
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Experiences of Drug Surrenderees in Highly Urbanized Cities in Cebu: A Phenomenological Study

Esmeraldo E. Damuag¹ ✉ Yolanda C. Sayson², Dodelon Sabijon³, Gaspar P. Boniao⁴, Aileen L. Tano⁵, Lendon A. Abasa⁶ and Marvin C. Alcontin⁷

¹³⁴⁵⁶⁷Teacher, College of Criminal Justice, University of Cebu, Cebu City, Philippines

²Vice Chancellor for Academic, University of Cebu, Cebu City, Philippines, Dean, College of Criminal Justice, University of Cebu, Cebu City, Philippines

Corresponding Author: Esmeraldo E. Damuag, **E-mail:** esmeraldodamuag@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the experiences of drug surrenderees in highly urbanized cities in Cebu. It further described the experiences of the informants during their engagement with drugs and after their surrender and the impact of the PNP double barrel program on the lives of the informants. It utilized the qualitative research method employing the phenomenological approach. There were 12 informants who were drug surrenderees from Cebu, Cebu City, 4 drug surrenderees from Mandaue City, and 4 drug surrenderees from Lapu-lapu City. The selection of informants was through purposive convenient sampling based on the list of the drug surrenderees of the office of the Barangay Captain and Police Sub-stations of the three 3 highly urbanized cities in Cebu. Seven themes were generated to answer the sub problems of this study. These were Amidst Life Adversities and Predicament; Dangerous Drugs Carry us to Seventh Heaven, Illicit Drugs Energize My Work, The Ill Effects of Drugs Deadens My Neurons, PNP Double Barrel Program Teach Us into A Law Abiding Person, PNP Oplan Tokhang Improve Our Lives, Open New Doors of Life's Beauty, and Community-Based Programs Lead into a Fruitful Life.

KEYWORDS

Criminal Justice, experiences of drug surrenderees, criminological research, Cebu, Philippines.

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1. Introduction

The illegal drug trade in the Philippines remains a serious national concern. Drug addiction is a chronic disease characterized by compulsive, or uncontrollable, drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences and changes in the brain, which can be long lasting. The devastating effects of drug abuse touch everyone and wreak havoc on society. Drug addicts exhibit compulsive and harmful behaviors, which lead them to commit crimes. Hence, the government has undertaken an ambitious program in the war against drugs.

President Rodrigo Duterte had predicted that the country could become a "narco-state" if the country's tide of drug addiction would not push back. The proliferation of dangerous drugs in highly urbanized cities in Cebu was a serious threat to the Cebuano residents and other individuals. Because of the double barrel program, the government warned and gave an opportunity for drug addicts, users, and street users to voluntarily surrender to the authorities. Otherwise, they would be subjected to Tokhang operation.

In the city of Cebu, there are at present 316 surrenderees, and they were involved in the rehabilitation programs such as counseling, religious and sports activities headed by the Cebu City Office Substance Abuse Prevention (COSAP) in coordination with the different barangay officials in the city. In Mandaue City, there are at present 131 surrenderees who are in the rehabilitation programs consisting of drug symposium, counseling and livelihood program under Lahat Bangon (LaBang) Foundation of father Milo Diola in coordination with the City Government of Mandaue. In Lapu-lapu City, there are 75 surrenderees who are in rehabilitation program such as religious activities and livelihood programs that would help them transition to legal normal jobs.

The researcher is a faculty member of the College of Criminal Justice at the University of Cebu-Main Campus and is interested in conducting this study on the lived experiences of drug surrenderees with the end in view of knowing their positive or negative experiences and the impact of the double barrel program in their lives. The output of the study is very useful as a reference for further studies in drug related problems in the community for purposes of helping the government to reduce the proliferation of illegal drugs, particularly in the formulation of the guidelines on treatment and rehabilitation programs of the drug dependents. On the other hand, the result of the study may be used as a reference to criminal justice students for their research on the problems of illegal drugs in the country and to adopt the appropriate control measures against illegal drugs and other related vices in the community.

The study delved into the experiences of drug surrenderees in highly urbanized cities in Cebu. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following sub-questions: (1) The experiences of the informants during their engagement with drugs; (2) The experiences of the participants after their surrender; and (3) The impact of the project double barrel of the PNP to the lives of the participants.

2. Literature Review

This study is anchored on the Low Self-Control Theory of Gottfredson and Hirschi with two other supporting theories: the Self-Efficacy Theory of Albert Bandura and the ERG Theory of Clayton P. Aldelfer.

2.1 Low Self-Control Theory

Low Self-control theory, proposed by Michael Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi in a general theory of crime (1990), is a widely researched perspective in criminology focusing on individual differences in attention to the consequences of one's actions as a general cause of delinquency, crime and analogous behaviors. They argue that those who learn early in life about delinquency, crime and other problem behaviors such as substance abuse, accidents and employment problems later in life. Those who develop high levels of self-control in childhood will be likely to be delinquent as adolescents and less likely to be arrested or convicted as adults have greater success in school, obtain more successful employment, attain higher incomes, and even experience many better health outcomes throughout life.

The Low Self-Control Theory of Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) described that people with low self-control end up being more prone to crime, and their criminal propensity continues into later life. Low self-control people act impulsively without much thought and based on what they are feeling at the moment. This makes them risk takers if they cannot consider the consequences of their actions. They are willing to try lots more behaviors even if they are potentially damaging to us.

