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Transformative Learning Behind Bars: A Jail-Based Framework for Moral Recovery and Development

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Abstract. Correctional facilities increasingly recognize education as a pathway to rehabilitation and social reintegration, particularly in contexts where access to structured learning is limited. This mixed-methods study evaluates a five-year (2017–2021) jail-based rehabilitation program

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integrating literacy instruction, livelihood training, and moral development for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) at a Philippine regional correctional facility. Literature highlights the transformative value of correctional education, yet research on integrated models combining academic, economic, and psychosocial components remains limited in the Philippine context. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and included only PDLs who participated in the literacy, livelihood, and moral development components of the program during the five-year period. Guided by restorative justice and transformative learning theories, the study analyzed the Alternative Learning System Accreditation and Equivalency outcomes involving 112 PDLs across five cohorts alongside livelihood financial records and complemented these with thematic analysis of participant testimonies and reflections. Results show a strong secondary-level Accreditation and Equivalency passing rate, with a 96.91 percent average and a 90 percent proceeds allocation to PDLs from livelihood activities, indicating consistent educational gains and economic viability. Qualitative findings revealed increased gratitude, resilience, and moral renewal, demonstrating notable psychosocial transformation. While the study was limited by its single-site scope and reliance on available institutional records, the results affirm that comprehensive, education-driven rehabilitation supports human capital development and aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on quality education and peace, justice, and strong institutions. The study recommends strengthening foundational literacy support, expanding facilitator training, and scaling up integrated jail-based rehabilitation models to enhance reintegration outcomes.

Keywords: correctional education; Persons Deprived of Liberty; Alternative Learning System; livelihood training; social reintegration

1. Introduction

The concept of rehabilitative education is being increasingly recognized as an essential strategy for addressing societal issues such as illiteracy, unemployment, and recidivism among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). The Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the Higher Education Act of 1994, mandates State Universities and Colleges to contribute actively to social transformation by extending programs to marginalized sectors, including PDLs. In line with this, a jail-based model was conceptualized to provide a comprehensive program aimed at reducing illiteracy, fostering livelihood opportunities, and strengthening moral and physical resilience. These objectives align with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly regarding quality education (SDG 4), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), and peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16).

Existing research highlights the transformative potential of education in correctional settings, demonstrating that alternative learning programs provide renewed purpose, improved literacy, and stronger self-esteem, which function as assets that support reintegration. Such programs also enable persons deprived of liberty to cope with challenges including limited resources, family constraints,

and class interruptions through faith, resilience, and optimism, which are further reinforced by sustained educational engagement (Bermudez, 2024).

Research further confirms that competencies gained through correctional education enhance employability and economic participation upon release, demonstrating a clear link between education and livelihood opportunities (Faa, 2023). Studies also indicate that jail-based programs contribute not only to literacy but also to moral recovery and social reintegration, suggesting a holistic foundation for rehabilitation (Cortez & Dioso, 2023). In addition, digital and socio-cognitive enrichment activities have been shown to strengthen inmate engagement and learning outcomes, demonstrating how secure educational platforms can support rehabilitation inside correctional facilities (Antonopoulou et al., 2022). Community-based and institutional partnerships also play a crucial role in strengthening the implementation of the Alternative Learning System (ALS), as stakeholder involvement enhances program delivery, support systems, and continuity of learning (Cayabas et al., 2023).

The jail-based program is anchored in a Jail-Based Developmental Framework that integrates three interrelated components: the Literacy Project, the Livelihood Project, and the Physical and Emotional Development Program. As shown in Figure 1, the Literacy Project equips PDLs with functional education through the ALS and prepares them for the Accreditation and Equivalency (A&E) test; this is consistent with literacy development practices noted by Smiley et al. (2020) and local ALS outcomes reported by Ravelas et al. (2024). The Livelihood Project introduces vocational training such as swab-making, basket weaving, and fan production, generating income and preparing program beneficiaries, specifically PDLs enrolled in the livelihood intervention, for employment after release, aligning with recent livelihood support initiatives for PDLs highlighted by Rapisora (2024).

The Physical and Emotional Development Program emphasizes values formation, spiritual sessions, and fitness activities that strengthen moral character, discipline, and resilience. The framework also demonstrates collaboration among the Department of Education (DepEd), the university, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), and inmate organizations. This integrated structure distinguishes the model from other ALS initiatives that typically focus only on academic instruction rather than combining literacy, livelihood, and moral formation within one system.

Despite these promising initiatives, a gap remains in assessing how integrated models such as this foster rehabilitation among PDLs. While existing studies discuss ALS outcomes, coping strategies, and individual experiences inside correctional facilities, limited research examines comprehensive frameworks that combine literacy, livelihood, and moral recovery in a single program. Labarette and Tiopes (2023) explore the experiences of PDLs enrolled in ALS Behind Bars, while Agustin et al. (2024) describe the lived realities of incarcerated learners; however, both studies focus on isolated components rather than a fully integrated rehabilitation approach. Few studies have empirically tested a holistic, education-

driven rehabilitation model in the Philippine correctional context, highlighting the need for research that evaluates how interconnected components contribute collectively to rehabilitation.

