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Effectiveness of the rehabilitation programs implemented by MIMAROPA youth center

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Abstract

Juvenile delinquency refers to illegal acts committed by individuals under the age of majority, often characterized by behaviors that challenge societal norms and legal standards. This phenomenon encompasses a range of antisocial actions that, if perpetrated by adults, would be classified as crimes, such as theft or vandalism. The study employed a descriptive-statistic research design to analyze the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs at the MIMAROPA Youth Center, situated in Poblacion, Bansud, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines. By utilizing purposive sampling methods, the research focused on 24 children in conflict with the law (CICL) and social workers involved in these rehabilitation efforts. The rehabilitation program "Case Management and Counseling" received the highest mean score of 3.80, which is described as highly effective. This indicates that the center provides adequate rehabilitation counseling for Children in Conflict with the Law. The rehabilitation programs for Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) were rated as highly effective. This conclusion is supported by the study's findings regarding case management and counseling, practical skills enhancement, health promotion, social and socio-cultural activities, home life, and education.

Keywords: Case management, counselling, MIMAROPA Youth Center, rehabilitation program

Introduction

Juvenile delinquency refers to acts that violate the law, committed by individuals under the legal age of majority. This concept encompasses a range of antisocial behaviors that deviate from accepted societal norms, laws, and cultural standards. If left unaddressed, such behaviors can escalate into more serious criminal activities. Juvenile delinquency typically includes acts that, if perpetrated by adults, would be classified as crimes. It also includes status offenses, which are less severe infractions such as truancy and disobedience to parents (Arthur, 2015)^[3].

Preventing juvenile delinquency is a critical aspect of maintaining societal order and safety. The adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" emphasizes the significance of proactive measures in curbing misbehavior among youth. Recognizing the importance of children and youth in nation-building, the Philippine Constitution mandates the protection and promotion of their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. This commitment is further echoed in Article 40 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which asserts that every child accused or adjudged of violating the law should be treated in a manner that promotes dignity and facilitates reintegration into society. The Convention advocates for alternative measures to judicial proceedings, ensuring that the rights and welfare of the child are respected. It promotes rehabilitation through various means, including counseling, probation, foster care, education, vocational training, and other alternatives to institutional care (Andersen & Dolva, 2015)^[2].

In alignment with these principles, the Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9344, also known as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006, was enacted to address the spectrum of interventions for Children at Risk (CAR) and Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). This legislation outlines a comprehensive framework that spans prevention, rehabilitation, and reintegration. It mandates that all Local Government Units (LGUs) establish 24-hour residential care facilities or Youth Rehabilitation Centers, overseen by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) (Luna, 2021)^[16]. These centers are tasked with providing care, treatment, and rehabilitation services for CICL.

The implementation of this Act has prompted research to assess the conditions of these children as clients within the system. The goal is to evaluate the effectiveness of these institutions in rehabilitating and reintegrating Children in Conflict with the Law back into their communities. By understanding the intricacies of juvenile delinquency and the corresponding interventions, society can better support at-risk youth and foster a safer, more inclusive environment for future generations.

Methodology

The study employed a descriptive-statistic research design to analyze the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs at the MIMAROPA Youth Center, situated in Poblacion, Bansud, Oriental Mindoro, Philippines. By utilizing purposive sampling methods, the research focused on 24 children in conflict with the law (CICL) and social workers involved in these rehabilitation efforts. This non-probability sampling technique emphasizes intentional participant selection based on the researcher's judgment to ensure a representative sample relevant to the study's objectives. The researcher designed a self-structured questionnaire to gather data on various aspects of rehabilitation, including case management, counseling, practical skills enhancement, health promotion,

socio-cultural integration, home-life support, and educational opportunities. This comprehensive approach aimed to illuminate the effectiveness of the programs in fostering positive outcomes for CICL, thereby contributing to a better understanding of juvenile rehabilitation practices in the Philippines.