People with low self-control are focused on themselves rather than others, making them insensitive to other people, and empathy is not a big deal for them. Crimes usually involve a desire for immediate gratification, like taking what you want. It can be impulsive, happening on the spur of the moment without any planning, given the possible negative consequences of crime. It involves taking risks. It also often creates victims, so criminal behavior can require indifference toward other people's well being. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi, it's the product of ineffective parenting. This happens in families where there is a weak attachment between parent and child and in families where parents fail to recognize and correct their children's wrong behavior (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

The Self-Efficacy Theory of Albert Bandura (2008) explains that a strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided. Such an efficacious outlook fosters intrinsic interest and deep engrossment in activities. They set themselves challenging goals and maintain a strong commitment to them. They heighten and sustain their efforts in the face of failure. They quickly recover their sense of efficacy after failures or setbacks. They attribute failure to insufficient effort or deficient knowledge and skills, which are acquirable. They approached threatening situations with assurance that they could exercise control over them. Such an efficacious outlook produces personal accomplishments, reduces stress and lowers vulnerability to depression (Bandura, 2008).

Bandura (2008) expresses his view of agentic positive psychology. He emphasizes human capacity rather than human failings and dysfunction. Bandura further explains how self efficacy can be influenced and developed and how it positively affects all facets of human experience. Bandura critiques the predominantly negative pathology-focused views in the discipline of psychology, contrasting it to positive psychology's pro self-efficacy approach. Furthermore, it is said that self-efficacy is not a trait that some have, and others don't (or somewhere in-between). Instead, he proposes that anyone, regardless of their past or current environment, has the ability to exercise and strengthen their self-efficacy.

2.2 Self-Efficacy

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Self-efficacy, or confidence as it is commonly known, is one of the most enabling psychology models to have been adopted into positive psychology models to have been adopted into positive psychology. It is optimistic self-belief in our competence or chances of successfully accomplishing a task and producing a favourable outcome (Bandura, 2008).

The Self-Efficacy Theory of Bandura (2008) plays a major part in determining our chances for success; in fact, some psychologist's rate self-efficacy above talent in the recipe for success. We need to pay special attention to self-efficacy when setting goals to make sure that our efficacy beliefs are in line with our aims and not working against them. The first and foremost source of self-efficacy is through mastery experiences. However, nothing is more powerful than having a direct experience of mastery to increase self-efficacy. Having success, for example, in mastering a task or controlling an environment, will build self-belief in that era, whereas failure will undermine that efficacy belief. To have a resilient sense of self-efficacy requires experience in overcoming obstacles through effort and perseverance.

2.3 Aldelfer's ERG Theory

Aldelfer's ERG Theory from 1969 condenses Maslow's five human needs into three categories: existence needs, related needs, and growth needs. The existence needs include all material and physiological desires like food, water, air, clothing, safety, physical, love and affection. The related needs encompass social and external esteem and relationship with significant others like family, friends, co-workers and employers. This also means to be recognized and feel secure as part of a group or family. Internal esteem impels a person to make creative or productive effects on himself and the environment, like progress towards one's ideal self (Aldelfer, 1969).

Aldelfer further developed Maslow's hierarchy of needs by categorizing the hierarchy into his ERG theory (Existence, Relatedness and Growth). The existence group is concerned with providing the basic material existence requirements of humans. They include the items that Maslow considered to be psychological and safety needs. The second group of needs is relatedness, the desire people have for maintaining important interpersonal relationships. These social and status desires require interaction with others if they are to be satisfied, and they align with Maslow's social needs and the external component of Maslow's esteem classification. Finally, Aldelfer isolates growth needs: an intrinsic desire for personal development. These include the intrinsic component from Maslow's esteem category and the characteristics included under self-actualization (Aldelfer, 1969).

The frustration-regression of the ERG Theory of Clayton Aldelfer has and added effect on workplace motivation. For instance, if an employee is not provided with growth and advancement opportunities in the organization, he might revert to the relatedness needs such as socializing needs, and to meet those socializing needs, if the environment or circumstances do not permit, he might revert to the need for money to fulfil those socializing needs.

This study has its legal anchor on Republic Act No. 9165, otherwise known as the “Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002”, which promotes the Philippine National Police as the primary law enforcement agency tasked to be involved in anti-drug campaign as part of the drug demand reduction and supply reduction strategies of the national government. The Command Memorandum Circular issued by Chief PNP Director General Ronald Delarosa on July 01, 2016, sets forth the general guidelines, procedures and tasks of police/units/stations in the conduct of the Philippine National Police (PNP) Anti-Illegal Drugs Campaign Plan “Project Double Barrel” in support to the barangay clearing strategy of the government and the neutralization of illegal drug personalities nationwide. The PNP implemented the PNP Anti-Illegal Drugs Campaign Plan –Project: “Double Barrel” in order to clear all drug affected barangays across the country, conduct no let up operations against illegal drug personalities and dismantle drug syndicates. The PNP intended to equally address illegal drug problems in the barangays and, at the same time, pursued the neutralization of illegal drug personalities as well as the backbone of illegal drug networks operating in the country.

The Memorandum was launched and implemented on the first day of office of the Chief PNP, and in order to generate the impact and public support, all police offices/units/stations and designated anti-drug units conducted a massive and simultaneous operations in two pronged approach, namely: Project Tokhang and Project HVT.

