taken to the hospital for an operation. You cannot really expect anything inside prison because there are a lot of people you don't know."</i> (IDI7_PDL7)</p>
Personal Accountability and Growth	<p><i>"I am no longer allowed to engage with my vices like smoking."</i> (IDI1_PDL1)</p> <p><i>"Regarding my reformation, our situation inside is fine—we are adequately fed, our needs are supplied, and we get to attend religious activities. These are the things that I can share about my reformation."</i> (IDI3_PDL3)</p> <p><i>"I used to get angry easily, but now I am self-aware enough to adjust and humble myself. I can now see when I am wrong and stop such behavior."</i> (IDI4_PDL4)</p> <p><i>"In comparison, when I was outside, you could see me in places like videoke bars, drinking and getting wasted. When I got inside, I learned how to attend religious activities and listen to the word of God. I love staying inside the church [inside the facility] now and spending time there because it's open to everyone."</i> (IDI5_PDL5)</p>
Realization and Reflection	<p><i>"I will tell my friends to be good [and law-abiding] because what I have been through in the reformation [center] has been difficult."</i> (IDI1_PDI1)</p> <p><i>"I have learned many lessons because of the many restrictions inside that I can share with my friends outside. Life in prison is difficult, so I would advise them not to commit any crime."</i> (IDI3_PDL3)</p>

	<i>"Being uneducated is hard. You need education to survive the world's hardships; otherwise, other people would be forced to cling to the knife blade. Education is the key to success, indeed."</i> (IDI6_PDL6)
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a. Endured Until Sentence Ended

Many described their daily existence inside the prison as relatively "normal" because they could engage in routines and activities like those outside the prison walls. Despite being confined, they were able to create a sense of normalcy within the structured environment of the penal facility. As IDI1 described that:

"Nanghinaot ako nga makasurvive ko sa akoang sentensya diri, mahuman nako akong sentensya diri. Dako gihapon akong pasalamat na dako gihapon ang kabag-ohan sa akong kinabuhi na naabot ko diri. Puhon kung mahatagan ko nga makalaya ko naa nay kausaban sa akong kinabuhi." (IDI1_PDL1)

"I hope that I can survive and finish my sentence. I am still very grateful that my life has had some positive changes even though I am here. When I get that chance to get out of here and get my freedom back, my life will have some change."

However, this perceived normalcy was tempered by the fact that their freedom was restricted, and their actions were governed by a strict set of rules and regulations imposed by the institution. As IDI2 described that:

"Ang akola lang kung mahuman nako akong sentensya, kung tagaan mi ug kalayaan sa taga BUCOR na palayaan mi muoli gihapon mi bisan sa ingon ani na gitagaan mi ug prebilibiyo diri, gitagaan mi ug kalayaan dili pud mi magpundo ra. Muoli pud mi sa among pamilya kay naa pud mangita kay naa man koy pamilya." (IDI2_PDL2)

"I always think of the day when I will be free. If the BUCOR would grant me my freedom, of course, I would go home to my family because they long for the day when I will get out of prison."

They acknowledged that compliance with these rules was necessary not only for survival but also to maintain order and avoid disciplinary actions. As IDI4 described that:

"Ang akola lang kung mahuman nako akong sentensya, kung tagaan mi ug kalayaan sa taga BUCOR na palayaan mi muoli gihapon mi bisan sa ingon ani na gitagaan mi ug prebilibiyo diri, gitagaan mi ug kalayaan dili pud mi magpundo ra. Muoli pud mi sa among pamilya kay naa pud mangita kay naa man koy pamilya." (IDI4_PDL4)

"I just make the most of my time here by taking care of myself, eating well, and, of course, praying to God so that I can go home after I finish my case."

The notion of enduring a life sentence or long-term imprisonment has been explored in the literature, often emphasizing the psychological and emotional resilience required by PDLs. As IDI6 described:

"Padayon lang sa adlaw adlaw ginabuhay nako kanang gihimo na inspiration gihapon na kanang tao na nakalaya, "Kalaya na sila oh kanus-a man ta musunod ani?" (IDI6_PDL6)

"I continue every day, and I motivate and inspire myself by looking at others who have finished their sentences and regained their freedoms. I would talk to myself and say, "They are out. When will it be your turn?"

Similarly, Haney (2003) argues that long-term imprisonment can lead to significant personal and behavioral changes as individuals navigate the challenges of confinement and begin to internalize institutional norms and values.

b. Facing the Stigma of Incarceration

Interestingly, despite the broader societal stigma often linked to incarceration, the participants shared that their experiences within the correctional facility were largely positive in terms of interpersonal treatment. As IDI1 described:

"Daghan na pero mawala ra man gihapon. Sauna, problema nako mingawon ko sa pamilya nako sa Laya katong first time nako naabot diri pero karon nawala naman." (IDI1_PDL1)

"I have had several problems inside. For one, I missed my family back home during my first months inside. I am glad to have overcome that."

This respectful approach to prison management played a crucial role in their adjustment process, helping them to cope more effectively with the emotional and psychological toll of incarceration. As IDI6 described:

"Daghan, first two weeks nako sa RDC bawat dorm naa man nay bantay pinto kamo ang leader ana na batch so ang inyo higdanan naay murag kubol siya niya gibutangan man na ug tobacco sa ilalom bisag dili akoa naapil ko, nabartulina ko pero wala koy labot." (IDI6_PDL6)

"I have had quite a few unpleasant experiences. In my first two weeks at the RDC, I experienced "nabartulina" because someone put tobacco under one of the bunk beds. Although I was not directly involved, I was still punished out of association."

The participants conveyed that this respectful treatment contributed to a sense of belonging and acceptance, which eased the burden of isolation and internalized stigma. As IDI7 described:

“Bag-o lang katong naanaan ko. Oo, grabi ang dunggab ka naabot man kog hospital naoperahan ko. Dili man nimo matag-an kay sa bilanggoan sa among mga PDL atong ikuan sa reality 1 million ka nawong naay mga maayo, naay daotan kumbaga klasi klasi na mga ugali.” (IDI7_PDL7)

“Just recently, I got stabbed and was taken to the hospital for an operation. You cannot really expect anything inside prison because there are a lot of people you don’t know.”