Results and Discussion

The table shows that the item "the center provides suitable therapy for the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside" received the highest mean score of 3.92, which is categorized as Highly Effective. This suggests that the MIMAROPA Rehabilitation Center offers adequate rehabilitation counseling for children in conflict with the law. Conversely, the item "the center provides the right treatment for the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside" received the lowest mean score of 3.71, though it is still classified as Highly Effective. Overall, the respondents rated the center's case management and counseling programs with an average mean of 3.81, also described as Highly Effective. This implies that the MIMAROPA Youth Center has established sustainable programs for counseling and managing cases involving children in conflict with the law (CICL).

Table 1: Summary of Results for Case Management and Counselling

Statement	Wm	VI	Rank
1. The center provides suitable therapy for the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.92	HE	1
2. The center ensures the participation of every Child in Conflict with the Law who reside inside in the rehabilitation.	3.88	HE	2
3. The center implements the counselling properly.	3.75	HE	3.5
4. The center provides the right treatment for the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.71	HE	5
5. The center performs counselling for Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside on time.	3.75	HE	3.5
Overall Weighted Mean	3.80	HE	

These findings are supported by the study of Basanta *et al.* (2018)^[5], which evaluated the Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) offender rehabilitation model. The RNR model asserts that high-risk offenders benefit more from intervention programs than low-risk offenders (risk principle) and that interventions are more effective when they address criminogenic needs (need principle) and engage offenders. In their field study, 101 juvenile offenders classified as high or low risk of recidivism based on the Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI) were assessed for school failure, behavioral disorders,

psychological adjustment, and social skills.

The results revealed that high-risk juvenile offenders exhibited higher rates of school failure and behavioral disorders (criminogenic needs) compared to low-risk offenders. Low-risk offenders, in turn, showed higher rates of these issues compared to the general population. As for psychological adjustment and social skills (non-criminogenic needs), the findings showed greater deficits in high-risk offenders compared to low-risk offenders, with no significant differences between low-risk offenders and the general population (Sands, 2016)^[8].

Table 2: Summary of Results for Practical Skills Enhancement

Statement	Wm	VI	Rank
• The center provides activities for the enhancement of skills of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.75	HE	3.5
• The center has provided facilities for every activity of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.79	HE	1.5
• The center teaches the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside the importance of focus and self-control.	3.79	HE	1.5
• The center values the interests of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.75	HE	3.5
• The center furnishes the activities for the enhancement of the confidence of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.63	HE	5
• Overall Weighted Mean	3.74	HE	

As shown in the table, the items stating "the center has provided facilities for every activity of the children in conflict with the law who reside inside" and "the center teaches the children in conflict with the law the importance of focus and self-control" received the highest mean score of 3.79, categorized as Very Highly Effective. This indicates that the

MIMAROPA Rehabilitation Center has successfully provided recreational activities that promote the necessary behaviors for the rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law.

On the other hand, the item "the center furnishes activities for the enhancement of the confidence of the Children in Conflict

with the Law" received the lowest mean score of 3.63, though it is still rated as Very Highly Effective. Overall, the respondents gave an average score of 3.74, described as Very Highly Effective, for the rehabilitation programs implemented by the MIMAROPA Youth Center, specifically in terms of practical skills development and enhancement. These findings align with the study by Manuel (2019) [7], which showed that diversion programs, vocational training, livelihood skills training, fun games, and sports development were perceived to be more effective than other methods. While cleanliness drives were also seen as effective, they were often viewed as punitive rather than restorative. The programs that were most effective provided formal and non-

formal education, taught better emotional regulation, encouraged exploration of personal strengths and weaknesses, and promoted economic empowerment. This is relevant to the current study, as program implementers reported challenges such as casework and limited financial resources. However, rehabilitated youth indicated that they had gained a more positive outlook on life and were coping well with their challenges. The findings suggest that follow-up programs should be conducted to ensure the continued success of these children in both their communities and schools (Shabani, 2019) [9].