The lower barrel approach implemented by the PNP Personnel, known as Project Tokhang, intended in all drug-affected barangays throughout the country in coordination with the Local Government Units (LGUs), particularly the Provincial/City/Municipal/Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs), Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), stakeholders, and other law enforcement agencies. Project Tokhang is a practical and realistic means of accelerating the drive against illegal drugs in affected barangays. This concept involves the conduct of house to house visitations to persuade suspected illegal drug personalities to stop their illegal drug activities (Command Memorandum, 2016).

There were five (5) stages in the conduct of “Project Tokhang”, namely: collection and validation of information stage, the coordination stage, house to house visitation stage, the processing and documentation stage, and the monitoring and evaluation stage. The collection and validation of information was conducted on the first week of the first month of President Duterte’s term. All local police offices/units/stations and anti-illegal drugs units are required to conduct validation to acquire specific information on suspected drug users and pushers in every affected barangay. The identity and criminal activities of each target must be properly documented and verified with all possible sources to equip the team with accurate and solid proof when confronting suspects during house to house visitations (Command Memorandum, 2016).

At least 700,000 drug pushers and addicts have surrendered to the police and military since President Rodrigo Duterte took over as the President of the Philippines. Duterte has sought and extension of the bloody “drug war” for six more months in a bid to clean up the country. In a press conference, President Duterte said that there is a need to address the drug surrenderees to help them maintain their sobriety and lessen their risk of relapse (Hechanova et al., 2018).

The study of Martinez et al. (2016) revealed that drug users are capable of overcoming the effects of drug withdrawal and can inhibit themselves from drug use through strong determination and will. The research undertaking is an attempt to look into the coping mechanisms of drug-user surrenderees of some selected barangays of Piat, Cagayan de Oro. The researchers described that there is a large gap between the number of people suffering from drug addiction, problematic drinking and drug abuse and those receiving treatment. Developing proper coping skills for addiction is the key to getting back to living life and avoiding relapse. Developing these skills with the surrenderees and their loved ones live a satisfying, sober life.

One of the studies conducted at De La Salle University in relation to the campaign of government against illegal drugs aims to improve the odds of securing recovery for individuals suffering from addiction, despite the influx of both public and private institutions catering to patients with substance use disorder all over the country, existing interventions seem to be insufficient in reaching out to the population suffering from the addiction. There are only fifty facilities that are recognized by the government, and given the number of afflicted individuals, drug treatment and rehabilitation seems to be a gargantuan task (Ramos, 2017).

On the other hand, the Psychological Association of the Philippines spearheaded a community-based recovery intervention program as a response to the Philippine government’s war on drugs. This intervention focused on drug recovery skills, life skills and family enhancement, which would cater to individuals with mild to moderate substance use disorder and their respective families. The testing and evaluation of this program were initiated in collaboration with local government units (Hechanova et al., 2018). However, treating addiction as a political and criminal problem on one hand and the standard treatment approaches and community-based intervention on the other end of the spectrum. But despite these efforts, substance use disorder and its comorbid problems continue to persist in the Philippine populace (Ramos, 2017).

The community outreach and advocacy programs were constantly conducted in different key settings such as schools, communities, and workplaces. During these activities, members of the Dangerous Drug Board staff would serve as resource speakers, orienting the participants on the country's drug abuse problem, the ill effects of drug abuse and the legal consequences of being involved in illegal drug activities.

The National Capital Region had the highest rate of affectation, with 92.96% of the region's barangays, followed by CALABARZON at 33.78%. The pronouncement of President Rodrigo R. Duterte to eradicate illegal drugs in the country during the first six months of his presidential term had an impact on the drug problem in the country. The PNP's Campaign plan: "Double Barrel", aimed to address these pressing concerns through "Project Tokhang", the so called Lower Barrel Approach and Upper Barrel Approach (Command Memorandum Circular No. 16, July, 2016). Since President Duterte assumed office on July 01, 2016, around 6,000 people have been killed in the campaign from July to December last year, with 2,000 people slain during legitimate police operations while the remaining 4,000 were killed in extrajudicial or vigilante-style killings conducted mostly by the unknown suspects (Montano, 2017).

In December 2013, the Philippine National Police - Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Force and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency confirmed reports that the Mexican Sinaloa Cartel had started operations in the country. About nine (9) Chinese drug cartels were involved in most illegal drug trade in the Philippines. The U.S. Department of State found out that Chinese drug cartels were behind the trade of methamphetamine hydrochloride in the Philippines.

On the other hand, there were three transnational drug organizations operating in the Philippines. First, the Chinese or Filipino-Chinese drug syndicates dominate the drug market in the country. They facilitate the production, manufacturing and bulk smuggling of dangerous drugs in the country. These activities ensure the supply of drugs in the market. Their activities were largely concentrated within their group, with the inclusion of very few and well-selected locals; second, African Drug Syndicate (ADS), responsible for smuggling drugs through the airports using drug couriers/swallowers; and third, the Mexican-Sinaloa Drug Cartel were the new drug group operating in the Philippines, and they are associated with the Chinese drug group to penetrate the Philippine market (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2016).

President Rodrigo Duterte divulged the names of the members of a large Chinese triad group in an interview with PTV-4 on July 7, 2016. The members of the triad group included Chinese drug lords, namely Wu Tuan, aka Peter Co, Peter Lim, aka Jaguar, and Herbert Colangco, with the three under the protection of Marcelo Garbo Jr, one of the Philippine National Police generals named by Pres. Duterte on July 5, 2016.

