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**BARS BETWEEN US: UNVEILING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES
OF CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS**

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ABSTRACT

The research study explored the lived experiences of children who have incarcerated parents, specifically to determine their life experiences, coping mechanisms, and ways in which their parents maintain parental responsibilities while being incarcerated.

Qualitative research using a phenomenological study with five participants in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte was used. The interview guide, recording device, and interview were the data gathering tools. Thematic analysis was used in this study.

The themes derived from the lives of the children with incarcerated parents include a peaceful life before incarceration, emotional turmoil during incarceration, affective separation after incarceration, and revitalizing family bonds. Despite these challenges, children with incarcerated parents cope through positive reframing, focusing on achieving goals, and maintaining parental responsibilities through paterfamilias wisdom and financial support. They demonstrate resilience in regaining a sense of normalcy. Researchers found that parents maintain parental responsibilities while incarcerated through paterfamilias wisdom and parental financial support, despite the challenges, as they must find ways to maintain their absolute responsibilities.

The study highlights the emotional turmoil faced by children of incarcerated parents, emphasizing the importance of their emotional well-being. The Department of Social Welfare and Development together with Women and Protection Desk may provide a safe space for the children to express these emotions and be able to provide effective coping strategies as it is

essential for children with incarcerated parents. Eclectic Approach is more appropriate in the case of these children because it able to focus on the specific needs of the children depending on the gravity of the impact of the incarceration of their parents.

The study also highlights the maintaining a connection between incarcerated parents and their child is essential for emotional stability. The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology and Penology may conduct Family Day to promote to close family ties being one of the truest Filipino traditions. Regular visitations and communication in prisons can promote parent rehabilitation and foster healthier family bonds.

Key words: Children with Incarcerated Parents, Imprisoned Parents, Parental Incarceration, Parental Imprisonment, Lived Experiences of Children with Incarcerated Parents, Incarcerated Parents, Impact of parental incarcer



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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTINGS

Introduction

Family is the building block of a human being (Briggs, 2020). Family is important because they can offer support and security coupled with unconditional love; they will always look to see and bring out the best in them, even if they cannot see it for themselves (Educational Tools Wellness, 2022). Having a complete family means filling the gaps within them. It guides them down the path of morality when it comes to outside influences such as dealing with drugs, alcohol, peer pressure, bullying, or someone saying negative things to them. If they do not already have a place to live, the family will help them find one and will also give them advice on how to get back on their feet.

On the other hand, a family can also be a reason for negative growth in the lives of the children. While there are children who have a normal family, there are also children who have an unstable family. Some reasons for a parent's absence range from the avoidable to the unavoidable: loss or relinquishment of parental rights, abandonment, negligence, and incarceration. While children are dependent on their parents, sudden detachment will lead to negative circumstances such as separation anxiety, depression, emotional neediness, and a string of failed relationships (Spelman, 2022).

In the United States, children with incarcerated parents constitute a significant and growing group. According to the National Resource Center for Children and Families of the Incarcerated (2021), nearly five million children in the United States have had at least one parent incarcerated at some point in their lives. This figure has risen considerably in recent decades as the number of individuals imprisoned in the United States has climbed.

In the Philippines, the Philippine Statistics Authority (2020) reported that there were over 200,000 individuals incarcerated in the country, many of whom have children. These children may face a range of challenges, including emotional distress, economic hardship, social stigma, and disrupted family relationships. While research on resilience has focused on various populations, including children who have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences, there is a lack of understanding of the lived experience of resilience in children of incarcerated parents in the Philippines (Sanchez, 2017).

Generally, children whose parents are in prison are more likely to struggle in academics and seem to have behavioral problems including aggressiveness, anxiety, despair, and rage. As an outcome of these experiences, those children may face long-term consequences in the form of difficulties developing healthy relationships or even involvement in criminal activity (Moseley, 2008). Because of this, it is important to understand how parental incarceration affects a child in order to offer the right interventions and support for addressing their various emotional and practical demands.

Background of the study

When over half of incarcerated adults are also parents, a side effect of the nation's imprisonment binge is undeniable consequences for the youngest citizens. As a result of continued increases in imprisonment rates over the past forty years, the number of children living with at least one parent behind bars also subsequently rose (Buchanan, 2012).

