

Assessment on the Therapeutic Community Modality Program in Parole and Probation Administration Office in Iligan City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the implementation of therapeutic community modality program in Parole and Probation Administration Office in Iligan City, Philippines during the calendar year 2016-2017 through the lens of the 70 parolees and probationers. Survey questionnaires were used to assess the therapeutic community modality program of the office by treatment category in terms of relational or behavior management, emotional and psychological aspects, vocational or survival aspects, and intellectual or spiritual aspects. Results revealed that the implementation of the therapeutic community modality program was effective and most of the rehabilitation activities engagements of the parolees and probationers had a strong influence on their perspectives and notions in the pursuit of changing their lives for a brighter future with their families. Therefore, recommendations were focused on hiring additional Parole and Probation Officers and the provision of ample support from Department of Justice to the office in all operational aspects and due recognition and appreciation of the national and local government officials.

KEYWORDS: community; justice; parole; probation; therapeutic

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1. Introduction

The increasing population in the world is unstoppable. Undeniably, it will lead to altitudinous propensity of criminality. The big picture implies that the inevitable issue of unemployment is one of the problems in the community which tend to lessen the resistance of many unfortunate individual to have a decent job to commit crimes for lame reasons. Once a person has committed a crime and after a due process in the determination of his guilt by proof beyond reasonable doubt has been conducted, correction programs will now come in. As a procedure, criminals will be incarcerated for the period demanded unto them to serve their sentence.

To remedy these problems, community-based corrections have evolved to lessen the probability of making the criminals commit another crime instead of purely reforming them. Hence, the Philippine government adopts the system of parole and probation. Parole is a supervised conditional release from prison granted prior to the expiration of a sentence while probation is sanction imposed on convicted adults or

adjudicated juveniles that occur in a residential or community setting outside of jail or prison.

Despite the adoption of the system, there were issues arising in the aspect of supervising the criminals once release had been granted. The fact that parole involves some incarceration prior to the release grant suggests that the average parolee has committed a more serious crime than the average probationer and, hence, poses a greater risk to the community. Therefore, the primary goals of parole should include crime deterrence and offender control. Given that most offenders will eventually return to the community, a rival goal is reintegration or the facilitation of an offender's transition from incarceration to freedom.

Meanwhile, probation is the period during which a person, the probationer, is subject to critical examination and evaluation [1]. It is a trial period that must be completed before a person receives greater benefits or freedom. Further, the enactment of Presidential Decree Number 968, otherwise known as the Probation Law of 1976, was hailed by criminal justice experts and practitioners as a significant milestone in the treatment of offenders in these contemporary times [2]. Probation as a science and an art in dealing with certain types of offenders, has exemplified compassionate and restorative justice with the context of social reforms, thus earning the tag as "pristine jewel in the crown of criminal justice system" [3]. The agency has continuously provided rehabilitation and integration of the offenders as productive, law-abiding, and socially responsible members of the community. Likewise, through the agency, the offender, unless disqualified, is no longer punished but treated and reformed and considered as a person of value with a potentiality for improvement were thousands of offenders who would otherwise have languished in jail, are now leading happy and fruitful lives with their families.

Under the therapeutic community modality program, one may be in a client role when receiving help or support from others because of behavioral problems or when experiencing distress. At another time, the same person assumes a therapist role when assisting or supporting another person in trouble.

The success of the therapeutic community modality treatment model is also anchored on the implementation of Restorative Justice. To highlight the Principles of Restorative Justice, offenders are recognized to indemnify victims and render community services to facilitate the healing of the broken relationship caused by offending the concerned parties. Mediation and conferencing are also utilized in special cases to mend and restore clients' relationship with their victim and the community. Considering that it is in the community that the rehabilitation of clients takes place, the utilization of therapeutic community treatment model coupled with the principles of restorative justice would be further energized with the recruitment, training, and deployment of Volunteer Probation Aides (VPAs).