During the 12-month period, PDEA operatives, in collaboration with other concerned government offices, conducted nearly 17,000 raids and buy-bust operations, which netted 1,399 high value targets. PDEA Chair Undersecretary Arturo C. Cacdac Jr. said that PDEA agents arrested the High Valued Target included (63) foreign nationals, (190) government officials/employees and law enforcers, and (58) leaders/members of the drug groups. He said the amount of shabu and other illegal drugs, controlled precursors and essential chemicals confiscated amounted to P6.3 Billion, reflecting an increase of 16.7 percent compared to the preceding year (Lawas, 2017).

Records from the PNP showed that the police had visited 6 million houses through the program from July 1, 2016, to January 2017. From the 41,000 police operations conducted nationwide, an estimated 44,000 drug pushers and users had been arrested. Around (1) million self-confessed drug addicts had also reportedly surrendered (Dalison, 2017).

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency discovered the production of "fly high" after a raid on a condominium unit in Makati. The effects of the use of fly high include sleeplessness, loss of appetite, and high libido. Inhalants are commonly used among minors, especially street children. Street children in the Philippines were most likely to be inhalant abusers. Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency statistics of 2014 recorded 40% of minors arrested for drug possession and drug syndicates use children as drug pushers. Children arrested for drug possession or use were brought to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in compliance with Republic Act No. 9344, otherwise known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2016).

On the month of September 2017, the PDEA sought the indictment of Commissioner Faeldon and eleven other (11) officers of the Bureau of Customs for conspiracy to import illegal drugs and protecting or coddling drug traffickers. The PDEA also accused Faeldon and other Bureau of Customs officials of obstruction of justice by harboring, concealing, or facilitating the escape of the persons behind the shabu shipment (Lawas, 2017). But because of so many complaints against the PNP and PDEA leaderships in the conduct of the anti-drug campaign, President Duterte issued a strict warning on the use of motor vehicles recovered during

anti-narcotics operations in the country with violators facing dismissal from the service, a jail term and perpetual disqualification from holding any government office upon conviction (Lawas, 2017).

Furthermore, in the second week of the month of October 2017, President Duterte announced that the PDEA was tasked as the sole agency in charge of the government's anti-illegal drug campaign after demonizing Amnesty International that the anti-drug campaign of the present administration primarily implemented by the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other law enforcement agencies were involved in human rights violations and other criminal activities. However, Presidential spokesman Abella said that we were hopeful that the operations of this agency would not jeopardize by the interference of outside agencies that failed to appreciate our desire not for a drug tolerant but a drug free nation (Gutierrez, 2017).

One of the most abused drugs in the Philippines was a local type of methamphetamine mixed with caffeine known as Shabu. This stimulant was believed to be the drug of choice for (90%) of the Philippines' illegal substance users. Drug abuse leads to many problems, such as those individuals who become addicted could also obsess with their habit. The individual's behavior would change. They may become physically violent or engage in other types of bad behavior. Those who abuse these drugs could struggle to keep a job. They may become unemployable. Young people who use these substances would be unable to perform well in school or college (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2015).

Illegal drugs have undeniably seeped into the root of social, health, legal and economic problems in our community and in our country as a whole. The prevention of this problem demands a strong, collaborative action. The major premise in the fight against illegal drugs was not left to the police alone; we were a community moving together to effectively combat the drug menace (Montano, 2017).

A US government report in 2009 concluded that illegal drug use was a significant problem in the Philippines due to corruption and poor law enforcement. There was particular concern expressed about the amount of methamphetamine (shabu) and cannabis production in the area. Drug addiction appears to be on the rise in the Philippines. There were concerned Filipinos believed to be as many as 6.7 million drug abusers according to figures from 2004- this was a dramatic increase from 1972 when there were only believed to have been around 20,000 drug users in the Philippines. The drug that was the most abused in the Philippines continues to be Alcohol – alcohol users in the Philippines were the second highest consumers of alcoholic drinks in South East Asia (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2015).

According to the 2011 United Nations Drug Report, the Philippines had the highest methamphetamine hydrochloride abuse. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency identified that the mountainous parts of Northern Luzon, Eastern Visayas and Mindanao were viable for marijuana cultivation. Marijuana produced in the country was distributed locally and also exported to other countries. Local distribution of marijuana increased in 2012 despite the destruction of illegal marijuana plantations (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2014).

In 2012, the United Nations said the Philippines had the highest rate of methamphetamine use in East Asia, and according to a U.S. State Department report, 2.1 percent of Filipinos aged 16 to 64 use the drug, which was known locally as "shabu". In Metro Manila, most barangays are being affected by illegal drugs.

Based on the records of the Dangerous Drugs Board's 2015 National Household Survey, there were around 1.8 million drug users in the country, wherein 38.36% or 11,319 out of the country's 42,065 barangays were "drug affected" (mostly in urban areas), a barangay is said to be drug-affected when there was a determined existence of drug user, pusher, manufacturer, marijuana cultivator or other personalities regardless of the number in the area. However, the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency's 2015 arrest data, methamphetamine hydrochloride or shabu (90%), reportedly tops the list of most abused illegal drugs, followed by marijuana and costly partly drugs like cocaine and ecstasy.

Drug syndicates had been producing methamphetamine in small-scale and kitchen-type laboratories to avoid detection by the Philippine authorities. Usually, drug syndicates rented warehouses for use as drug laboratories. These syndicates had moved towards renting houses in private subdivisions, condominiums, and apartments to be used as bases for their illegal drug production. Private properties were becoming more favorable to drug syndicates as sites of illegal drug production. Methamphetamine remained more feasible to sell in the Philippines than cocaine, a more costly illegal drug (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2014).