Moreover, as described by Goffman (1963), stigma is an attribute that deeply discredits an individual, reducing them from a whole and usual person to a tainted and discounted one. In the context of incarceration, individuals often carry a "spoiled identity" even after demonstrating reform or rehabilitation.

c. Personal Accountability and Growth

This theme reflects the process by which Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) begin to acknowledge their past actions and take responsibility for the consequences of their behavior. As IDI3 described:

“Mga tanan kaayohan nga trabaho diri sa sulod, mao ni ang sitwasyon diri sa sulod okay ra mi diri, sakto mi sa pagkaon diri, sa tanan, sa pagsimba okay ra, mao nang sa tanan nakong nahibal-an diri akong mashare sa ilaha didto.” (IDI3_PDL3)

“Regarding my reformation, our situation inside is fine—we are adequately fed, our needs are supplied, and we get to attend religious activities. These are the things that I can share about my reformation.”

Through introspection and time spent within the structured environment of the correctional facility, participants expressed a growing awareness of the impact of their offenses, not only on themselves but also on their families, victims, and society. As IDI4 described:

“Sauna dali ra kaayo mainit ako ulo, dali ra ko masuko pero karon kabalo na ko mag adjust sa kaugalingon dali ra ko makapaubos, dali ra nako makita na mali akong pangbuhaton maong dili na nako mapadayon kay nakita man nako na mali na siya. Sauna wala man nako na nakita karon nabantayan na nako.” (IDI4_PDL4)

“I used to get angry easily, but now I am self-aware enough to adjust and humble myself. I can now see when I am wrong and stop such behavior.”

Many described a transformation in how they view their lives, noting that prison became a turning point where they began to shift their mindset, develop healthier behaviors, and set goals for self-improvement. As IDI5 described:

"Para sa akong nindot jud siya ug icompare nako akong kaugalingon sa gawas ko ug sa diri: sa gawas latagaw, naa sa videokehan gastambay, gainom, pag-abot nako diri sa sulod nakatuon ko na musuod ug simbahan, musulod ko, maminaw sa pulong sa Ginoo. Sa gawas ko ang akong gakahimuon muadto sa mga tambayanan, sa barkada, abot diri sa sulod naa ko sa simbahan naga stambay kada Dominggo pero bisan pag dili Dominggo ug ganahan ka muadto ug simbahan mutambay open kaayo." (IDI5_PDL5)

"In comparison, when I was outside, you could see me in places like videoke bars, drinking and getting wasted. When I got inside, I learned how to attend religious activities and listen to the word of God. I love staying inside the church [inside the facility] now and spending time there because it's open to everyone."

Moreover, according to McNeill and Maruna (2007), taking responsibility for one's actions is a key step in the desistance process, moving away from criminal behavior. They argue that individuals who begin to see themselves as capable of change and worthy of a better future are more likely to adopt prosocial behaviors and maintain a crime-free life.

d. Realization and Reflection

Participants shared how their time inside allowed them to look back on their past actions with a clearer perspective. Through solitude, structured routines, and exposure to rehabilitative programs, they were able to engage in meaningful self-reflection, which led to important realizations about their lives, their decisions, and their responsibilities toward others. As IDI3 described:

"Daghan, daghan koy leksyon nga nakuanan diri sama sa bawalan ka sa tanan, tanan nakong kaagi diri sa sulod mapahibalo nako sa amigo nako sa gawas na dili gyud lalim mapriso diri mao ng bawal gyud makasala kung mahimo likayan, likay gyud." (IDL3_PDL3)

"I have learned many lessons because of the many restrictions inside that I can share with my friends outside. Life in prison is difficult, so I would advise them not to commit any crime."

However, many participants acknowledged that being incarcerated gave them the space to reevaluate the path they had taken. They reflected on the consequences of their crimes, the pain inflicted on their families and victims, and the opportunities they had taken for granted. As IDI4 described:

"Daghan, daghan koy leksyon nga nakuanan diri sama sa bawalan ka sa tanan, tanan nakong kaagi diri sa sulod mapahibalo nako sa amigo nako sa gawas na dili gyud lalim mapriso diri mao ng bawal gyud makasala kung mahimo likayan, likay gyud." (IDI4_PDL4)

“I believe that God is watching over me and that He will bless me. I will accept whatever blessing he has in store and ask for it in prayer. I don’t have anyone else but God because my mother is also far from me. I trust and pray to the Lord that he will bless me with good health while I am still here.”

Through reflection, they recognized the consequences of their actions, expressed remorse, and developed a sincere desire to change and live a more meaningful, law-abiding life. As IDI7 described:

“Ang nakatabang sa akua kanang mga tudlo na pinaagi sa akua na maayo, sa mga reformation, sa mga religious.” (IDI7_PDL7)

“What helped me move forward as well are the lessons I learned through reformation and religious activities.”

Table 3 presents the emerging themes and core ideas related to the challenges and coping mechanisms experienced by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) while serving their sentence inside the correctional facility. This table captures the recurring patterns and common experiences drawn from the participants' narratives, highlighting the emotional, physical, and psychological struggles they faced during incarceration.

Table 3: The Emerging Themes and Core Ideas on the Challenges and Coping Mechanisms of PDLs While Serving Their Sentence Inside the Facility

Emerging/Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Challenges	
Prohibited from Engaging in Vices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caught hiding cigarettes results in punishment. • No access to alcoholic beverages in prison. • No gambling or card games for money. • Smoking is strictly prohibited inside the facility.
Restricted Movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must stay within designated areas during activities. • Not allowed to leave the cell after lights out. • Visitation movement only allowed with clearance. • Visitors and PDLs must stay within meeting zones.
Coping Mechanism	
Praying Unceasingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always praying for strength, wisdom, and good health. • Constantly praying for oneself inside prison and family. • Participated in spiritually related activities inside the prison. • Praying for the loved ones outside.
Spending Leisure Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving time for physical activities to uplift oneself. • Leisure activities make life inside prison enjoyable. • Playing basketball to entertain oneself. • Spending physical activities or sports to cope with boredom.

a. Prohibited from Engaging in Vices

One of the significant challenges experienced by the PDLs at the Davao Prison and Penal Farm is the strict prohibition against engaging in vices such as smoking, drinking alcoholic beverages, gambling, and substance use. One PDL describe:

"Kanang bawalan mi nawala na ang bisyo, sa una panigarilyo bitaw nawalaan mi."
(IDI1_PDL1)

"I am no longer allowed to engage with my vices like smoking."