Table 3: Summary of Results for Health Promotion

Items	Wm	VI	Rank
1. The center provides the medical needs of every Child in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.79	HE	2
2. The center observes proper hygiene of every Child in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.75	HE	3.5
3. The center provides a program that supports the health promotion of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.75	HE	3.5
4. The center provides programs for the physical and mental health of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.71	HE	5
5. The center establishes healthy habits for the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.83	HE	1
Overall Weighted Mean	3.77	HE	

As presented in the table, the item stating "the center establishes healthy habits for the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside" received the highest mean score of 3.83, categorized as Highly Effective. This indicates that the youth center actively promotes and monitors the health of children in conflict with the law, ensuring their well-being throughout the rehabilitation process.

Conversely, the item "the center provides programs for the physical and mental health of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside" received the lowest mean score of 3.71, though it is still classified as Highly Effective. Overall, the respondents gave an average score of 3.77, described as Highly Effective, for the rehabilitation programs implemented by the MIMAROPA Youth Center in terms of

health promotion. This suggests that the center effectively organizes and maintains the well-being of the children, addressing their health needs during rehabilitation. This finding is consistent with the study by Andersen and Dolva (2015) [2], where children expressed satisfaction with participating in less significant decisions. This may be attributed to a lack of experience in decision-making or a desire to conform to their peers, seeing therapists as experts in the normalization process. The study highlights the importance of health care professionals informing children about decision-making opportunities and negotiating power-sharing and responsibility in pediatric rehabilitation, making it relevant to the current research.

Table 4: Summary of Results for Socio-Cultural

Items	Wm	VI	Rank
1. The center provides activities for the enhancement of social skills of the Children in Conflict with the law who reside inside.	3.75	HE	3.5
2. The center promotes respect to individual beliefs and cultural differences among Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.79	HE	1.5
3. The center educates the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside about the importance of gender equality.	3.79	HE	1.5
4. The center helps the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside in molding a good attitude towards others.	3.71	HE	5
5. The center values every improvement in the personality of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.75	HE	3.5
Overall Weighted Mean	3.76	HE	

As shown in the table, the statement "the center promotes respect for individual beliefs and cultural differences among Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside" and "the center educates the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside about the importance of gender equality" received the highest mean score of 3.79, which is described as highly effective. This indicates that the youth center successfully educates Children in Conflict with the Law by fostering good moral character and teaching them to respect others, ultimately helping them become law-abiding citizens. On the other hand, the statement "the center helps the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside in developing a positive attitude toward others" received the

lowest mean score of 3.71, but it is still described as highly effective. Overall, the average mean score of 3.76, also described as highly effective, reflects the respondents' positive perception of the rehabilitation programs implemented by the MIMAROPA Youth Center, particularly in the Social and Socio-Cultural dimensions. This suggests that the MIMAROPA Youth Center serves as a supportive environment for Children in Conflict with the Law, aiding in their rehabilitation and character development. These findings are consistent with Arthur (2015) [3], who noted that citizenship literature often portrays children as either "citizens in the making" or as individuals with full agency. English law treats young people ambiguously, sometimes as

pre-citizens requiring protection and, at other times, as full citizens, particularly in the context of the youth justice system. Arthur's research highlights that neither viewing children as "citizens in waiting" nor as fully autonomous citizens adequately protect their status as child citizens, especially when responding to antisocial and offending behavior. This is relevant to the current study, as viewing

young people in conflict with the law through the lens of "differentiated" youth citizenship offers a child-centered approach to citizenship. It allows for the regulation of antisocial and offending behavior while acknowledging children's specific socio-economic circumstances, evolving capacities, and awareness, without diminishing their equal status as citizens.