Owing to its geographical location, international drug syndicates use the Philippines as a transit hub for the illegal drug trade. Some local drug syndicates were also involved in the international illegal drug trade and utilized drug mules to transport small amounts of illegal drugs to other countries. Some overseas Filipino workers have been utilized by drug syndicates as drug mules,

either knowingly or unknowingly. Most Filipino drug mules, mainly women, were sent to China, where drug convicts would face execution via lethal injection. The Ninoy Aquino International Airport has been identified as a favorable illegal drug trafficking hub (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2015).

Some Filipinos choose to be involved in drug trafficking due to the promise of a high income. Some still participate in such illicit activity because they were forced to do so by certain circumstances. There were reports in the past that some Filipinos, usually women, were forced and blackmailed by drug syndicates to work as drug couriers, and if they refused, their family's safety would be compromised. The Manila-based firm Pacific Strategies & Assessments identified the Philippines as "not only a transshipment point but also a key producer of synthetic drugs for all of Asia" in a report made in 2009 (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2016).

According to a 2011 Substance Abuse Risk Factor study, drug users tend to be more informed about the risks and consequences of drug use than non-users. So, intervention campaigns that focus on disseminating information may be of limited value. The cornerstone of the Obama administration's 2014 National Drug Control Strategy focuses on addiction as a disease based on discoveries about the brain. The Director of the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), in the person Dr. Nora Volkow at the National Institute of Health, pioneered brain imaging to investigate the effects and addictive properties of drugs (Gutierrez, 2017).

On the other hand, from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health in 2012, illegal drug use in America was again on the rise. The same year, another study sponsored by the Partnership for Drug-Free org., in conjunction with the Multi-life Foundation, showed an increase in prescription drug abuse among teens, with 24 percent of high school students claiming to have abused these medications. However, the Centers for Disease Control National Youth Risk Behaviors Survey glean insight into the increase and decrease in misuse of all kinds of drugs between 1991 and 2013: marijuana, cocaine, heroin, steroids, inhalants and more (Lawas, 2017).

Community-Based Interactive Programs, like Narcotics Overdose Prevention and Education (NOPE) and the Robert Crown Center Heroin Prevention Program, focus on educating students face-to-face about the dangers of drugs. On the other hand, Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) is an initiative that brings police officers and other volunteers into schools to educate and scare youth away from unsavory drug influences (Gutierrez, 2017).

In America, the White House's no. 1 anti-drug priority is indeed community based programs totaling 1 billion dollars' support education and outreach programs intended to discourage the use of controlled substances, while community outreach efforts focused on getting those who have begun to use illegal drugs to stop (Lawas, 2017).

The federal funding for public health programs that address substance use has increased every year, with a portion of 43 percent spent on drug treatment and prevention efforts. Addressing the impact of substance abuse was estimated to cost Americans more than 6,000 billion dollars each year. Teenagers are inherently experimental, and human nature means that some teens would experiment with drugs, and sadly, some would become addicts (Montano, 2017).

The international substance abuse prevention education program, which prevents the use of controlled drugs, is basically a tertiary crime and violence prevention education program as a drug control strategy (Roberson, 2003). On the other hand, in 2012, there were 195 participants from different organizations nationwide who attended the 20th Youth Congress held in Dagupan City, duly hosted by the Local Government Unit of Dagupan, were added to the 2,735 youth leaders who participated in the training since 2002. The Drug Abuse Resistance Education Program (DARE) was enhanced to complement the implementation of the National Drug Education Program. DARE offers a variety of activity-oriented techniques that are designed to encourage student-generated responses to problem-solving situations, specifically regarding drug abuse. This was implemented in collaboration with the Philippine National Police. From 2010 to 2012, there were 156 DARE Police Officers trained and have already conducted classroom teaching among grades five and six pupils in various public elementary schools (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2015).

To bring anti-drug advocacy to the children, the Dangerous Drug Board participates in the annual celebration of Children's Month every October. The Dangerous Drug Board conducts the Kids Against Drugs program, a primary prevention activity that aims to inculcate the skills of the children as a firm foundation for preventive education; 922 children have been reached-out to since this program's implementation in 2006 (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2016).

With all the theories, related literature and studies, I was able to support this particular study regarding the experiences of the informants during and after their engagement with drugs, the experiences of the informants after their surrender to the police authorities, and the impact of the PNP double barrel program to the lives of the informants. The aforementioned theories, related literature and studies described the common factors of drug abuse, its causes and its effects. It also described the role of the

government and every individual in the campaign against illegal drugs, considering that dangerous drugs affect the health, social, legal, physical, mental, and psychological condition of every person.

The aforementioned theories, related literature and studies also served as a guide to the researcher in gathering and organizing data and coming up with a concrete output of the study, particularly on the formulation of implications for practice such as the recommendations, suggestions and measures for implementation. It also served as a guide in formulating the implications of future studies for the purpose of conducting an in-depth investigation of a problem or phenomenon relative to substance abuse. The output of the study may be used as the basis for the government's national drug prevention program.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection

Before actually conducting the the interview, I made a transmittal letter noted by the adviser and approved by the Dean of the Graduate School addressed to the Chief of Police of the 3 highly urbanized cities of Cebu for me to conduct interviews to the informants in highly urbanized cities in Cebu. When approved, I began to identify informants and later on explained to them my research work, how the interview is to be made, the purpose of the study and the procedure in the conduct of interviews, as well as the rights of the informants and obligation of the researcher before and after the conduct of the study.