The general objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of a jail-based developmental framework in enhancing the educational attainment, livelihood skills, moral recovery, and social reintegration readiness of PDLs. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How do PDLs perform academically based on their ALS A&E test outcomes?
2. How effective are the program's livelihood training activities in enhancing the economic productivity of PDLs?
3. How do the program's moral recovery, spiritual, and developmental activities influence the emotional and psychological well-being of PDLs?
4. In what ways does participation in the program contribute to social reintegration readiness among PDLs?
5. What implementation challenges and contextual barriers affect the delivery of literacy, livelihood, and moral development initiatives in the correctional setting?
6. Based on the findings, what improvements can be recommended to strengthen the integrated jail-based developmental framework?

This study is relevant not only to the local correctional setting but also to other contexts seeking to strengthen rehabilitation through education. Many countries face similar challenges related to recidivism, limited access to learning programs, and the need for livelihood opportunities inside correctional facilities. Comparable international analyses highlight these concerns, including Weinbren's (2023) review of peace-building education in custody and Zitko's (2021) call to redesign correctional learning for 21st-century needs. The integrated model examined in this study, which combines literacy, skills training, and moral development, offers practices that are adaptable to institutions pursuing holistic and humane rehabilitation. To address these research questions, the study employed a mixed-methods action research design that captured both measurable outcomes and personal experiences.

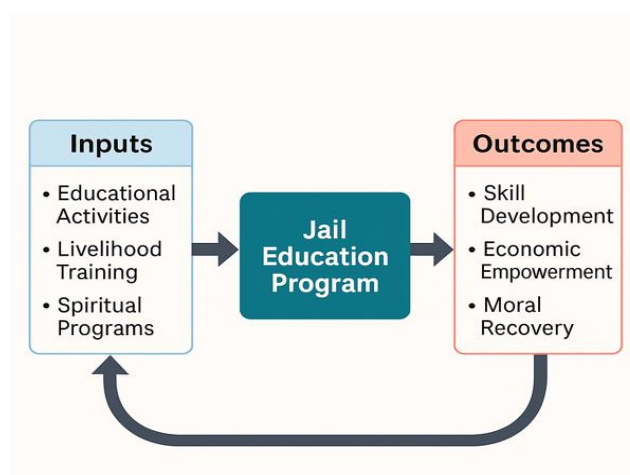


Figure 1: Jail-based developmental framework

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

Building on these initial insights, the following section reviews key scholarly work on correctional education and transformative learning.

2.1 Theoretical Underpinnings of Jail-Based Rehabilitation Programs

Restorative justice remains central in modern rehabilitation, emphasizing accountability, harm repair, and community reintegration. Chloupis and Kontompasi (2025) highlight that education reduces recidivism, strengthens moral responsibility, and promotes personal growth. The Social Discipline Window supports this by illustrating how balanced control and support contribute to empowerment.

Transformative justice adds a broader lens by confronting systemic inequalities (Abramson & Roberts, 2023). Several studies show that education enables PDLs to rebuild identity and develop agencies. Reamico (2022) stresses the role of resilience, support systems, and skills training in reintegration. Ortaleza and Nabe (2024) document how participatory correctional programs foster empathy, discipline, and self-awareness. Recent international evidence also affirms that rehabilitative education promotes civic responsibility and moral renewal, as demonstrated in a large-scale scoping review of prison-education research by Berglund et al. (2025) and supported by related findings from the United Kingdom and Nordic regions (Hopkins & Farley, 2015).

These theoretical perspectives directly inform the present study because they emphasize education, moral renewal, and community preparation as key elements of rehabilitation. The program examined in this research reflects these principles by integrating literacy, livelihood development, and values formation within a single jail-based framework. By grounding the intervention in restorative and transformative justice, the study examines how education-driven approaches can strengthen accountability, foster personal growth, and prepare PDLs for reintegration, consistent with the directions outlined in previous research.

2.2 Correctional Education and Developmental Programs

Correctional education serves as a pathway to literacy, self-worth, and social inclusion. Labarrete and Tiopes (2023) highlight the Philippine ALS Behind Bars initiative as a transformative program aligned with UNESCO's (2021) view of prison education as a human right and consistent with ALS outcomes described by Castillo (2024) and Azarcon (2024). Cortez and Dioso (2023) emphasize gains in literacy and self-efficacy, while Bermudez (2024) notes that resilience and faith help learners to navigate resource constraints and family challenges.

Similar learner experiences have been documented in studies of PDL contexts by Cano et al. (2023) and Flores-Barolo and Vicente (2019). International research likewise reports increased hope, employability, and social integration among participating inmates (Erisman & Contardo, 2020; Hopkins & Farley, 2015). Policy-level analyses reinforce these outcomes. Faa (2023) documented successful reintegration among 128 ALS passers in Metro Manila, while Sagge et al. (2023) identified literacy, numeracy, and livelihood as core competencies for re-entry.

These findings are consistent with Case and Hazel's (2020) progressive model for skills-based education in custody.