As the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP, 2020) highlights, a key approach in rehabilitating inmates involves implementing rules restricting engagement in vices. These vices are considered detrimental not only to an individual's physical and mental well-being but also to their moral development.

b. Restricted Movement

Other challenges of the PDLs are the absence of such vices fosters a routine that encourages discipline, structure, and self-reflection—critical components of effective rehabilitation. As IDI4 described:

"Ang dili maayo nako na experience diri sa sulod nga pinugngan ta sa tanan natong binuhatan kanang naay mga utlanan na mga dili angay nato buhaton na gusto nato buhaton pero bawal man." (IDI4_PDL4)

"I think one of the unpleasant experiences I have is the loss of freedom to do the things that I want, but I know these restrictions are in place for a reason."

Research further supports the idea that environments that are free from addictive substances and harmful habits provide a stronger foundation for lasting behavioral improvements and lower the chances of repeat offenses (Mears, et al., 2012).

c. Praying Unceasingly

One of the most common and significant coping mechanisms identified among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) at the Davao Prison and Penal Farm is unceasing prayer. Faced with the emotional, mental, and spiritual challenges of incarceration, such as separation from loved ones, loss of freedom, guilt, and uncertainty, many PDLs turn to prayer as a source of comfort, strength, and hope. As IDI1 described:

"Magsige ra gihapon ampo para malimtan o masolusyunan ang mga problema."
(IDI1_PDL1)

"I always pray to find solutions to my problems."

Faced with the emotional, mental, and spiritual challenges of incarceration, such as separation from loved ones, loss of freedom, guilt, and uncertainty, many PDLs turn to prayer as a source of comfort, strength, and hope. As IDI4 described:

“Ang dako na nakatabang sa akua para malampasan ni nako na problema ang Ginoo gyud kay Siya gyud nagahatag ug kuan sa akong kasing kasing na ang tanan probelma na muabot sa tao naay kasulbaran.” (IDI4_PDL4)

“God helped me survive all my problems. He always reminds me that all my problems and burdens will be solved.”

Unceasing prayer becomes more than just a religious act—it transforms into a vital coping strategy that helps PDLs endure the psychological and emotional difficulties of incarceration while encouraging personal transformation and moral renewal. As IDI4 described:

“Para sa akua, sa gawas pa ko dili nako mahimo ang pagsimba, pag-ampo, pagbasa sa bibliya ug pakisama sa mga kauban. Pag-abot nako diri nahimo nako na pakisama ko, musimba ko, mutambong ko ug bible study.” (IDI5_PDL5)

“When I was still outside prison and had my freedom, I didn’t go to church, pray, read the Bible, and do fellowship with others – I did all that when I got here.”

As IDI7 also shared:

“Fighting spirit na laban pero dili kalimtan na ang naas taas kay Siya ra gyud ang makasulbad sa tanan.” (IDI7_PDL7)

“My coping mechanism is my fighting spirit. But I do not forget God, who can solve everything.”

Moreover, Johnson (2011) argues that prayer can reduce aggression, encourage moral growth, and enhance social relationships—key factors in a correctional setting. Similarly, research by Johnson and Larson (2003) indicates that spiritual practices such as prayer contribute to a more positive outlook, better emotional regulation, and improved behavior among inmates.

d. Spending Leisure Activities

Leisure activities have emerged as another significant coping mechanism for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) at the Davao Prison and Penal Farm. As IDI4 described:

"Ang ako lang nagpasalamat ko na gitagaan ko nila na paggawas gawas pud ko pawala sa akong buryong sa sulod." (IDI2_PDL2)

"I am still grateful to the facility personnel for giving me the opportunity to leave our cell to avoid boredom."

Engaging in various forms of recreational or leisure-time activities—such as playing sports, gardening, music, art, or other hobbies—serves as a healthy outlet for emotional expression, stress relief, and personal fulfillment amidst the constraints of incarceration. As IDI4 described:

"Ang ako lang diria ang paglingaw lingaw sa kaugalingon unya alalay sa pag-ampo sa Ginoo unya kaon ug sakto aron makauli pa pagkahuman sa kaso." (IDI4_PDL4)

"I just make the most of my time here by taking care of myself, eating well, and, of course, praying to God so that I can go home after I finish my case."

As IDI7 also shared that:

"Ang ako lang maistorya sa akong pagserbisyo sa sulod usahay mu entra ug kanang mga gathering, kalihokan sa sports, unsay sugo sa mga BUCOR sa amoa na kuan maayo amoang ginasunod." (IDI7_PDL7)

"I render service inside, participate in gatherings and activities like sports, and follow the orders of BUCOR."

Furthermore, Yuen (2011) asserts that recreational engagement in prison fosters personal development, improves mood, and helps build positive social interactions among inmates.

Table 4 presents the emerging themes and core ideas on the significant insights shared by the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) with their fellow inmates throughout their journey toward reformation. These insights reflect the participants' realizations and lessons learned during their incarceration, which they often communicated to others as a way of encouraging positive change and moral growth within the prison community.