During the interview, I selected a comfortable venue for the informants to be at ease and inspire honest responses. After each interview for the individual in-depth interview, I transcribed the recorded responses and translated them into English.

3.2 Data Analysis

I analyzed the data through the processes of coding, categorizing and making sense of the essential meaning of the phenomenon. From the responses of the informants, I extracted significant statements, and I was able to formulate core meanings. I clustered all core meanings and developed cluster themes to better understand the descriptions of the lived experiences of the informants. After thorough reading and analyzing, I created 7 emergent themes that painted out the answers to the sub-questions in this study.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

I personally provided the informants with the informed consent form and requested them to participate in the research with the specific title. I informed them of the purpose of the research, and they had given enough opportunity to talk to anyone who was comfortable with them before they decided to participate in the study. Informants were advised not to hesitate to ask the researcher questions if they could not understand the contents of the study. They were informed that their participation was purely voluntary, and they had options whether to participate or not.

I requested the informants to share their experiences as drug surrenderers in highly urbanized cities of Cebu and informed them that all information gathered during the interview was documented/tape-recorded, and no one had access to the said documents, and the tape was kept and deposited at the research office of the University of Cebu.

The informants were properly informed of the duration of the study, and I informed them that I may visit them two or three times for another interview and follow-up. They were also informed of their rights, especially if they felt uncomfortable answering questions, whether they had options to respond or not, and whether they were aware of the benefits of the study.

4. Results and Discussion

This section deals with the presentation and analysis of data. All transcriptions were read many times to acquire descriptions of the experiences of the informants. The significant statements were extracted from the informants pertaining directly to the research phenomena. Formulated meanings were constructed from significant statements and arranged then into cluster themes. Cluster themes were then re-grouped and evolved into emergent themes (see Appendix F2 for a sample of cluster themes which evolved into emergent themes).

4.1 Positive Experiences of the Informants during their Engagement with Drugs

These research questions draw from the responses of the informants about their experiences during their engagement with drugs, where they felt happiness, enjoyment and unwary.

4.1.1 Amidst Life Adversities and Predicament, Dangerous Drugs Carry us to Seventh Heaven

This particular theme of the study relates to the experience of the informants during engagement with drugs who were very happy and unwary after taking drugs despite the problems encountered with them in their daily lives.

I want to try to solve my problems. For me, if I can use, it gives pleasure and unwearied. My friends were the one's taught me. This happened because my family did not support me. They are not mindful and caring of me. My parents were separated. (Participant 1).

At first, it was curiosity, then my friends and the environment. When I saw them (friends) used drugs, they were happy and active. Those were the reasons which encouraged me to take drugs. The taking resulted to happiness, unlike before, I had cough runny nose, but then I started to used drugs, it all disappeared. (Participant 2).

If I have family problems and everytime I quarrel with my girlfriend, I resort to use drugs. I become vigorous and active, not inactive. I am not easily fall sleep. My mind become productive. (Participant 6).

Leventhal (2006) explained that a drug as a chemical substance that, when taken into the body, alters the structure or functioning of the body in some way, excluding those nutrients considered to be related to normal functioning. However, informants shared their experiences that when they used drugs, they became active, joyful and unwearied. Their minds become productive, and drugs produce pleasurable moments. It is emphasized that drug-taking behavior results in some form of physical, mental, or social impairment. Informants shared their experiences during the interview that sometimes they were physically, socially and mentally impaired due to the negative effects of drugs.

Dingwall (2006) stated that when taking drugs, it created a bogus sense of well-being and an enormous energy, and a person would tend to push his body faster. However, according to Watkins (2017), there were justifiable reasons for drug users to use illegal drugs so that they can perform well in the workplace, especially if they were working during night time like taxi drivers, waiters, bar and hotel employees, and etc. in order to increase their energy and to work faster beyond the period of time to support with their daily needs as well as the members of the family.

4.1.2 Illicit Drugs Energize My Work.

This theme tells about the positive experiences of the informants during their engagement with drugs. Informants said that their minds become active and unwearied after taking drugs. They can have finished their work even beyond the period of time due to the effects of drugs.

I have like of doing work even at night time, and then I worked as masseuse at night time. I do not even have any dirty clothes because I washed it immediately. There were times when I donot have job in a company at day time, and then I worked as a masseuse at night to support the needs of my eight children. (Participant 7).

When I worked, I am unwearied if I take drugs. I am very much inspired, my mine becomes active, and I can finish my work quickly. (Participant 1).

I worked as a waiter at night. I used drugs for me to be unwearied. (Participant 2).

Soriano (2006) further explained that social factors are the contributory reasons which influence people to use drugs because of the availability of over-the-counter and prescriptive drugs, influences made by media, the impact of the affluent lifestyle, high unemployment problems, the effect of increased travel and exposure to different cultures; pressures exerted by peer groups; loss of religious and social values on academic achievements and the perception of graft and corruption.

4.1.3 The Ill Effects of Drugs Deaden my Neurons

This theme described the negative experiences of the informants during their engagement with drugs. They said that they were wakeful, and their body would be completely weary due to the ill effects of drugs.

There was. When I had my vice, I inflicted injury to my wife, including my children. I always look for trouble even if my wife had not simmed against me. Once I used drugs, I am wakeful. My wife gets hassled with me and consistently ordered her to find money to support my vices. (Participant 5).