The VPA program is a strategy to generate maximum participation of the citizens in the community-based program of probation. Through the VPAs, the substance of restorative justice is pursued with deeper meaning since the VPAs are residents of the same community where the clients they supervise reside. Thus, it is practicable for the volunteers to solicit support for clients' needs and assist the field officers in supervising the probationers. The Therapeutic Community treatment modality, Restorative Justice

paradigm and deployment of VPAs integrated into one rehabilitation program have yielded tremendous outcome in the rehabilitation and reformation of probationer. The basic purpose of parole and probation is to provide an individualized program offering a young or unhardened offender an opportunity to rehabilitate himself without institutional confinement. Throughout the period, law authorities will continuously supervise the probationers and in the event that they abuse such opportunity, the court will impose institutional punishment for the original offense.

The researcher chose this study because of her inclination to be one of the conduits of possible changes in the Parole and Probation Administration Office in terms of hiring additional Parole and Probation Officers, ample support from Department of Justice to the office in all operational aspects and due recognition and appreciation of the national and local government officials to the favorable impact of decongestion of the present status of the prison facilities in the country. Therefore, this study was conducted to assess the rehabilitation programs of Parole and Probation Administration Office in Iligan City, Philippines for the calendar year 2016-2017.

2. Methodology

This study utilized a cross-sectional research design in assessing the rehabilitation programs of Parole and Probation Administration Office in Iligan City, Philippines. The respondents of this study were the 70 parolees and probationers who were undergoing the therapeutic community modality program for six months to four years in the Parole and Probation Administration Office. They were selected based on the referral of the Parole and Probation Officers.

Survey questionnaires were distributed to the respondents to obtain data. The 40-item questionnaires used were adapted from the Therapeutic Community Modality Treatment Model and consisted of four parts, namely, relational or behavior management, emotional and psychological aspects, vocational or survival aspects, and intellectual or spiritual aspects. To elicit clear responses from the respondents, the questionnaire was translated to Cebuano. To assess its reliability, the tool was pilot tested to 20 respondents. The obtained Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha=0.91$) was deemed acceptable.

Before data gathering was performed, a written informed consent form was obtained from the respondents. Included in the consent form are the provisions that the respondent's participation in this study is completely voluntary, and if they decide to participate, their personal information would be kept confidential and would be used for educational purposes only.

The obtained data were descriptively analyzed using percentage, frequency, and mean. After the questionnaires were obtained, item responses were summed to create a score for a group of items. The instrument was interpreted using several scoring procedures. Average scores of positive items in the questionnaire were interpreted as follows: 1.00-1.66 = disagree/ineffective; 1.67-2.33 = neither disagree nor agree/undecided; and 2.34-3.00 = agree/effective. Meanwhile, average scores of negative items in the questionnaire were interpreted as follows: 1.00-1.66 =

agree/effective; 1.67-2.33 = neither disagree nor agree/undecided; and 2.34-3.00 = disagree/ineffective.

Independent t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to determine the significance of the difference in the assessment of rehabilitation programs by the respondents when they are grouped according to profile. A p-value less than 0.05 was considered significant.

3. Results and Discussion

The profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, ethnic affiliation, educational attainment, program under, and duration of treatment is shown in Table 1. Out of 70 selected respondents of the study, 45 (64.3%) were parolees and 25 (35.7%) were probationers. About a quarter or 27.1% of the respondents completed the therapeutic community treatment within 1 to 2 years, 22.9% completed the treatment within 2-6 years, 20% completed the treatment within 12 to 18 months while at least 18.6% completed the treatment within 6 months.