Table 5: Summary of Results for Home-life

Items	Mean	VI	Rank
1. The center allows a regular visit of the family of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.67	HE	4
2. The center receives supports from families and communities for the successful rehabilitation of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.33	HE	5
3. The center creates a feel-like at home environment for the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.71	HE	3
4. The center meets the basic needs of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.83	HE	1.5
5. The center provides the protection needs of every Child in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.83	HE	1.5
Overall Weighted Mean	3.67	HE	

As shown in the table, the items "the center meets the basic needs of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside" and "the center provides the protection needs of every Child in Conflict with the Law who reside inside" received the highest mean score of 3.83, described as highly effective. This suggests that the youth center is not merely a facility for Children in Conflict with the Law, but also a place that ensures their needs are met, making them feel secure and free from the influence of negative vices (ACLU, 2019).

On the other hand, the item "the center receives support from families and communities for the successful rehabilitation of the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside"

received the lowest mean score of 3.33, but it is still described as highly effective. Overall, the respondents' perceptions resulted in an average mean score of 3.67, which is described as very highly effective, in terms of the rehabilitation programs related to Home-Life implemented by the MIMAROPA Youth Center.

This implies that the MIMAROPA Youth Center provides a home-like environment for Children in Conflict with the Law, offering security, comfort, and the fulfillment of their basic needs. These factors are crucial for their rehabilitation process.

Table 6: Summary of Results for Education

Items	Wm	VI	Rank
1. The center collaborates with schools and educational institutions to provide Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside their educational needs.	3.88	HE	1
2. The center provides quality education for the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside.	3.75	HE	2
3. The center ensured that the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside receive appropriate educational needs.	3.54	HE	4
4. Through education, the center helps the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside in developing self-esteem.	3.67	HE	3
5. The center motivates the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside to learn more.	3.50	HE	5
Overall Mean	3.67	HE	

As shown in the table, the item "the center collaborates with schools and educational institutions to provide Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside with their educational needs" received the highest mean score of 3.88, which is described as very highly effective. This indicates that the Youth Center effectively coordinated with educational institutions to ensure that the educational needs of these children were met and sustained.

On the other hand, the item "the center motivates the Children in Conflict with the Law who reside inside to learn more" received the lowest mean score of 3.50, but it is still described as very highly effective. Overall, the respondents' perceptions resulted in an average mean score of 3.67, which is also described as very highly effective, reflecting the success of the educational rehabilitation programs implemented by the MIMAROPA Youth Center. This suggests that despite residing in a rehabilitation center, children in conflict with the law were provided with the necessary educational resources. The center promoted and upheld quality education, aiming to enhance their skills and develop their potential. These findings are supported by Azam *et al.* (2021) ^[4], who highlighted the crucial role of education and vocational training in the rehabilitation process of child offenders.

Education helps shape individuals' character and contributes to long-term positive outcomes, such as better future opportunities. The study discusses the importance of the Multisystemic Therapy (MST) approach, particularly its focus on academic and vocational training as essential components of rehabilitation for child offenders.

Based on a case study in Kuala Lumpur, the research examined restorative justice practices in Malaysia's juvenile justice system and emphasized the role of community-based rehabilitation programs, which follow the MST approach in promoting education and vocational training for child offenders. The study confirmed that all child offenders involved had previously dropped out of school and did not receive either academic education or vocational training during the community-based rehabilitation process.

Thus, the study recommends that local community-based rehabilitation programs for child offenders genuinely adopt the MST approach, particularly its focus on academic and vocational training. This is critical to ensure that juvenile offenders are granted opportunities for education and vocational training, which are vital for their future development.

Conclusion

The rehabilitation programs for Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) were rated as highly effective. This conclusion is supported by the study's findings regarding case management and counseling, practical skills enhancement, health promotion, social and socio-cultural activities, home life, and education. The programs implemented by the MIMAROPA Youth Center contribute significantly to the reformation and gradual personal development of CICL. Participants have demonstrated improved emotional management, coping skills, and increased engagement in the center's activities. Notably, adherence to the center's rules and regulations, along with positive interactions with house parents and social workers, indicates progress in the participants' attitudes and personal character. Therefore, it can be concluded that the rehabilitation efforts are effective.

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