Although many studies highlight the value of correctional education, very few examine programs that bring together literacy, livelihood, and moral development in a single, integrated rehabilitation model within Philippine jail settings. Most existing research looks at these components separately rather than as parts of a unified approach. Because of this, there is a need for a study that carefully evaluates a holistic rehabilitation program using a mixed-methods design, focusing on how it supports learning, economic readiness, and personal transformation among persons deprived of liberty (PDLs).

These studies relate directly to the present investigation by showing that literacy, livelihood training, and moral development are central to effective rehabilitation. They highlight the need to examine integrated models such as the program evaluated in this study that brings these components together within one framework. This connection situates the study within existing research while demonstrating how the program extends current approaches to education-driven rehabilitation.

3. Methodology

Given the limited number of studies that examine fully integrated jail-based rehabilitation models, this research used a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design to evaluate how literacy, livelihood, and moral development activities collectively supported PDL rehabilitation. The urgency of this study stems from the absence of empirical evaluations of integrated jail-based rehabilitation programs in the Philippines, despite increasing demand for evidence-based models that improve educational, economic, and psychosocial outcomes in correctional settings.

3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods design was used because it enables the integration of measurable outcomes with lived experiences to provide a fuller understanding of program impact (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2023). The quantitative phase analyzed five years of ALS A&E test results and participation in livelihood and developmental activities. Data regarding the Alternative Learning System (ALS) performance reflect educational attainment, while livelihood records serve as indicators of economic readiness (Bryman, 2024).

The qualitative phase involved the thematic analysis of a video testimony from a reintegrated PDL and written reflections of participating PDLs. Qualitative approaches are essential in correctional studies since they capture nuanced perspectives and contextual insights that are often invisible in numerical data (Patton, 2024).

A sequential explanatory approach was selected because it allows quantitative trends to be examined first and thereafter explained more deeply through qualitative narratives. Quantitative data were processed using IBM SPSS v28, and

qualitative data were coded in NVivo 12. Triangulation across test results, livelihood records, and personal accounts strengthened the study's credibility and confirmability.

3.2 Research Method

The study adopted an action research approach. This approach is participatory and iterative, thus making it suitable for community-based and correctional interventions (Stringer, 2023). This approach follows four recurring phases:

1. Planning: Identifying learning needs, preparing instructional materials, and coordinating schedules with jail personnel.
2. Action: Implementing ALS classes, livelihood training, and values formation or spiritual sessions.
3. Observation: Monitoring attendance and performance, documenting progress through facilitator notes and activity logs.
4. Reflection: Reviewing challenges and successes with PDLs and facilitators and adjusting activities for the next cycle.

This cyclical process promotes continual improvement and adaptation to the needs of marginalized groups (Herr & Anderson, 2023; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2024).

3.3 Participants

A total of 112 PDLs participated in the livelihood and moral recovery components of the program, including skills training, values-formation sessions, and physical or spiritual development activities. For the literacy component, 80 PDLs served as the quantitative sample, representing all individuals who took the ALS A&E examinations between 2016 and 2021, as recorded by the correctional facility. Of these, 31 were elementary-level examinees and 49 were secondary-level examinees, with the corresponding passing records documented in the facility archives.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, consistent with action research protocols and jail operational procedures. Inclusion criteria required that participants were (a) enrolled in any component of the literacy, livelihood, or developmental program; (b) eligible and recommended by facilitators for ALS preparation; and (c) willing to provide informed consent for involvement in the study.

3.4 Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data included the following:

- ALS A&E test results (2017–2021) for 80 PDLs
- Livelihood project records (earnings and participation) for 119 PDLs
- Attendance logs in spiritual and physical fitness programs

These data were appropriate for assessing year-to-year improvements and participation trends. Frequency counts, percentages, and averages were used to summarize trends. In addition, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if improvements in ALS performance across years were statistically significant.

3.5 Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data were gathered from three sources: a video testimony from a reintegrated PDL, handwritten reflections from active participants, and facilitator notes that were recorded during learning and development sessions. These were included because qualitative methods capture personal transformation, resilience, gratitude, and moral renewal that cannot be fully expressed through numerical data (Patton, 2024). Participation was voluntary and limited to PDLs who engaged in the literacy, livelihood, or moral development activities of the program. All qualitative materials were collected and transcribed verbatim, and this was followed by a thorough review of the transcripts for familiarization.

Meaningful statements were coded and organized into categories, and similar categories were clustered to identify emerging themes. The themes were refined to ensure accuracy and credibility, consistent with qualitative procedures that emphasize systematic coding, careful interpretation, and development of coherent thematic structures (Nurmahanani, 2023; Tasu'ah et al., 2023). The finalized themes were then prepared for integration with quantitative results to ensure a cohesive interpretation of the participants' experiences and developmental outcomes.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

To support the mixed-methods design, the study used multiple instruments for comprehensive data gathering. Structured survey and interview guides were employed to capture detailed narratives from released PDLs about their experiences with education, livelihood, and moral recovery. Document analysis was conducted on ALS A&E test results, livelihood financial records, and attendance sheets, providing quantitative data on performance, productivity, and participation. Video documentation was also used to record testimonies, offering authentic insights through expressions and emotions that enriched the themes drawn from written and oral reflections. Together, these instruments provided a robust and multidimensional understanding of the program's impact.