About four in ten respondents (40%) were young adults with ages ranged from 18 – 35 years old; about five in ten respondents (48.6%) were middle-aged adults with ages ranged from 36 – 55 years old; and about one in ten respondents were older adults with ages ranged from 55 years old and above. This result indicates that almost half of the respondents are middle-aged adults. Data also showed that 87.1% of the respondents were male, while only 12.9% were female. Result showed that more than half of the respondents (55.7%) were at least high school level or graduate, 27.1% were at least elementary graduate, while only 17.1% completed vocational course or at least college graduate with MA/MS. This result indicates that the ratio of respondents with vocational/college level/ or diploma to high school level/graduate is 2:6. Data also showed that 90% were Christian, while only 10% were Muslim. This result indicates that majority of the respondent's ethnic affiliation are Christian.

Tables 2-5 present the mean distribution according to respondent's assessment on the effectiveness of the therapeutic community program in terms of relational or behavior management, emotional and psychological aspects, vocational or survival aspects, and intellectual or spiritual aspects.

Data showed that the relational-behavior management treatment using therapeutic community program modalities such as individual and group counseling, community service, environmental and ecology approach were reportedly effective for the rehabilitation of the respondents (Table 2). Specifically, research showed that most of the respondents reported that they were expected to comply probation or parole conditions during the whole program. Bonding, identification, and trust with the Therapeutic Community family were established since behavior shaping tools were fully applied to the respondents. Hence, data indicate that this type of approach, assisted the respondents in sorting out their problems, identifying solutions, reconciling, and resolving conflicts. Consequently, most of the respondent's claimed that this activity did make possible for them to refrain from use of prohibited drugs.

Regarding community service, the study showed that most of the respondents reported that community service such as tree planting, beautification drives, cleaning

Table 1. Profile of the parolees and probationers.

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age category, in years		
Young Adults (18 – 35)	28	40.0
Middle-Aged Adults (36 – 55)	34	48.6
Older Adults (>55)	8	11.4
Sex		
Male	61	87.1
Female	9	12.9
Ethnic affiliation		
Christian	63	90.0
Muslim	7	10.0
Educational attainment		
Elementary level/graduate	19	27.1
High School level/graduate	39	55.7
Vocational course/college level/graduate/with MA/MS	12	17.1
Program Under		
Parolees	45	64.3
Probationer	25	35.7
Duration of treatment		
6 months	13	18.6
6-12 months	8	11.4
12-18 months	14	20.0
1-2 year/s	19	27.1
2-6 years	16	22.9
Total	70	100.0

and greening of surroundings, maintenance of public parks and places, garbage collection, blood donation and similar socio-civic activities were rendered by clients for the benefit of society.

Lastly, in terms of environment and ecology, majority of the respondents stated that seminars or lectures were conducted to instill awareness and concern among clients in preserving ecological balance and environmental health. There were seminars or lectures conducted on anti-smoke belching campaign, organic farming, waste management, segregation and disposal and proper care of the environment. Thus, results indicate that most of the respondents are satisfied with the received treatment in terms of relational-behavior management.

According to results in Table 3, the emotional and psychological treatment using therapeutic community program modality such as health, dental and medical services approach were effective for the rehabilitation of the respondents. Correspondingly, this indicated that most of the respondents were taught to accept one’s responsibility for their personal change. Motivational interviewing and counseling utilizing the principle

Table 2. Mean distribution according to respondent’s assessment on the effectiveness of the relational and behavior management treatment category by therapeutic community program modalities.