If I cannot have used drugs, I wanted it immediately available because if none, then it is something like my body will be completely defeated. I stole things from home as well as sell my clothes and pants to gain money to purchase drugs. (Participant 1).

My heart beat quickly and strongly. I am easily got surprised even petty occurences because of lack of rest. It was only my thoughts who are extremely active. Sometimes I was hotheaded, easily angered, imaginative and sickly body. I was easily got angry even to

small caused or grounds that leads to trouble. There was a huge changed of my body, and the way people looked at me was not that good. (Participant 2).

The new advocacy program, done in partnership with the DDB-member agency National Youth Commission, aims to intensify youth empowerment efforts to zero-in on drug abuse. Project coverage includes six (6) key cities of the country, namely Metro Manila, Davao, Cebu, Zamboanga, Naga, Cagayan De Oro, and Baguio City. The caravan has enjoined at least 1,400 youth from various communities, organizations and academic institutions into the anti-drug abuse advocacy. It also aims to impart the ill-effects of substance abuse and dependence and to highlight the best practices of youth groups and networks in the intensified campaigns and initiatives in combating drug dependence (Dangerous Drugs Board 2016).

Manwong (2013) described also that stimulant drugs like methamphetamine hydrochloride, locally known as "shabu", can produce increased mental alertness wakefulness, reduce hunger, and provide a feeling of well being. However, Cejes and Etis (2016) also explained that drug addiction affects parts of the brain involved in reward and motivation, learning and memory, and control over behavior. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration 2016 (SAMHSA) explained also that drug abuse has many damaging consequences not only for the individual but also for society as a whole. Underneath the pleura of social problems is a phenomenally complex mechanism involving tolerance, dependence, and addiction. Addictive drugs hijack the reward pathway that is intended for natural reinforcers and, in doing so, cause harm both acutely and chronically to individuals to society.

4.2 Experiences of the Informants after Their Surrender

4.2.1 PNP Double Barrel Program Teach Us to Become a Law abiding Person

This theme relates to the experiences of the informants after their surrender to the police authorities. Initially, they felt nervous when the police required them to comply with requirements such as fingerprints and other pertaining papers until such time they knew the purpose.

Sir, I did not surrender until the point came that my wife went to me and told me to go with my neighbor to surrender in Sapangdako police because she was afraid of the happenings. Then, they required me to fill up a drug surrenderees form with pictures. (Participant 5).

For my safety, I surrendered to the police when the Oplan Tokhang started, and then there were cases of murder. On the first day, they asked me to clean for perspiration to disappear the residue, and then the next day, I came back and was involved in the program of LABANG by father Milo Diola. (Participant 7).

I surrenderd last June 30, 2016, when President took office. I was afraid because it seems like he is serious with his campaign. I felt nervous when they required me to submit a finger print with picture until such time I knew the purpose. (Participant 2).

It is provided in Section 54 of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drug Act of 2002, the Voluntary Submission Program of Drug Dependent to Confinement, Treatment and Rehabilitation through his/her parent, spouse, guardian or relative within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, may apply to the Board or its duly recognized representative, for treatment and rehabilitation of the drug dependency (Guevara, 2013). It is also provided further in Section 60 of RA 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, that judicial and medical records of drug dependents under the voluntary submission program shall be confidential and shall not be used against them for any purpose.

4.2.2 PNP "Oplan Tokhang" Improves our Lives

This theme relates to the experiences of the informants after their surrender to the police authorities, who were advised by their parents, relatives, and barangay officials to surrender for their common good.

I surrendered August of last year when Oplan Tokhang started. I was told by the Barangay Captain Harry to surrender, for my life is in danger, after which, they were eight (8) police man who came to see me. At that time, I worked and was told by my mother to surrender for my common good. (Participant 7).

I was just newly surrendered, and no police advice me to do it. But, there were people from the barangay hall came to our place, informing and urging drug users to surrender for my own good. There were also policemen who keep coming back to our place that is why I was very afraid. (Participant 2).

I surrendered in the month of August 2017 to the police. I did not go with them; instead, I was told to go to barangay on Monday. (Participant 3).

The Project *tokhang* of the Philippine National Police was a practical and realistic means of accelerating the drive against illegal drugs in affected barangays throughout the country. The concept involved the conduct of house to house visitations to persuade suspected illegal drug personalities to stop their illegal activity and cooperate with the police for their rehabilitation. The Barangay Anti Drug Abuse Council (BADAC), in cooperation with other concerned citizens, were tasked by law to identify drug pushers and users within their respective barangays and provide information to the police with regard to the criminal activity of the persons involved in illegal drugs.

According to Bean (2004), the treatment of substance abuse, whether in or out of criminal justice, uses a mixture of traditional medical interventions. SAMHSA (2014) described that patients can receive behavioral treatment in many different settings with various approaches. One of the approaches is Outpatient Behavioral Treatment, which includes various programs for patients who visited a behavioral health counselor on a regular schedule. Most of the programs involved individual or group drug counseling or both. However, the three highly urbanized cities in Cebu implemented comprehensive treatment and rehabilitation programs for the best interest of the drug surrenderers in compliance with the national drug abuse prevention program by hiring experts on treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependents. Bean (2004) further explained that there are two main reasons for the treatment of substance abuse. First, developed a wider understanding of the links between drug taking and crime; secondly, treatment has been revitalized by the growing belief that it works.