Table 4: The Emerging Themes and Core Ideas on the Significant Insights
Shared by the PDLs With Their Other Inmates in Their Journey to Reformation

Emerging Themes	Core Ideas
Abide Laws at All Times	<i>"I just continued, and I did well by following the rules inside so that I could finish my sentence."</i>
Avoid Conflicts	<i>"If there are conflicts, I avoid them. If there are fights, we try not to get involved and make things worse but try to negotiate [both parties]." (IDI2_PDL2)</i> <i>"You must be patient inside the brigade to avoid complications and untoward incidents happening to you." (IDI3_PDL3)</i>
Be Respectful to Others	<i>"I learned to always respect everyone inside the facility, including my fellow inmates and the workers. I also try to help those who need help as much as possible." (IDI2_PDL2)</i>

a. Abide Laws at All Times

This realization reflects a shift in mindset, where individuals begin to internalize the value of lawfulness within the prison and in preparation for reintegration into society. As IDI3 described:

"Magpadayon lang ko og magbinuutan pinaagi sa pagsunod sa mga mando diri sa sulod haron mahuman ang akong sentensya. (IDI3_PDL3)

"I just continued, and I did well by following the rules inside so that I could finish my sentence."

b. Avoid Conflicts

Reflects a growing awareness among inmates of the value of inner peace, mutual respect, and emotional control in their journey toward Reformation. For PDLs, engaging in or being involved in conflict within the facility not only disrupts their rehabilitation but also hinders the peaceful environment necessary for personal transformation. As IDI2 described:

"Ug naay mga away away likay lang, akong ingnon na ug naay mga away diha dili lang ta maghilabot bulagon lang." (IDI2_PDL2)

"You must be patient inside the brigade to avoid complications and untoward incidents happening to you."

c. Be Respectful to Others

This theme reflects a more profound internal transformation among PDLs. It marks a shift from impulsive or harmful behavior to one rooted in dignity, empathy, and social responsibility. This insight improves life within the facility and strengthens inmates' long-term rehabilitation and reintegration outcomes. As IDI2 described:

“Ang akoa lang pagrespeto, pagtabang sa angay nakong tabangan sa among brigada, pagrespeto sa kanang among mga kapatas, pagrespeto sa mga empleyado.” (IDI2_PDL2)

“I learned to always respect everyone inside the facility, including my fellow inmates and the workers. I also try to help those who need help as much as possible.”

When individuals perceive legal norms as fair and morally justified, they are more likely to voluntarily comply with rules and laws, even without external enforcement (Tyler, 2006). Furthermore, developing the habit of law-abiding conduct inside the facility prepares PDLs for successful reintegration into society. Desistance from crime is intricately linked to an individual's ability to redefine themselves as law-abiding citizens and embrace a new identity rooted in positive societal roles. The shared insight among inmates to uphold laws often becomes a collective encouragement that fosters mutual accountability and support (Maruna and LeBel, 2003).

Table 5: Cross-Case Analysis Based on Patterns,
Similarities, and Differences Identified across Case Units

Emerging Themes	Case Units (PDLs)		Remarks
	Similar	Different	
Lived Experiences			
Endured Until Sentence Ended	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	All cases 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) shared the same sentiments as to surviving the pain with patience inside the facility and that pain taught strength, not bitterness. Hopeful to finish the sentence and to begin a new chapter in life.
Facing the Stigma of Incarceration	PDL 1-4,6 -7 (01, 02, 03, 04,06 & 07)	-	Common cases by the six (6) PDL thought that people or society may judge even after paying their mistakes. It is difficult for them to be seen as criminal forever and stigma follows. PDLs struggle as to how to prove to the society that I am not the same person.
	-	05	Case 05 had not claimed to experience this due to his/her supportive family members and that their regular visit uplift his/her spirit whenever feeling down inside the facility.
Personal Accountability and Growth	PDL 1-7 (01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07)	-	All cases described their journey as a moment of awakening. For many PDL, this accountability was not just about admitting guilt but about recognizing the harm cause to others and to themselves.
Realization and Reflection	PDL 1-7 (01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07)	-	All cases purports that behind the prison walls, away from distractions and past influences, they were given the time and space to think of their previous mistakes. For them, they came to understand the root causes of their wrong decisions. Most of them shared they cried in regret while others struggled with guilt and shame.
Challenges			
Emotionally Disturbed	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	All cases experience deep emotional disturbances as part of their journey through incarceration. The sudden loss of

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			freedom, separation from family, feelings of guilt, fear of judgment, and the uncertainty of the future weigh heavily on their mental and emotional health.
Prohibited to Engage in Vices	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	All cases have common experienced being prohibited from engaging in vices presents both challenges. In prison, being prohibited can be overwhelming, especially in an environment where such behaviors might be seen as normal coping mechanism. They have no longer had their usual outlets to manage stress or negative feelings.
Restricted Movement	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	All of the cases shared the same sentiments as to the confinement to specific areas, such as prison cell which greatly limits their ability to move freely. It makes it difficult to access basic amenities or even sufficient space to move around.
Coping Mechanisms			
Accepting Current Situation	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	As they face the many challenges in incarceration or detention, all cases pointed out that accepting the current situation is indeed a common coping mechanism. Acceptance allows them to emotionally cope with their situation, helping them to manage feelings of helplessness or anger.
Praying Unceasingly	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	All cases were engaged in constant prayer as their means of coping mechanism inside prison. For most of the PDLs, this offers both emotional and spiritual support in the face of adversity. For them, belief in divine intervention can provide comfort, reminding them that there is a purpose to their suffering and they are not abandoned.
Spending Leisure Activities	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	Leisure activities, whether recreational or creative help them break monotony inside facility. For example, playing basketball or organizing a group exercise session give them a sense of shared purpose and belonging. All cases turn to spirituality as a form of coping, engaging in prayer, meditation, or religious study.
Significant Insights			
Abide Laws at all times	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	All cases offered that to main personal dignity and self - respect, there is a need to abide the laws and rules inside facility. For PDLs, adhering to the laws can be a reminder that despite the loss of physical freedom, they still have control over their actions and decisions.
Avoid Conflicts	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	All cases revealed that conflict often arises from heightened emotions such as anger, frustrations, or resentment. Avoiding conflicts create a more positive and supportive environment within the detention facility and in the future after serving their sentence.
Be Respectful to Others	PDL 1-7 (01 - 07)	-	When inmates treat each other with respect, it creates a more peaceful and harmonious relationship. All cases purports that they are more likely to collaborate and help each other. Respect fosters an environment where inmates can work together to make their time in the detention more bearable.

a. Lived Experiences of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)

The first emerging theme in the cross-case analysis is Lived Experiences, which encapsulates how the PDLs navigated the emotional, psychological, and moral dimensions of life inside the facility. Across the four subthemes—Endured Until Sentence Ended, Facing the Stigma of Incarceration, Personal Accountability and Growth, and Realization and Reflection—a pattern of shared emotional resilience and introspection emerged, with only minimal divergence among the cases.