Relational-Behavior Management Treatment Items	Therapeutic Community Modalities	Mean	Remarks	Description
1. The activity assisted the clients to sort out their problems, identify solutions, reconcile conflicts and help resolve them.	Individual and group counseling	2.96	Agree	Effective
2. Bonding, identification, and trust with the TC family were established.	Individual and group counseling	2.96	Agree	Effective
3. Seminars/lectures were conducted to instill awareness and concern among clients in preserving ecological balance and environmental health.	Environment and Ecology	2.94	Agree	Effective
4. The clients are expected to complied probation/parole conditions during the whole program.	Individual and group counseling	2.90	Agree	Effective
5. Services in the community such as tree planting, beautification drives, cleaning and greening of surroundings, maintenance of public parks and places, garbage collection, blood donation and similar socio-civic activities were rendered by clients for the benefit of society	Community Service	2.90	Agree	Effective
6. There were no seminars/lectures conducted on anti-smoke belching campaign, organic farming, waste management, segregation and disposal and proper care of the environment.	Environment and Ecology	2.70	Disagree	Effective
7. Behavior shaping tools were not fully applied to the clients.	Individual and group counseling	2.63	Disagree	Effective
8. The activity did not make possible for the clients to refrain from use of prohibited drugs.	Individual and group counseling	2.50	Disagree	Effective
9. The program did not involve some family members in the rehabilitation activities.	Individual and group counseling	1.93	Neither agree nor disagree	Undecided
10. Individual and group interaction with the probation and parole officers of the agency is not build up.	Individual and group counseling	1.56	Agree	Ineffective

of coercion and dissonance as well as the knowledge of the stage and process of change among clients were conducted. Definite time of spiritual retreat was spent away from one's normal life for the purpose of reconnecting, usually in prayer, with God.

Not only good grooming and personal hygiene were shown to the clients but also, drug dependency test and laboratory examinations were provided in the program. Aside from counseling tools, which were utilized to increase client insights that complement the effects of behavior shaping strategies and reinforce behavior change among the clients, there were identified variety of groups in a treatment center including static, extended marathon, probes and specialty, or theme-oriented groups as well as their particular applications as a group. The researcher therefore concluded

Table 3. Mean distribution according to respondent’s assessment on the effectiveness of the emotional and psychological treatment category by therapeutic community program modalities.

Emotional and Psychological Treatment Items	Therapeutic Community Modalities	Mean	Remarks	Description
1. There were identified variety of groups in a treatment center including static, extended marathon, probes and specialty, or theme oriented groups as well as their particular applications as a group.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.98	Agree	Effective
2. Drug dependency test and laboratory examinations were also provided in the program.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.97	Agree	Effective
3. Motivational interviewing and counseling utilizing the principle of coercion and dissonance as well as the knowledge of the stage and process of change among clients were conducted.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.96	Agree	Effective
4. A definite time of spiritual retreat was spent away from one’s normal life for the purpose of reconnecting, usually in prayer, with God.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.94	Agree	Effective
5. The clients were taught to accept one’s responsibility for their personal change.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.91	Agree	Effective
6. There were no counseling tools utilized to increase client insights that compliment the effects of behaviour shaping strategies and reinforce behaviour change among the clients.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.66	Disagree	Effective
7. Good grooming and personal hygiene were not shown to the clients.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.53	Disagree	Effective
8. Each client is not assigned to a counselor for a specific counseling session.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.33	Neither agree nor disagree	Undecided
9. Medical and health services including physical examination and treatment, free medicines and vitamins, dental examination and treatment were not provided.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	2.08	Neither agree nor disagree	Undecided
10. There are no psychological testing’s and evaluation as well as psychiatric treatment provided for by the Agency’s Clinical Services Division and referrals to other government accredited institutions in case of distance.	Health, Mental and Medical Services	1.28	Agree	Ineffective

that most of the respondents were contented with the received treatment in terms of emotional and psychological. Nevertheless, there is still room to improve, especially there are no psychological testing and evaluation as well as psychiatric treatment provided for by the Agency’s Clinical Services Division.

Meanwhile, the study reported that vocational and survival treatment using therapeutic community program modalities such as work or job placement, vocational-livelihood skills training, client self-help organization and payment of civil liability were

Table 4. Mean distribution according to respondent’s assessment on the effectiveness of the vocational and survival treatment category by therapeutic community program modalities.