A study conducted by McGinley and Jones (2018) indicated that challenges faced by children affected by parental incarceration include feelings of stigma, shame, fear of being, feelings of isolation, and a lack of individuals in whom children could confide and seek support. Furthermore, a study conducted by Allen (2019) pointed out that young

children with incarcerated parents show signs of emotional or psychological problems. Children also exhibit internalizing problems, such as anxiety, withdrawal, depression, and shame. In this case, it can lead to social withdrawal and be predictively at risk for a wide range of negative adjustment outcomes, including socio-emotional difficulties (e.g., anxiety, low self-esteem, depressive symptoms, and internalizing problems), peer difficulties (e.g., rejection, victimization, poor friendship quality), and school difficulties (e.g., poor-quality teacher-child relationships, academic difficulties, school avoidance) (Rubin et al., 2009).

In local settings, there is inadequate research and statistics on the number of children in the Philippines who have incarcerated parents. However, it is well known that the country has a high incarceration rate, and it is likely that parental incarceration affects a considerable number of children (Philippine Social Science Journal, 2019), although various attempts are being made to assist children whose parents are incarcerated. An example of this is non-governmental organizations such as the Child Justice League and the Child Protection Network, which offer assistance and services to children affected by parental incarceration. However, there is still a need for increased awareness and support for this vulnerable demographic (Reynolds, 2003).

Given the fact that parenthood is invaluable on the part of the children, the parent-child relationship is critical for the affected person. Law enforcement agencies should also consider the welfare of the children left behind by the incarceration of their parents. Although their parents are at fault, the sins of their parents should not be inherited by their children.

With these facts, the researchers came up with the idea to conduct a research study on children with incarcerated parents in a local setting. Several children experience and continue to experience being away from their parent(s) because of incarceration. This idea was formulated to understand the side of the children, to give them significance, and not to invalidate what they had gone through.

Statement of the Problem

The main aim of this study is to explore the lived experiences of children having incarcerated parents.

Within this broad theme, the researchers have several specific problems:

- 1) What are the life experiences of children with incarcerated parents?
- 2) What is the coping mechanism applied by the children having incarcerated parents?
- 3) What are the ways parent maintains parental responsibilities while being incarcerated?

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support the theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists.

Attachment Theory

The Attachment Theory was developed by John Bowlby in the 1950s. It is a psychological theory that explores the importance of the early mother-child relationship for social and emotional development. According to this theory, the formation of secure attachments in early childhood is essential for later functioning in intimate relationships,

self-esteem, and the capacity to regulate emotions. Bowlby's theory of attachment also highlights the negative consequences of separation or loss of contact with a caregiver (Cherry, 2023).

Parental incarceration may affect children's attachment stability due to parent-child separation, inconsistent communication regarding parental absence, limited contact with incarcerated parents, and insecure caregiving arrangements. Economic burden, diminished supervision, stigma, home and school changes, and other unpleasant life events can all result from parental incarceration. Maternal incarceration tends to cause more disruption for children than paternal incarceration and may lead to a greater risk of insecure attachment and psychopathology. Children's prior attachment relations and other life experiences are likely to be of great importance for understanding children's reactions to parental incarceration.

Social Bond Theory

Travis Hirschi, an American criminologist, created the social bond theory in the 1960s based on his work assessing the reasons why people commit crimes. Hirschi's Social Bond Theory has also been noted regarding the impact of disrupted parent-child attachments on offspring outcomes (van de Rakt et al., 2011). As Hirschi (1969) suggested with social bond theory, people with less to lose are more likely to commit a crime. In Social Bond Theory four basic elements make up social bonds. They are attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. It is these four bonds that all humans hold and ultimately determine conformity or deviant behavior (Agnew, 1985). If one is attached to his or her parents, he or she will be more likely to refrain from committing a crime to not damage the relationship.

The relationship between the Social Bond Theory and the Lived Experience of Children Having Incarcerated Parents is that it emphasizes that the closer or stronger the bond of the child to his or her family, the more likely the child will refrain to commit wrongdoings or even crimes to protect the relationship they have with his or her parents. When a parent is incarcerated, it affects the bond between the child and the incarcerated parent.

General Strain Theory

In the 1980s, Criminologist, Robert Agnew, presented his theory of general strain, in which he covered a range of negative behaviors, especially how adolescents deal with the stresses of strain. General strain theory focuses on the source, such as anything that changes in the individual's life that causes strain. He stated that certain strains and stresses increase the likelihood of crime, such as economic deprivation, child abuse, and discrimination. These factors can cause an increase in crime through a range of negative emotions.