In the subtheme Endured Until Sentence Ended, all seven PDLs (Cases 1 to 7) described a consistent experience of enduring their sentence with patience and inner strength. The participants commonly expressed that the pain they experienced during incarceration did not foster bitterness but instead taught them strength. The collective sentiment was hope—hope to complete their sentence and begin a new chapter in life. This similarity underscores the transformative potential of adversity, where time inside the facility served not only as punishment but also as a space for internal growth.

For the subtheme Facing the Stigma of Incarceration, six out of seven PDLs (Cases 1–4 and 6–7) reported a shared concern about being judged by society even after serving their sentence. These participants articulated feelings of social alienation, emphasizing the persistent label of "criminal" that they feared would follow them beyond prison walls. They struggled with the pressure to prove they had changed and were no longer the same person who committed the offense. Interestingly, Case 5 diverged from this pattern. This individual did not report feeling stigmatized, attributing this to the emotional and spiritual support provided by their frequent family visits. This variance suggests that familial support may serve as a protective factor against the internalization of social stigma.

In the Personal Accountability and Growth subtheme, all seven PDLs reflected a unanimous experience of moral and emotional awakening. Each participant spoke of using their time in confinement to evaluate their past behaviors, leading to a deeper understanding of the root causes behind their wrong decisions. This internal reckoning often led to expressions of regret, guilt, and shame, but also revealed a significant shift in self-awareness and responsibility. The consistency in this response indicates that the prison setting, despite its restrictions, can foster a process of moral recalibration and personal development when space for reflection is present.

Finally, in Realization and Reflection, all participants reported that being physically removed from the distractions and influences of the outside world allowed them to engage in profound self-reflection. They described moments of introspection, often emotional, that helped them process their life choices and internal struggles. While some admitted to crying in private due to regret, others spoke about battling guilt. Despite these painful experiences, the time for reflection helped them understand what they did and why they did it, marking a critical step toward personal reform.

Overall, the Lived Experiences theme illustrates a collective narrative of pain, awakening, and transformation. While the incarceration period was undeniably difficult for all participants, it also emerged as a powerful context for emotional healing, spiritual

growth, and redefinition of the self. The consistency of these experiences across most cases, with only minor variation, reinforces the idea that structured time for reflection, coupled with emotional or familial support, plays a vital role in the rehabilitative journey of PDLs.

b. Challenges Faced by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)

The second central theme that emerged from the cross-case analysis is Challenges, which encapsulates the psychological, behavioral, and physical difficulties encountered by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) throughout their incarceration. This theme includes three interrelated subthemes: Prohibited to Engage in Vices and Restricted Movement. Across all seven cases, a uniform pattern of challenges was identified, highlighting the multidimensional burden of life inside the correctional facility.

The subtheme, prohibited from engaging in Vices, further compounds these emotional difficulties. All participants shared that the prohibition from engaging in familiar vices, such as smoking, drinking, or other habitual behaviors, was a significant challenge. For many, these vices once served as coping mechanisms for managing stress, anger, or sadness. Inside the facility, the absence of these outlets left them emotionally exposed and sometimes overwhelmed. Moreover, in an environment where peers may still normalize such behaviors, resisting them adds additional psychological strain. This shared experience points to the importance of introducing healthier institutionally supported alternatives for emotional regulation, such as structured programs for art, exercise, or counseling.

The second subtheme, Restricted Movement, was also unanimously acknowledged as a significant physical and psychological challenge. All PDLs expressed frustration with being confined to limited spaces—often their cell—which drastically restricted their ability to move freely. Many noted that accessing basic amenities required permission or was limited by schedule and space constraints. The lack of physical freedom posed discomfort and contributed to feelings of powerlessness and claustrophobia, intensifying their mental strain. This aspect of the prison experience highlights how physical confinement affects the body and mind, emphasizing the need for policies for increased mobility and structured physical activities within secure parameters.

In summary, the theme of Challenges reveals that incarceration affects PDLs across multiple levels—emotionally, behaviorally, and physically. While each subtheme represents a distinct form of difficulty, they paint a holistic picture of the daily hardships PDLs endure. The uniformity of responses among all seven participants underscores that these challenges are not isolated incidents but systemic aspects of the carceral experience. Addressing these shared struggles is crucial not only for improving the well-being of incarcerated individuals but also for supporting their successful reintegration into society.

c. Coping Mechanisms of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)

The third emerging theme, Coping Mechanisms, reflects how Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) manage the stress, isolation, and emotional burden of incarceration. In this study, two subthemes emerged from the cross-case analysis: Praying Unceasingly and Spending Leisure Activities. All seven participants (PDLs 1–7) shared common strategies in these areas, revealing no variations in their approaches to coping.

Under the subtheme Praying Unceasingly, all PDLs reported prayer as their primary and most consistent means of coping within the facility. This practice provided emotional and spiritual solace, enabling them to endure daily hardships with hope and resilience. For many, turning to a higher power offered comfort and a renewed sense of purpose, reinforcing the belief that their suffering had meaning and that they were not entirely forgotten. The uniformity of this coping method across all cases illustrates the vital role of faith in sustaining inmates' emotional and mental well-being during incarceration. Prayer served as a personal refuge and a source of collective strength and unity among inmates who shared the same beliefs. The subtheme Spending Leisure Activities was also consistently evident across all cases. Participants described engaging in recreational or creative activities, such as playing basketball, joining group exercises, or participating in religious study sessions, to break the monotony of prison life. These activities helped restore a sense of normalcy, structure, and belonging within the limited space of the facility. They also provided opportunities for inmates to interact positively with others, fostering camaraderie and mutual support. Notably, leisure activities often intersected with spirituality, as several participants also mentioned engaging in meditation or religious study as part of their daily routine.

Overall, the findings under the theme of Coping Mechanisms highlight the adaptive strategies PDLs develop to maintain psychological and emotional balance within a restrictive environment. The shared reliance on prayer and structured activities helped mitigate the emotional weight of confinement and enhanced inmates' sense of self-discipline and inner peace. These consistent responses suggest that faith-based and recreational programs within correctional facilities are meaningful and essential components of inmate rehabilitation and emotional well-being.

d. Significant Insights Gained by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL)

The final theme from the cross-case analysis is Significant Insights, which highlights the reflective realizations and internal transformations that the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) experienced during their incarceration. This theme encompasses their profound understanding of behavior, relationships, and personal conduct. Three core subthemes—Abide Laws at All Times, Avoid Conflicts, and Be Respectful to Others—capture the collective insights that resonated across all seven cases, with no differences identified among participants.