Vocational and Survival Treatment Items	Therapeutic Community Modalities	Mean	Remarks	Description
1. Vocational and technical trade classes such as refrigeration, automotive mechanic, radio/television and electronic repairs, tailoring, dressmaking, basic computer training, etc were availed.	Vocational-survival and Skills Training	3.00	Agree	Effective
2. The clients demonstrated responsibility through performance of assigned tasks.	Work or Job Placement	2.97	Agree	Effective
3. Client associations are served to provide some structure to the lives of clients where they re-learn the basics of working within a group with hierarchy, authority and responsibility much like in the bigger society.	Client Self-Help Organization	2.88	Agree	Effective
4. Client self-help organization are established wherein the clients form cooperatives and associations as an economic group to venture on small-scale projects.	Client Self-Help Organization	2.84	Agree	Effective
5. Vocational and trade classes were not coordinated and supported with local Barangays, parish centers, schools and civic organizations	Vocational-survival and Skills Training	2.73	Disagree	Effective
6. The client is not referred for work or job placement through the officer’s own personal effort, contact or information.	Work or Job Placement	2.71	Disagree	Effective
7. The program did not provide seminars and skills training classes like food preservation and processing, candle making, novelty items and handicrafts making etc., to help the clients earn extra income.	Vocational-survival and Skills Training	2.66	Disagree	Effective
8. The goal, focus and purpose of jobs within the treatment model were not understood by the clients.	Work or Job Placement	2.63	Disagree	Effective
9. Payment of obligations is not still instilled in the minds of the clients especially with their responsibility and the consequences of the harm they inflicted to others.	Payment of Civil Liability	2.58	Disagree	Effective
10. The payment of civil liability or indemnification to victims of offenders are pursued despite the economic status of clients	Payment of Civil Liability	2.18	Neither agree nor disagree	Undecided

effective in the rehabilitation of the respondents (Table 4). In terms of work or job placement, most of the respondents reported that demonstration of responsibility through performance of assigned task was effective. The respondents also said that work or job placement through the officer’s own personal effort, contact or information

Table 5. Mean distribution according to respondent’s assessment on the effectiveness of the intellectual and spiritual treatment category by therapeutic community program modalities.

Intellectual and Spiritual Treatment Items	Therapeutic Community Modalities	Mean	Remarks	Description
1. There are active NGOs, schools, civic and religious organizations are tapped to facilitate the activities and ensure its continuity.	Moral, Spiritual, Values Formation	2.91	Agree	Effective
2. Literacy teach-ins during any sessions were conducted for clients to become part of the module and become functional literate.	Literacy and Education	2.91	Agree	Effective
3. The program identified personal strengths and weaknesses and helps resolve to change specific negative behaviours and attitudes of the clients.	Moral, Spiritual, Values Formation	2.90	Agree	Effective
4. Faith in God as the primary source of help in order to change themselves.	Moral, Spiritual, Values Formation	2.87	Agree	Effective
5. Seminars, lectures or trainings offered or arranged by the agency forms the moral, spiritual, values formation of the clients.	Moral, Spiritual, Values Formation	2.80	Agree	Effective
6. Insights of the clients were not developed on their rehabilitation program through reflections.	Moral, Spiritual, Values Formation	2.71	Disagree	Effective
7. The clients did not acquire knowledge of the TC concepts, tools and processes during the whole sessions.	Moral, Spiritual, Values Formation	2.58	Disagree	Effective
8. There were no linkages with educational foundation, other GOs and NGOs for free school supplies, bags and uniform for client’s children and relatives.	Literacy and Education	2.56	Disagree	Effective
9. Activities that provide physical exertion like sports, games and group play were not conducted to enhance the physical well-being of the clients	Sports and Physical Fitness	2.37	Disagree	Effective
10. Adult education classes were not availed and helped clients learn basic writing, reading and arithmetic.	Literacy and Education	2.06	Neither agree nor disagree	Undecided

was effective. Also, data indicated that most of the respondents understood the goal, focus and purpose of jobs within the treatment model.