In connection with the Lived Experience of Children Having Incarcerated Parents, the General Strain Theory emphasizes that the experience of having a parent in prison can create strains that may influence the behavior and well-being of the child. Children experiencing these strains when they encounter negative circumstances, like having incarcerated parents, can turn to emotional and social strain. They are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior as a response to the strain they experience.

Conceptual framework

The study used the IPOO model, which illustrates the relationship between the four major components of the conceptual framework: input, process, output, and

outcome. An Input-Process-Output-Outcome model is a functional graph that identifies the processing task required to convert inputs to outputs and their outcome (Swaen, 2022). The conceptual framework illustrated the expected relationship between variables. It defines the relevant objectives for the research process and maps out how they come together to draw coherent conclusions (Swaen, 2022).

The input to this study was the different life experiences of children having incarcerated parents, their coping mechanisms, and the ways in which the parent maintained parental responsibilities while being incarcerated. The process includes the collection, interpretation, and analysis of the gathered data. The output of the study is a documentary video entitled “Silent Sentences” concerning the life experiences of children with incarcerated parents to raise awareness and be posted online in coordination with the Ilocos Norte Police Provincial Office Facebook page and the Department of Social Welfare and Development-Ilocos Norte Provincial Operation Office. The outcome of the study could be the formulation of possible interventions; the transition of those affected could be less traumatizing; and the promotion of stories of empowerment rather than traumas

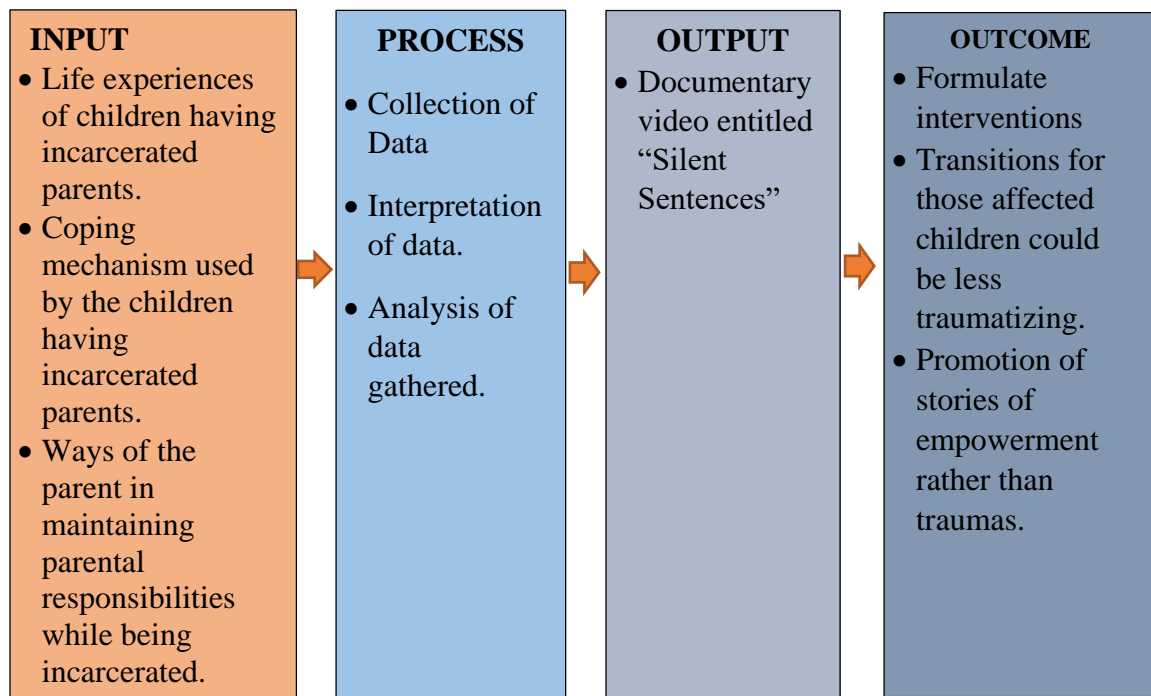


Figure 1: Paradigm of the Study

Significance of the study

The result of the study will give an advantage to the following:

Children. Affected by the incarceration of their parents, they may be given an opportunity to be heard and able to focus on their specific needs depending on the gravity of the impact of the incarceration of their parents.

Parents. The result of the study will help them understand the effects of their incarceration on the welfare of their children. The given data would help them formulate some preventive measures. The findings would also help them learn about the actions of their children.

Community. They may gain critical information from the findings to further understand the lived experiences of children with incarcerated parents and to eliminate the stigma against them.