3.7 Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis used frequency counts, percentages, means, and ANOVA to measure improvements across multiple years of ALS performance. Livelihood data were analyzed through trend analysis to determine growth across production cycles.

Qualitative data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis, involving familiarization, initial coding, theme searching, reviewing, refining, and producing the final narrative. This systematic approach helped identify recurring themes related to personal growth, resilience, reintegration, readiness, and challenges (Braun & Clarke, 2022). A brief limitation is acknowledged; voluntary participation may introduce selection bias, and reliance on institutional records may limit data completeness.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

All participants gave informed consent, confirming their voluntary involvement in the study. Anonymity and confidentiality were protected by removing personal

identifiers and securing all data. Ethical clearance was granted by the institutional Ethics Committee/Review Board, ensuring compliance with national policies and international principles such as the Declaration of Helsinki. Special measures were taken to safeguard the rights and well-being of the PDLs, ensuring participation was free from coercion and aligned with human rights standards.

4. Results

This section presents the quantitative and qualitative findings based on the study's research questions. All interpretations of these findings are provided separately in the Discussion section.

4.1 Qualitative Results

4.1.1 Academic Performance of Persons Deprived of Liberty

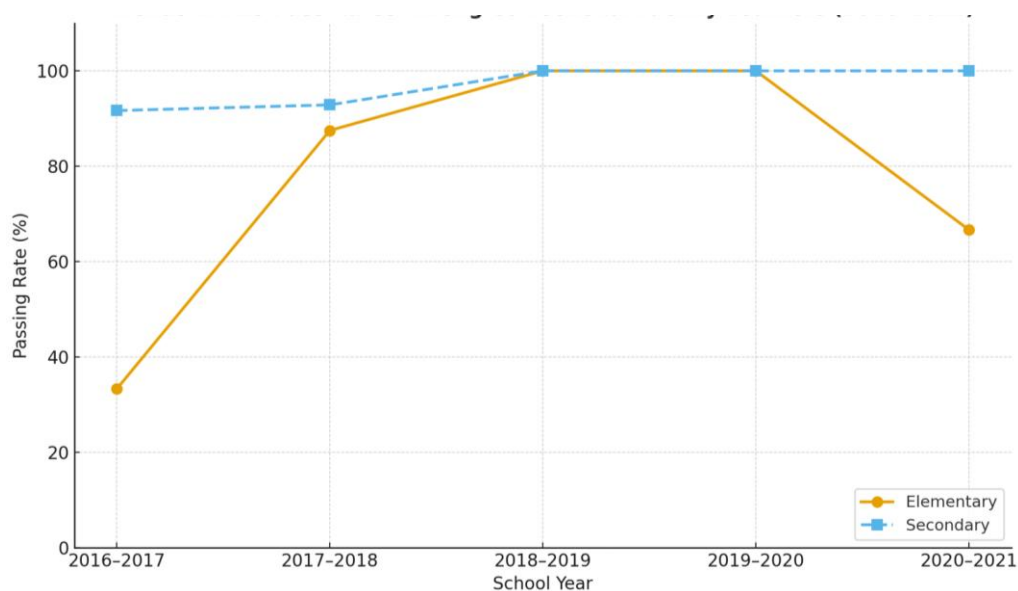


Figure 2: Trends in Alternative Learning System pass rates among correctional facility learners (2016–2021)

Analysis of ALS A&E results from 2016 to 2021 (Figure 2) shows steady improvement in educational performance among PDLs. Elementary pass rates averaged 77.5%, with perfect scores in 2018–2019 and 2019–2020. However, the 33.33% result in 2016–2017 reflects early challenges. Secondary results were consistently high, averaging 96.91% and recording a 100% pass rate for three consecutive years. Even the lowest secondary outcome of 91.67% in 2016–2017 indicates strong overall performance.

A one-way ANOVA confirmed significant improvement across the years ($F(5,24) = 4.62, p < .01$), with post hoc tests showing the greatest gains between the 2016–2017 and the 2019–2021 periods. These findings show that secondary-level outcomes remained consistently strong, while elementary learners may need more targeted instructional support.

4.1.2 Effectiveness of Livelihood Training

This data category focuses on the financial proceeds generated by PDLs from livelihood activities, demonstrating their enhanced vocational skills and contributions to economic productivity.