Moreover, majority of the respondents found the vocational-livelihood skills training as effective program, since the program had provided them seminars and skills training classes like food preservation and processing, candle making, novelty items and handicrafts making and the like that enabled them to earn extra income, refrigeration, automotive mechanic, radio or television and the like. Most of the respondents also reported that vocational and trade classes were coordinated and supported by the local barangays, parish centers, schools, and civic organizations.

Similarly, most of the respondents reported that client self-help organization were established wherein the respondents formed cooperatives and associations as an economic group to venture on small-scale projects. Thus, these associations served as a platform where they re-learn the basics of working with a group with hierarchy, authority, and responsibility much like in the bigger society.

Finally, in terms of payment of civil liability, most of the respondent disclosed that payment obligations were still instilled in their minds especially with their responsibility and the consequences of the harm they inflicted to others. However, majority of them neither disagree nor agree whether payment of civil liability or indemnification to victims of offenders were pursued despite their economic status. Thus, this study indicates that most of the respondents are satisfied with the received treatment in terms of vocational and survival treatment.

On the other hand, the study established that intellectual and spiritual treatment using therapeutic community program modalities such as moral, spiritual, values formation; literacy and education; sports and physical fitness were effective in the rehabilitation of the respondents (Table 5). Data revealed that most of the respondents agreed that the seminars, lectures, or trainings offered or arranged by the agency formed the moral, spiritual, values formation. Most of the respondents claimed that the program, which helped identified personal strengths and weaknesses and helped resolved specific negative behaviors and attitudes were effective. Moreover, most of the respondents considered faith in God as the primary source of help to change themselves. The respondents had acquired knowledge of the Therapeutic Community concepts, tools, and processes during the whole sessions. Thus, insights of the clients were also developed on their rehabilitation program through reflections. Active NGOs, schools, civic and religious organizations were tapped to facilitate the activities and ensure its continuity.

In terms of literacy and education, the respondents reported that literacy teachings during any session were conducted and there were linkages with educational foundation, other government office and NGOs for free school supplies. However, most of the respondents were undecided when asked about basic writing, reading and arithmetic. Lastly, most of the respondents reported that the program provided them activities such sports, games, and group play to enhance their physical well-being. The results indicate that relatively, most of the respondents are satisfied with the received treatment in terms of intellectual and spiritual.

Independent t-test and ANOVA were used to determine the significance of the difference in the assessment of rehabilitation programs by the respondents when they are grouped according to profile. No difference exists in the ratings of the respondents when they are grouped according to age, sex, ethnic affiliation, educational attainment, program under, and duration of treatment.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This study highlights how the parolees and probationers assessed the rehabilitation programs of the Parole and Probation Administration Office in Iligan City, particularly the therapeutic community modality program implemented by the

office for the reformation of the clients. Based on the results of the study, the said program was effective and most of the rehabilitation activities engagements of the parolees and probationers had a strong influence on their perspectives and notions in the pursuit of changing their lives for a brighter future with their families.

In relation with the findings and conclusions of the research, the following are the recommendations:

- The Department of Justice – Parole and Probation Administration should maintain its good relationship and partnership with the volunteer religious groups. Regular bible study sessions may be conducted. The Department of Justice – Parole and Probation Administration may also request the continued assistance of academic institutions and other non-government organizations to impart formal and non-formal education to the clients.
- The focal person of Department of Justice – Parole and Probation Administration may develop more partnerships and linkages with other government and non-government organizations to help them improve vocational training for parolees and probationers. Also, they may link with other organizations that can assist the clients in job placement upon termination of the program.
- The government may hire additional numbers of parole and probation officers who will implement the rehabilitation programs and supervise the clients.
- Future studies may be conducted which would focus on other factors affecting the assessment on the parole and probation rehabilitation program in terms of therapeutic communities' modalities.
- Further studies may also be conducted by comparing the efficacy of TC program and other types of treatment settings for parolees and probationers.
- Finally, future studies may include include other group of probationers and parolees based on various possible factors that could strengthen the community-based corrections.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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