4.3 Impact of the of the PNP Double Barrel Program into the Lives of the Informants

4.3.1 Open New Doors of Life's Beauty

This theme speaks about the impact of the PNP double program on the lives of the informants; they were taught how to take care of themselves, and they learned a lot with proper guidance, counseling and advice when they were confined at the rehabilitation center.

We were taught how to take care of ourselves, unlike before our minds were rusty (corroded or impaired). But now it is lessened. (Participant 5).

I am happy here. Of all my life, it is only here I experienced happiness, which I did not encounter, especially that my parents are still around. Before, I do not know how to use the bible. I do not go to church. It is only here I learned it. Now that I am belong in LABANG, I already have self control. I do not like to put my children to shame and shout at them. Secondly, I now have humility and patience. The adoption brought discipline and change of self. (Participant 7).

Because of the program in the center, I learned to strong with guidance, counseling and advices. We were help by the volunteers from school. The police conduct seminars and meetings that can help us. (Participant 6).

Republic Act No. 9165, otherwise known as the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, in relation to the Local Government Code of 1991, requires the local government units to allocate funds intended for the campaign against illegal drugs and treatment and rehabilitation of drug dependents. According to Bharath (2017), substance abuse is also responsible for significant morbidity, and the treatment of drug addiction creates a tremendous burden on society. Fox (2017) also explained that substance abuse has long been a source of major concern, both for the individual's health and for the wider community as a whole. Drug prevention efforts may focus on individual or their surroundings. A concept known as "environmental prevention" focuses on changing community conditions or policies so that the availability of substances and the demand for them are reduced (Bharath, 2017).

Robertson (2003) further explained that reducing one risk factor may result in a reduction of multiple problems in the family, school, peer group and the community. Increasing protective factors support healthy development in all life areas, which helps them to resist influences to use. On the other hand, according to National Institute for Drug Abuse, the effective peer-based preventive education and information program to counter the dangers and ill effects of drug abuse, the Dangerous Drugs Board had institutionalized the *Barkada Kontra Droga* (BKD, Peer Groups Against Drugs) program in order to enlist the participation of more in and out-of school youth, and eventually organized them into a movement of young people who were catalysts within their peer groups in advocating a healthy, drug-free lifestyle. As of this year, there were 50 277 BKD members from 251 chapters nationwide. The Dangerous Drug Board had also launched the "Nationwide Search for the Best BKD Program".

4.3.2. Community-Based Programs Lead us into a Fruitful life

This theme relates to the impact of the double barrel program on the lives of the informants. Informants said that programs implemented by the national and local governments as well as the services provided by the non-governmental organisation were good and beneficial to them. They said that they learned a lot because of the educational program offered by the center and other services such as counseling, and religious and sports activities.

The COSAP program is good only for single individual because they do not children to feed. They can attend the seminar because they have time, unlike me. I do not have a husband but children to feed. I need to work to feed them. (Participant 3).

If they were decided, they will be changed because there is counseling, religious and zumba activities on every Thursday of the week. Ninety percent it can help solve, but it all depends on the users. (Participant 9).

It can be solve because we were taught of religious activity and counseling. (Participant 10)

The Chief of the Local Government Units of the three (3) highly urbanized cities in Cebu, namely Cebu City, Mandaue City, and Lapulapu City, were very active to support the program of the national government towards the treatment and rehabilitation of the drug surrenderees. In the case of Cebu City government, the office of Hon. Mayor Tomas Osmena designated competent personnel who taking care of all drug surrenderees in Cebu City in coordination with the barangay officials and the PNP personnel within the city. The Cebu City government offers intervention programs like counseling, bible sharing, sport activities, livelihood and etc. to the drug surrenderees in Cebu City for the purpose of helping them to become a productive members of the community someday.

In Mandaue City, the city government allocated funds for the programs on treatment and rehabilitation to the drug surrenderees in the city for purposes of helping them become productive and law-abiding residents in the City of Mandaue in the future. There were recognized Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) headed by the competent personnel who taking care the drug surrenderees in barangay Subangdako, Mandaue City, and other barangay within the jurisdiction of the said cities by offering different programs for rehabilitation of drug dependents such as bible sharing, livelihood program, drug symposium, and other activities for the better future of the drug surrenderees.

In Lapu-Lapu City, the city government initiated programs on the treatment and rehabilitation of drug surrenderees in coordination with the barangay officials and local police for the immediate treatment of drug dependents. The said local government unit also provides livelihood training programs with the drug surrenderees to develop their knowledge and skills in order to support their basic needs in the future.

In the study of Tagasa (2015), it was revealed that drug education activities should be continuously conducted to raise community awareness and to orient the people regarding their important role in the campaign against illegal drugs with full activation of Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC) to totally eradicate or curb the drug demand and supply in the community.

5. Conclusion

Seven themes were created that answered the sub-problems of the study. For the experiences of the participants during their engagement with drugs, there were three (3) emergent themes, namely: Amidst Life Adversities and Predicament, Dangerous Drugs Carry us to Seventh Heaven; Illicit Drugs Energize My Work; and The Ill Effects of Drugs Deaden My Neurons.

For the experiences of the participants after their surrender, there were two (2) emergent themes, namely: PNP Double Barrel Program Teach us into a Law Abiding Person and PNP Oplan Tokhang Improve our Lives.

For the impact of the PNP double barrel program on the lives of the informants, there were two (2) emergent themes, namely: Open New Doors of Life's Beauty and Community-Based Programs Lead into a Fruitful Life.

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ORCID iD

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3775-4805>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1063-4272>

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4836-2743>

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8074-3316>

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