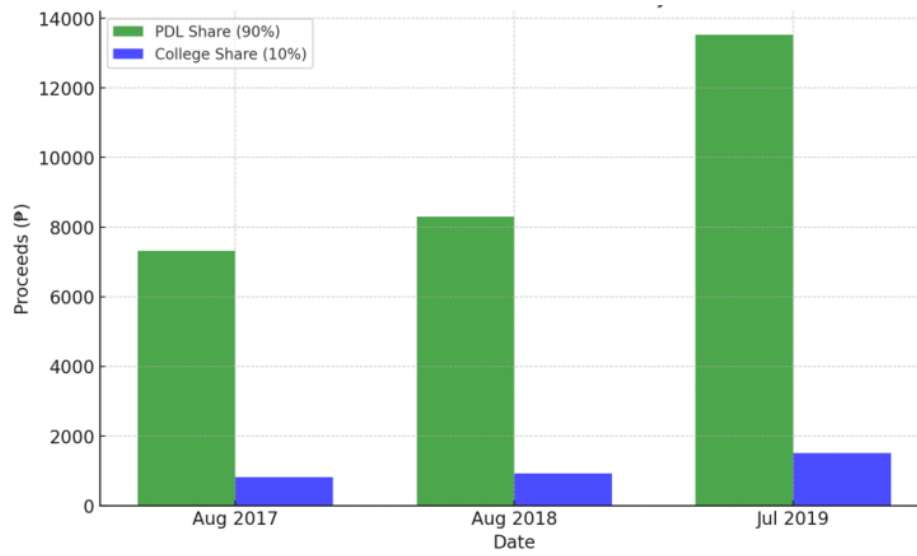


Figure 3: Proceeds from livelihood projects

Analysis of livelihood proceeds shows that PDLs generated increasing income across the three documented production cycles (Figure 3). Earnings rose from ₱8,135 in August 2017 to ₱9,230 in August 2018 and further increased to ₱15,025 in July 2019. The total combined proceeds amounted to ₱32,390, of which ₱29,151.90 was given directly to the participants. A linear trend analysis supports this upward pattern, indicating a statistically significant improvement over time ($\beta = 3,443.2, p < .05$).

The consistent increase in proceeds demonstrates that participants were able to apply vocational skills more effectively each year, resulting in higher productivity. Figure 3 clearly shows this steady progression, reflecting growing output and improved economic contribution among the participating PDLs.

4.1.3 Impact of the Moral Recovery Program

This segment explores participation in spiritual and physical fitness activities from 2017 to 2021, emphasizing their role in fostering resilience, discipline, and personal transformation among PDLs.

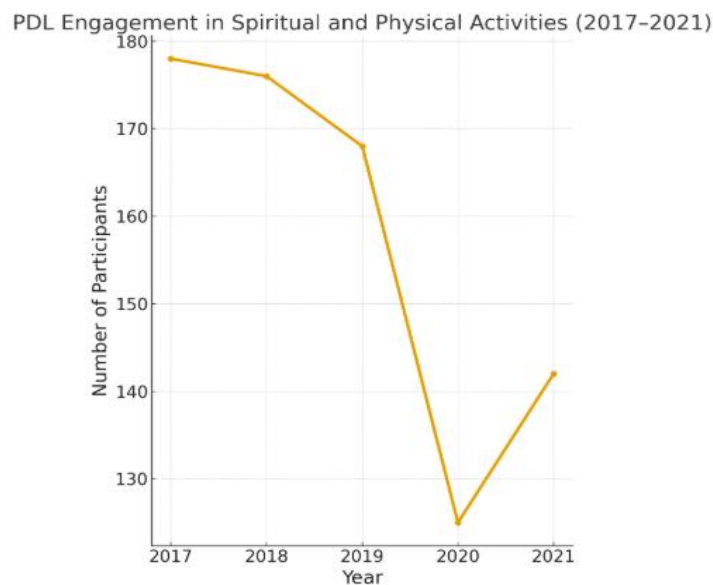


Figure 4: Participation in spiritual and physical fitness activities

Analysis of participation records from 2017 to 2021 (Figure 4) shows varying levels of engagement in spiritual and physical fitness activities among PDLs. Participation was high in 2017 with 178 participants, decreasing slightly in 2018 and 2019 with 176 and 168 participants, respectively and dropping to 125 in 2020. In 2021, participation increased again to 142. A chi-square test of independence confirmed significant variation across the five-year period ($\chi^2(4, N = 789) = 9.84, p = .04$). Overall, the mean participation rate was 88%, indicating sustained involvement despite fluctuations.

4.2 Qualitative Results

The qualitative component explored the lived experiences of PDLs through thematic analysis of video testimonies and written reflections. Using Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework and NVivo 12 for organized coding, four key themes emerged: transformation, gratitude, resilience, and advocacy. These themes show how the program fostered personal growth, moral recovery, and renewed direction. Participants described strengthened faith, renewed hope, and increased confidence in addition to appreciation for educational and livelihood opportunities that improved their self-worth and family relationships. Resilience and advocacy further reflected their desire to inspire positive change within their communities. When viewed with the quantitative results, the qualitative insights demonstrated a convergence between cognitive improvement and psychosocial development, highlighting the multidimensional rehabilitative value of combining education, livelihood, and values formation.

4.2.1 Improvement in Reintegration Readiness

Table 1 below summarizes the key themes, sub-themes, and representative statements drawn from the video testimonies.