Under the Abide Laws at All Times subtheme, all PDLs emphasized respecting institutional rules to maintain personal dignity and self-respect. Despite losing physical freedom, they acknowledged that following rules gave them a sense of agency and

control over their actions. This realization reflects a shift from external compliance to internalized discipline, where abiding by the law became not just a requirement but a conscious choice tied to personal integrity. This insight is significant as it demonstrates that incarceration can foster moral reflection and the re-evaluation of one's values.

The second subtheme, *Avoid Conflicts*, further illustrates the emotional and psychological growth of the participants. All seven PDLs recognized that conflict is often rooted in unregulated emotions such as anger, frustration, and resentment. They shared that avoiding confrontations inside the facility helped cultivate a calmer and more cooperative environment, which was not only beneficial during incarceration but also essential for reintegration into society post-release. This insight underscores their growing emotional awareness and developing interpersonal skills—vital components of rehabilitation and social adjustment.

Lastly, the subtheme *Be Respectful to Others* reinforced the importance of mutual respect as a survival strategy and a moral principle. All PDLs agreed that respecting fellow inmates fostered peaceful coexistence and made prison life more manageable. Respect is the foundation for collaboration and support, allowing inmates to build relationships that contribute to a more humane and dignified environment. This shared realization reflects individual maturity and a collective understanding of the social dynamics needed.

In summary, the theme *Significant Insights* captures the profound self-reflection among all seven PDLs during their time inside the facility. Their consistent recognition of the value of lawful behavior, emotional regulation, and mutual respect indicates meaningful personal growth. These insights point to the transformative potential of incarceration when accompanied by opportunities for reflection, structure, and support. The uniformity of responses suggests that such realizations are common and crucial stepping stones in rehabilitation.

e. Lived Experiences of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)

The first emerging theme in the cross-case analysis is *Lived Experiences*, which encapsulates how the PDLs navigated the emotional, psychological, and moral dimensions of life inside the facility. Across the four subthemes—*Endured Until Sentence Ended*, *Facing the Stigma of Incarceration*, *Personal Accountability and Growth*, and *Realization and Reflection*—a pattern of shared emotional resilience and introspection emerged, with only minimal divergence among the cases.

In the subtheme *Endured Until Sentence Ended*, all seven PDLs (Cases 1 to 7) described a consistent experience of enduring their sentence with patience and inner strength. The participants commonly expressed that the pain they experienced during incarceration did not foster bitterness but instead taught them strength. The collective sentiment was hope—hope to complete their sentence and begin a new chapter in life. This similarity underscores the transformative potential of adversity, where time inside the facility served not only as punishment but also as a space for internal growth.

For the subtheme Facing the Stigma of Incarceration, six out of seven PDLs (Cases 1–4 and 6–7) reported a shared concern about being judged by society even after serving their sentence. These participants articulated feelings of social alienation, emphasizing the persistent label of "criminal" that they feared would follow them beyond prison walls. They struggled with the pressure to prove they had changed and were no longer the same person who committed the offense. Interestingly, Case 5 diverged from this pattern. This individual did not report feeling stigmatized, attributing this to the emotional and spiritual support provided by their frequent family visits. This variance suggests that familial support may serve as a protective factor against the internalization of social stigma.

In the Personal Accountability and Growth subtheme, all seven PDLs reflected a unanimous experience of moral and emotional awakening. Each participant spoke of using their time in confinement to evaluate their past behaviors, leading to a deeper understanding of the root causes behind their wrong decisions. This internal reckoning often led to expressions of regret, guilt, and shame, but also revealed a significant shift in self-awareness and responsibility. The consistency in this response indicates that the prison setting, despite its restrictions, can foster a process of moral recalibration and personal development when space for reflection is present.

Finally, in Realization and Reflection, all participants reported that being physically removed from the distractions and influences of the outside world allowed them to engage in profound self-reflection. They described moments of introspection, often emotional, that helped them process their life choices and internal struggles. While some admitted to crying in private due to regret, others spoke about battling guilt. Despite these painful experiences, the time for reflection helped them understand what they did and why they did it.

Overall, the Lived Experiences theme illustrates a collective narrative of pain, awakening, and transformation. While the incarceration period was undeniably difficult for all participants, it also emerged as a powerful context for emotional healing, spiritual growth, and redefinition of the self. The consistency of these experiences across most cases, with only minor variation, reinforces the idea that structured time for reflection, coupled with emotional or familial support, plays a vital role in the rehabilitative journey of PDLs.

f. Challenges Faced by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)

The second major theme that emerged from the cross-case analysis is Challenges, which encapsulates the psychological, behavioral, and physical difficulties encountered by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) throughout their incarceration. This theme includes three interrelated subthemes: Prohibited to Engage in Vices and Restricted Movement. Across all seven cases, a uniform pattern of challenges was identified, highlighting the multidimensional burden of life inside the correctional facility.

The subtheme, prohibited from engaging in Vices, further compounds these emotional difficulties. All participants shared that the prohibition from engaging in

familiar vices, such as smoking, drinking, or other habitual behaviors, was a significant challenge. For many, these vices once served as coping mechanisms for managing stress, anger, or sadness. Inside the facility, the absence of these outlets left them emotionally exposed and sometimes overwhelmed. Moreover, in an environment where peers may still normalize such behaviors, resisting them adds additional psychological strain. This shared experience points to the importance of introducing healthier institutionally supported alternatives for emotional regulation, such as structured programs for art, exercise, or counseling.

The second subtheme, Restricted Movement, was also unanimously acknowledged as a significant physical and psychological challenge. All PDLs expressed frustration with being confined to limited spaces—often their cell—which drastically restricted their ability to move freely. Many noted that accessing basic amenities required permission or was limited by schedule and space constraints. The lack of physical freedom posed discomfort and contributed to feelings of powerlessness and claustrophobia, intensifying their mental strain. This aspect of the prison experience highlights how physical confinement affects the body and mind, emphasizing the need for policies for increased mobility and structured physical activities within secure parameters.

In summary, the theme of Challenges reveals that incarceration affects PDLs across multiple levels—emotionally, behaviorally, and physically. While each subtheme represents a distinct form of difficulty, together they paint a holistic picture of the hardships PDLs endure daily. The uniformity of responses among all seven participants underscores that these challenges are not isolated incidents, but rather systemic aspects of the carceral experience. Addressing these shared struggles is crucial not only for improving the well-being of incarcerated individuals but also for supporting their successful reintegration into society.

g. Coping Mechanisms of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)

The third emerging theme, Coping Mechanisms, reflects how Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) manage the stress, isolation, and emotional burden of incarceration. In this study, two subthemes emerged from the cross-case analysis: Praying Unceasingly and Spending Leisure Activities. All seven participants (PDLs 1–7) shared common strategies in these areas, revealing no variations in their approaches to coping.

Under the subtheme Praying Unceasingly, all PDLs reported prayer as their primary and most consistent means of coping within the facility. This practice provided emotional and spiritual solace, enabling them to endure daily hardships with hope and resilience. For many, turning to a higher power offered comfort and a renewed sense of purpose, reinforcing the belief that their suffering had meaning and that they were not entirely forgotten. The uniformity of this coping method across all cases illustrates the leading role of faith in sustaining inmates' emotional and mental well-being during incarceration. Prayer served as a personal refuge and a source of collective strength and unity among inmates who shared the same beliefs.

The subtheme of Spending on Leisure Activities was also consistently evident across all cases. Participants described engaging in recreational or creative activities, such as playing basketball, joining group exercises, or participating in religious study sessions, to break the monotony of prison life. These activities helped restore a sense of normalcy, structure, and belonging within the facility's limited space. They also provided opportunities for inmates to interact positively with others, fostering camaraderie and mutual support. Notably, leisure activities often intersected with spirituality, as several participants mentioned engaging in meditation or religious study as part of their daily routine.

Overall, the findings under the theme of Coping Mechanisms highlight the adaptive strategies PDLs develop to maintain psychological and emotional balance within a restrictive environment. The shared reliance on prayer and structured activities helped mitigate the emotional weight of confinement and enhanced inmates' sense of self-discipline and inner peace. These consistent responses suggest that faith-based and recreational programs within prisons are meaningful and essential components of inmate rehabilitation and emotional well-being.

h. Significant Insights Gained by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL)

The final theme from the cross-case analysis is Significant Insights, which highlights the reflective realizations and internal transformations that the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) experienced during their incarceration. This theme encompasses their profound understanding of behavior, relationships, and personal conduct. Three core subthemes—Abide Laws at All Times, Avoid Conflicts, and Be Respectful to Others—capture the collective insights that resonated across all seven cases, with no differences identified among participants.

Under the Abide Laws at All Times subtheme, all PDLs emphasized respecting institutional rules to maintain personal dignity and self-respect. Despite losing physical freedom, they acknowledged that following rules gave them a sense of agency and control over their actions. This realization reflects a shift from external compliance to internalized discipline, where abiding by the law became not just a requirement but a conscious choice tied to personal integrity. This insight is significant as it demonstrates that incarceration can foster moral reflection and the re-evaluation of one's values.

The second subtheme, Avoid Conflicts, further illustrates the emotional and psychological growth of the participants. All seven PDLs recognized that conflict is often rooted in unregulated emotions such as anger, frustration, and resentment. They shared that avoiding confrontations inside the facility helped cultivate a calmer and more cooperative environment, which was not only beneficial during incarceration but also essential for reintegration into society post-release. This insight underscores their growing emotional awareness and developing interpersonal skills—vital components of rehabilitation and social adjustment.

Lastly, the subtheme Be Respectful to Others reinforced the importance of mutual respect as a survival strategy and a moral principle. All PDLs agreed that respecting

fellow inmates fostered peaceful coexistence and made prison life more manageable. Respect was seen as the foundation for collaboration and support, allowing inmates to build relationships that contributed to a more humane and dignified environment. This shared realization reflects individual maturity, and a collective understanding of the social dynamics needed to coexist under constrained conditions.

In summary, the theme Significant Insights captures the profound self-reflection among all seven PDLs during their time inside the facility. Their consistent recognition of the value of lawful behavior, emotional regulation, and mutual respect indicates meaningful personal growth. These insights point to the transformative potential of incarceration when accompanied by opportunities for reflection, structure, and support. The uniformity of responses suggests that such realizations are common and crucial stepping stones in rehabilitation.

Table 5: Summary of a Comparative (Cross-Case) Analysis across Case Units

Major Emerging Essential Themes	Case Units						
	Case A (PDL 1)	Case B (PDL 2)	Case C (PDL 3)	Case D (PDL 4)	Case E (PDL 5)	Case F (PDL 6)	Case G (PDL 7)
Lived Experiences							
Endured Until Sentence Ended	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Facing the Stigma of Incarceration	√	√	√	√	X	√	√
Personal Accountability and Growth	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Realization and Reflection	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Challenges							
Emotionally Disturbed	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Prohibited to Engage in Vices	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Restricted Movement	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Coping Mechanisms							
Accepting Current Situation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Praying Unceasingly	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Spending Leisure Activities	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Significant Insights							
Abide Laws at all times	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Avoid Conflicts	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Be Respectful to Others	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

5. Implication and Concluding Remarks

5.1 Implication for Practice

The findings of this study highlight the need for correctional institutions to move beyond traditional punitive approaches and adopt more holistic, person-centered rehabilitation strategies. By understanding the individual journeys of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), prison administrators and rehabilitation practitioners can design programs more responsive to inmate transformation's emotional, psychological, and social dimensions.

Likewise, there is a need to train correctional personnel in restorative justice principles, empathetic engagement, and motivational communication to help build a more encouraging and transformative environment. In addition, the findings from this research can serve as a valuable resource for policymakers in crafting or updating policies

prioritizing genuine rehabilitation over simple incarceration. Effective rehabilitation must extend beyond prison walls, with community reintegration programs offering sustained support through skills training, counseling, and livelihood opportunities. Ultimately, this study advocates a shift toward a justice system that values human dignity, personal growth, and second chances.