Table 1: Matrix of themes: Thematic analysis of video testimony

Themes	Sub-Themes	Representative Statements (Simplified) and English Translation
Transformation and Redemption	Turning Point in Life	I thought it was my end, but God reminded me He has plans for me.
Transformation and Redemption	Faith and Spiritual Growth	The Lord changed me; we should not wait for Him to tell us to change.
Education and Skills Training	Gratitude for Support	I am very thankful for the free services provided to us.
Education and Skills Training	Livelihood Opportunities	Thank you for the livelihood program; we can buy food even while in jail.
Challenges and Resilience	Personal Struggles	Life is hard, and I help my parents earn a living.
Challenges and Resilience	Hope Amidst Hardships	Let us not lose hope; like me, we must keep fighting life's challenges.
Advocacy and Reflection	Call to Action for Others	May my life be a lesson – let us correct our paths to become better citizens.
Advocacy and Reflection	Faith-Centered Perspective	Make the Lord the center of life for He will guide us to the right path.

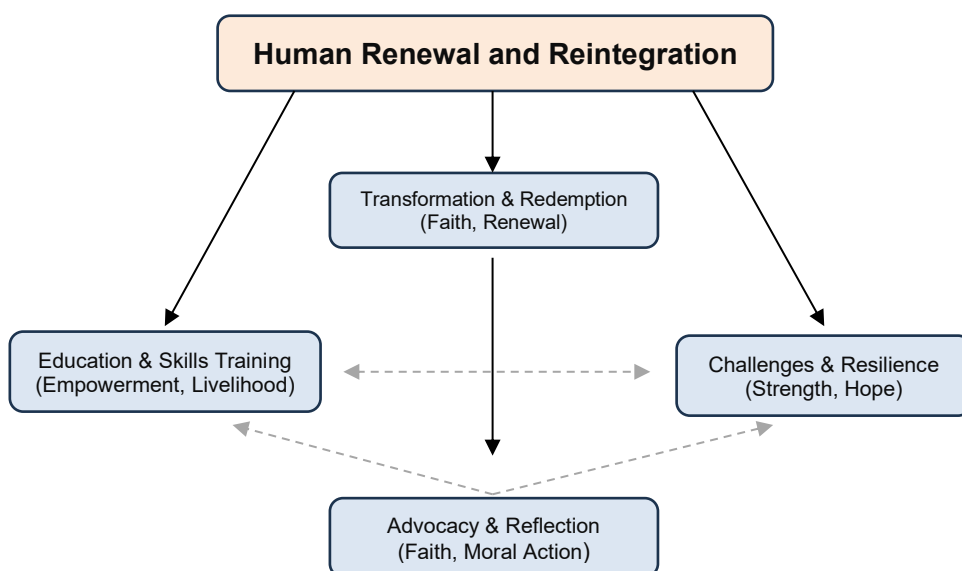
**Figure 5: Thematic map of video testimonies of persons deprived of liberty**

Table 1 and Figure 5 present the thematic findings drawn from participant testimonies and reflection narratives. Four key themes emerged from the qualitative data: Transformation and Redemption, Education and Skills Training, Challenges and Resilience, and Advocacy and Reflection. Participants described experiences of personal change and renewed purpose, often associating their participation in the program with spiritual growth, self-awareness, and a sense of second chances. They also highlighted the value of literacy lessons and livelihood training, noting that these opportunities enabled them to acquire new skills, contribute to daily needs, and engage in productive activities while inside the facility.

Participants also reported challenges such as limited resources and emotional difficulties, yet their reflections emphasized continued perseverance, discipline, and motivation to complete the program. Several testimonies expressed a desire to inspire other PDLs and use their learning experiences to guide better decision-making. Table 2 includes sample statements that illustrate each theme, while Figure 5 visually summarizes how these themes connect within the overall process of personal growth and preparation for reintegration.

Table 2: Thematic analysis of participant reflections on the impact of the educational program

Theme	Simplified Evidence (English Translation)	Core Meaning
Gratitude and Support	"With God's help, we were given abilities." / "Thank you to those who supported us."	It shows deep appreciation for education, opportunities, and stakeholder support.
Transformation and Learnings	"Our outlook has changed and we gained hope." / "We learned discipline and new skills."	Reflects personal growth, new perspectives, and enhanced skills.
Resilience Amid Challenges	"Our situation is difficult, but we are still learning." / "Even with many trials, I learned to persevere."	Demonstrates determination and perseverance despite hardships.
Hope and Future Readiness	"I want to continue learning for a better future." / "What I have learned, I can use outside for my family."	Expresses hope, motivation, and preparation for reintegration.
Call for Continuity	"We hope that you will continue programs like this."	Highlights the need for sustainability of educational interventions.