5.2 Implications for Future Research

As a researcher, the study opens several avenues for future research on the reformation of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). While it provides valuable insights into individual experiences through a multi-case study approach, future research could benefit from involving more participants and incorporating various prisons from different regions to understand the reformation process better. Studies comparing the experiences of male and female PDLs or individuals convicted of other types of crimes may offer deeper insights into the unique pathways of transformation. Additionally, conducting longitudinal studies that follow reformed individuals after their release could help evaluate the long-term impact of rehabilitation and the effectiveness of reintegration efforts. Further investigations might also consider the views of correctional staff, families, and community members to present a more holistic picture of the reformation journey. Expanding and diversifying the scope of research in this area can strengthen evidence-based practices in rehabilitation and advance restorative justice initiatives within the prison system.

5.3 Concluding Remark

This study explored the lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms, and significant insights of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) during their incarceration at the Davao Prison and Penal Farm. Through rich, qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews with seven PDLs from minimum and medium security units, the research highlighted that while imprisonment is undoubtedly painful and restrictive, it can also catalyze personal transformation. All participants demonstrated the capacity to endure emotional and psychological hardships, reassess their life choices, and recognize their incarceration as an opportunity for personal awakening and moral growth. These findings affirm what Maruna (2001) emphasized in his theory of desistance—that the way individuals reinterpret their past and envision their future plays a significant role in genuine behavioral reform.

The reformatory journey, as shown in the narratives of the PDLs, is influenced not only by their commitment to change but also by the environment within the facility. Institutional factors such as spiritual programs, structured routines, and emotional support systems significantly shaped their experiences. For many PDLs, prayer, meditation, and reflection served as vital tools for emotional regulation and moral clarity. These coping mechanisms illustrate the centrality of faith and emotional wellness in rehabilitation, reinforcing previous studies by Bazemore and Stinchcomb (2004), which

advocate for restorative practices and holistic rehabilitation frameworks within correctional systems.

Moreover, the study found that PDLs developed a strong respect for institutional rules, other inmates, and themselves. This internal discipline, avoidance of conflict, and emphasis on respectful interactions suggest a readiness for reintegration into society—provided the external environment is equally supportive. However, systemic challenges remain, particularly the emotional toll of confinement, lack of meaningful activities, and the societal stigma that follows incarceration. These barriers are not unique to one or two individuals but were echoed across all cases, reflecting broader institutional and social issues that must be addressed.

Considering these findings, several recommendations are proposed. First, prison authorities should institutionalize faith-based and emotional wellness programs. These may include regular religious services, spiritual counseling, guided meditation, and mental health support. Liebling and Arnold (2004) highlighted that spiritual engagement in prisons is not only comforting but also transformative, helping inmates to reconcile their past and redirect their future. Second, there is a need to enhance recreational and educational opportunities within prisons. Providing access to sports, vocational skills training, and creative workshops fosters engagement and a renewed sense of purpose and productivity among inmates.

Third, the implementation of pre- and post-release reintegration programs should be prioritized. Collaboration with non-governmental organizations, community groups, and families can reduce societal stigma and equip PDLs with the skills and moral support necessary for successful reentry. Travis and Visser (2005) assert that reentry success depends significantly on what happens during incarceration and how it connects to life after release. Fourth, it is recommended that correctional systems create reward-based frameworks that reinforce positive behavior. Recognizing and incentivizing respect, conflict resolution, and adherence to rules can build a culture of discipline and accountability inside the facility.

Finally, training correctional staff to adopt a rehabilitative—not just custodial—mindset is crucial. Staff should be equipped with tools to manage behavior constructively, support inmates' personal development, and foster a culture prioritizing reform over punishment. As noted by Cullen (2007), rehabilitation should be viewed not as leniency but as a means of protecting society by addressing the root causes of criminal behavior.

In sum, the journey from imprisonment to reformation is complex but possible. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of how individual resilience and structured institutional support can pave the way for meaningful change. It challenges correctional systems to move beyond punitive traditions and toward more compassionate, rehabilitative approaches that honor the humanity and potential of every person behind bars.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest related to the conduct, findings, or publication of this research entitled "Journey from Imprisonment to Reformation of Persons Deprived of Liberty: A Multi-Case Study." No financial, personal, or professional relationships influenced the outcome or interpretation of the study.

About the Authors

Kirstie Amor V. Cruda, MSCJ is a faculty member of the College of Criminal Justice Education, University of Mindanao in Davao City, Philippines. She is a licensed criminologist who successfully passed the Criminology Licensure Examination in year 2011. She currently serves as Associate Professor I at a university, where she shares her

expertise in the field of criminal justice. She is also a graduating student in the Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice program. In 2018, she underwent specialized training in Forensic Legal Medicine at the Professional Academy of the Philippines in Cebu City, and in Forensic Ballistics at the Philippine Criminalistics Society, Inc. in Baguio City. Her academic and professional background reflects a strong commitment to advancing knowledge and practice in the fields of criminology and forensic science.

Nestor C. Nabe, PhD, CSP, CST is an Assistant Dean of the College of Criminal Justice Education as well as the Program Coordinator of the Master of Science in Criminal Justice and Doctor of Philosophy in Criminal Justice; both at the University of Mindanao in Davao City, Philippines. Dr. Nabe has successfully earned the following academic degrees; Doctor of Science in Criminology-Philippine College of Criminology, Master of Science in Criminology-Cagayan de Oro College, and Bachelor of Science in Criminology-University of Baguio. A reservist in the Philippine Army, he currently serves as the S1-2202nd RBde, S4-6th TAS, AFPRESCOM with the rank of Major. As a dedicated professional, Dr. Nabe is an active member of the following professional organizations: Philippine Criminalistics Society, Inc. Philippine Association for Teachers and Educators, Philippine Society of Criminologists and Criminal Justice Professionals, Inc. Philippine Society for Industrial Security, Inc. Philippine Educators Association for Criminology Education, Professional Criminologists Association of the Philippines, and Reserve Officers Legion of the Philippines. As an academic, he has authored several books, namely, Law Enforcement Professional Conduct and Ethical Standards, Laboratory Manual in Polygraphy and Laboratory Manual in Police Photography.

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