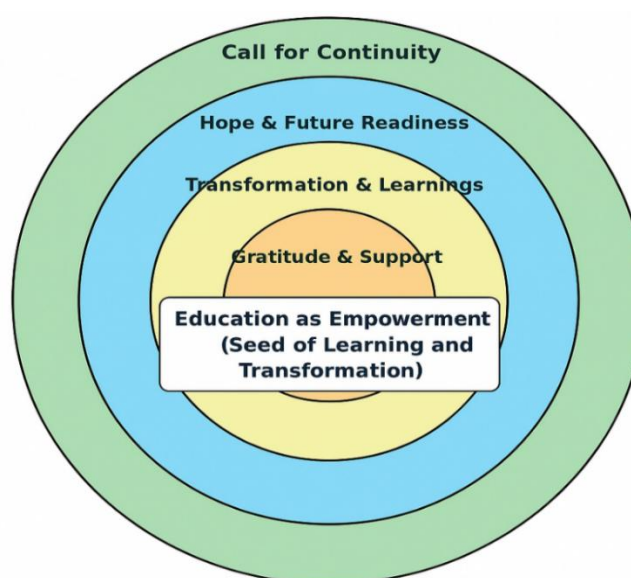


Figure 6: Ripple of transformation through education

Table 2 and Figure 6 present the themes that emerged from the participants' reflections, showing how educational engagement within the correctional facility shaped their experiences. Five themes were identified: Gratitude and Support, Transformation and Learnings, Resilience Amid Challenges, Hope and Future Readiness, and Call for Continuity. Participants described appreciation for the learning opportunities that were provided and acknowledged the encouragement they received from facilitators and partner institutions. They also shared experiences of moral growth, discipline, and new knowledge, which they associated with gaining confidence, purpose, and a renewed sense of identity during their participation in the program.

Participants reflected on the difficulties they encountered, including emotional and resource-related challenges, but emphasized their continued determination to complete the educational and livelihood activities. Their narratives also expressed hope for reintegration, noting that the skills and values they developed would help them to prepare for life after detention. Some participants stressed the importance of sustaining and expanding the program so that future PDLs could benefit from the same opportunities. Figure 6 visually illustrates how these themes connect, forming a ripple-like pattern that begins with gratitude and learning and extends into resilience, hope, and the desire for continued implementation.

Table 3: Summary of quantitative indicators and supporting qualitative themes

Quantitative Indicator	Key Findings	Supporting Qualitative Themes	Interpretive Link
ALS A&E Performance (2016–2021)	Elementary average = 77.5%; Secondary average = 96.91%; Multiple years with 100% secondary pass rate.	Transformation and Redemption; Gratitude for Support; Hope and Future Readiness	Participants described increased confidence, purpose, and motivation, reflecting how literacy gains contributed to renewed identity and readiness for reintegration.
Livelihood Productivity (2017–2019)	Income increased from ₱8,135 → ₱9,230 → ₱15,025; 90% of proceeds returned to PDLs.	Gratitude for Livelihood Support; Transformation and Learnings; Resilience Amid Challenges	Reflections showed appreciation for skills training, improved self-worth, and strengthened ability to provide for daily needs even while incarcerated.
Participation in Moral Recovery (2017–2021)	Participation range 125–178, mean involvement 88%; significant variation across years ($\chi^2(4, N = 789) = 9.84, p = .04$).	Faith-Centered Growth; Personal Struggles and Resilience; Advocacy for Others	Testimonies highlighted strengthened faith, emotional stability, and a desire to guide others – matching the high engagement levels seen in records.
Reintegration Readiness Indicators	Consistent participation across activities (education, livelihood, fitness, spiritual programs).	Hope and Future Readiness; Advocacy and Reflection	Participants expressed confidence, goal orientation, and the intention to apply learned skills upon release.

Table 3 shows how the quantitative outcomes of the program are supported by the qualitative reflections of PDLs. High ALS pass rates are consistent with the themes of increased confidence and renewed purpose. Steady livelihood income growth aligns with expressions of gratitude, improved self-worth, and readiness for future employment. Strong participation in moral and spiritual activities is reinforced by testimonies describing resilience, strengthened faith, and emotional stability. Together, these integrated results indicate that literacy, livelihood, and moral development components collectively enhance rehabilitation and reintegration readiness.

5. Discussion

This discussion integrates the quantitative and qualitative findings to interpret how the program's literacy, livelihood, and moral development components contributed to rehabilitation and reintegration among PDLs. The results collectively demonstrate that educational access, vocational training, and values formation provide a multidimensional foundation that strengthens both cognitive and psychosocial readiness. These outcomes are consistent with evidence showing that literacy-focused instruction enhances the foundational competencies that are essential for learner growth (Nurmahanani, 2023) and that information literacy supports more inclusive and effective learning processes (Tasu'ah et al., 2023). This outcome aligns with local and international scholarship on correctional education and supports the continued development of integrated rehabilitation models.

The academic outcomes show consistently high performance in the ALS A&E tests at the secondary level. These patterns are consistent with evidence that flexible and learner-centered systems such as the ALS can bridge educational gaps for marginalized populations (Labarrete & Tiopes, 2023; UNICEF Philippines, 2021). The variability in elementary results mirrors documented challenges in foundational learning when resources and prior schooling are limited, indicating the need for differentiated instruction and strengthened facilitator preparation. These outcomes support earlier findings that structured literacy programs improve self-efficacy and educational attainment in correctional settings (Cortez & Dioso, 2023).

The livelihood outcomes demonstrate steady growth across production cycles, suggesting improved vocational competency and productive engagement among participants. This finding is consistent with livelihood models that are reintegration focused such as Gumatay's RISE Program (2024) and other evidence showing that income-generating activities in correctional facilities enhance employability and financial readiness (Sagge et al., 2023). The allocation of most proceeds to participants reflects a developmental approach that encourages responsibility and autonomy. Comparable livelihood initiatives, including the Bread and Pastry and the Christmas Lantern Making projects, show that integrating practical skills and sustainable methods promotes economic resilience. These findings are aligned with research that links livelihood training to reduced recidivism through improved post-release stability (Chloupis & Kontompasi, 2025).

Participation in spiritual and physical development activities remained high across most years, indicating the relevance of these activities in supporting emotional stability and values formation. This aligns with global perspectives on humanistic and restorative education that emphasize dignity, moral renewal, and social responsibility (UNESCO, 2021). The temporary decline in participation during restricted periods reflects contextual limitations rather than reduced motivation. Consistent participation supports earlier observations that spiritual grounding, structured routines, and supportive environments contribute to resilience, discipline, and long-term behavioral improvement (Bermudez, 2024; Ortaleza & Nabe, 2024).

The qualitative results provide depth to the quantitative findings by illustrating how PDLs internalized their learning experiences. Themes of transformation, gratitude, resilience, hope, and advocacy affirm research that highlights the role of education in strengthening identity, self-worth, and reintegration readiness (Sarenas et al., 2024; Vivares & Cuevas, 2023). Participants expressed renewed purpose, improved family relationships, and greater determination to pursue lawful and productive futures. These reflections are consistent with findings that spiritual development and communities supported learning cultivate optimism and positive self-concept (Amores et al., 2023; Bermudez, 2024). Their call for sustaining the program further emphasizes the need for stable and accessible educational and livelihood initiatives that strengthen rehabilitation outcomes (Faa, 2023; Sagge et al., 2023).

Viewed as a whole, the results show that a holistic rehabilitation model that integrates literacy, livelihood, and moral spiritual development enhances functional skills and psychosocial competence. The combination of academic gains, increasing economic productivity, and evidence of personal transformation echoes the findings on PDL experiences reported by Paclauna (2024) and supports insights from correctional education research such as that of Patrie (2023) showing the value of integrated, learner-centered, and values-based approaches. These results reinforce the importance of institutionalizing such programs to support reintegration, reduce recidivism, and promote inclusive and humane correctional practice.

6. Conclusions

Based on these insights, the study concludes with recommendations for practice and policy. The findings demonstrate that the integrated jail-based developmental program produced meaningful educational, economic, and psychosocial gains among PDLs. Secondary education outcomes reached consistent 100% pass rates from 2018 to 2021, while significant differences between elementary and secondary results ($p < .05$) underscore the need for strengthened foundational literacy support. Livelihood initiatives generated steady financial growth, returning 90% of the proceeds to the participants and enhancing self-sufficiency. Spiritual and physical fitness activities further contributed to discipline, moral recovery, and emotional stability, confirming the value of holistic rehabilitation.

This study extends existing frameworks by showing how restorative justice principles can be operationalized through an integrated model that combines literacy enhancement, vocational development, and moral formation. It also broadens transformative learning theory within correctional settings by demonstrating how perspective transformation emerges through education, skills training, and structured values-based activities. While the program shows strong promise, future research may explore long-term reintegration outcomes, post-release employment trajectories, and the sustainability of moral and behavioral changes beyond incarceration.

To sustain and expand these gains, the program should reinforce elementary-level literacy interventions, enhance facilitator training, and align livelihood initiatives with current market needs. Preserving spiritual and physical development activities remains essential to holistic rehabilitation. Overall, the model offers a replicable and adaptable framework for correctional institutions seeking to reduce recidivism and strengthen reintegration. This study reaffirms that education is not merely rehabilitative but transformative, positioning correctional institutions as spaces of human renewal.

6.1 Policy and Theoretical Implications

The results emphasize the need to strengthen national policies that institutionalize correctional education and livelihood programs through coordinated efforts of the DepEd, the BJMP, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), local governments, and private partners. Integrating ALS, vocational training, capacity-building for facilitators, and market-responsive livelihood initiatives can support sustainable reintegration, which is consistent with the adult learning impacts noted by Addae (2021) and aligns with the broader educational implications discussed by Ly and Hong (2025).

The findings also reinforce restorative and transformative justice frameworks by showing that education and livelihood engagement foster accountability, self-worth, and reintegration, reflecting principles described by McCold and Wachtel (2003). Moreover, the current study extends Social Learning Theory by demonstrating how positive behaviors develop through structured learning, mentorship, and community support, while also emphasizing the role of prison-based educational environments in shaping long-term behavioral and socioeconomic outcomes, as evidenced in recent analyses of prison education effectiveness and returns by Stickle and Sprick Schuster (2023). These insights encourage the use of interdisciplinary approaches that connect education, psychology, and community development in rehabilitation research.

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8. Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest. No financial, personal, or institutional relationships influenced the conduct, analysis, or reporting of this study.

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