Policymakers. This study can provide insights and recommendations to address the unique needs of these children.

Social Workers. The result of the study could guide them in the development and establishment of programs and assistance for children with incarcerated parents. It will help children act safely and provide solutions to their needs.

PNP Women and Children Protection Desk. With the aid of this study, they may conduct appropriate investigation and action for children with incarcerated parents to identify the needs of children whose parents are incarcerated.

Researchers. The study is integral to the academic and professional development of the researchers as a criminology students. It equips with the skills and knowledge needed to make meaningful contributions to the understanding and management of parental incarceration to their children that should be considered also by the criminal justice system.

Future Researchers. This study will serve as a tool to direct and navigate them as they uncover credible, trustworthy, and essential elements that are known as important material for deeper learning on the subject. They will undoubtedly require this research as their main source of illumination for their upcoming studies.

Scope and delimitations

The general scope of this study involved the exploration of the lived experiences of children having incarcerated parents. Specifically, the life experiences of children before, during, and after the incarceration of parents, coping mechanisms applied by the children having incarcerated parents, and the ways of the parent in maintaining parental responsibilities while being incarcerated.

This study was conducted in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. The five (5) participants are only those children who experienced having incarcerated parents in order to explore their life experiences, coping mechanisms, and ways in which their parents maintained parental responsibilities while being incarcerated. This research study was carried out from the second semester of the academic year 2022-2023 to the first semester of the academic year 2023-2024.

Definition of terms

The following terms are defined operationally and technically for a better understanding of the terminologies that were used in this study.

Affective separation. It describes the psychological or emotional distance that develops between people, frequently as a result of conflict, relocation, or other life transitions (Abelacio, 2019).

Children. They refer to the son or daughter being left behind due to parental incarceration.

Coping mechanism. These are the ways of the children in dealing with the result or parental incarceration.

Emotional turmoil. It refers to a state of inner conflict or intense emotional disturbance on the part of the children as a result of the incarceration.

Incarceration. It is the confinement in a jail or penitentiary under due legal process or by competent (i.e., authorized) legal authority (EDD State of California, 2023).

Lived experience. It is the experience faced by the children before, during, and after the incarceration of their parents.

Parental Responsibilities. It is the voluntary duties and obligations of parents in exchange for the benefits and privileges of raising a child.

Parental Support. It refers to the different types of assistance provided by a parent or parents to their children. It is a way for parents to continue to assist their children and to ensure the well-being and financial stability of their children as they grow.

Incarcerated Parents. They refer to a mother or father having served time in jail or prison (NYC Vital Signs, 2021).

Paterfamilias Wisdom. It refers to the guidance, advice, or wisdom passed down by the male head of a family, typically the father or patriarch.

Peaceful Life. It is the state of inner calm and harmony, where individuals are free from conflict and stress and experience a sense of well-being and contentment.

Positive Reframing. It refers to the ways in which the children of incarcerated parents perceive the effects of parental incarceration.

Revitalize Family Bond. The act of spending time with younger children reinforces a strong emotional bond and allows parents to impart their own life values (Camp Rainbow Gold, 2023).

Silent Sentences. It refers to the silent battles faced by the children of incarcerated parents.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURES AND STUDIES

This chapter presents the relevant and related literature studies that have been considered by the researchers, which can strengthen the significance of conducting this study. In addition, it offers more information to fully comprehend the research for better understanding.

Growing Up with Parental Imprisonment: Children's Experiences of Managing Stigma, Secrecy, and Shame

In Scotland, parental imprisonment affects 27,000 children and young people each year. With the given information, the research of McGinley & Jones (2018) provided an in-depth investigation into the views and experiences of the children and young people affected by parental incarceration. The said study focused on the dominance of stigma, secrecy, and shame in the lives of such children. This paper reported the findings of a small-scale qualitative study that sought the accounts of six young people aged between 13 and 26 whose biological father was or had been imprisoned. The paper explored the impact of stigma on day-to-day experiences in childhood and the emotional and social well-being of young people.

A qualitative approach was used to explore children and young people's experiences, ranging between 13 and 26 years old, of being the son or daughter of a prisoner. Respondents were equipped with data about the idea of the review and its motivation before settling on whether to continue. A total of six young people were recruited. In-depth individual interviews were undertaken with young people and ensured that they had access to support before and after the interview.

Two respondents were under 16 years old, and there were five (5) females and one (1) male respondent. All had a biological father who was either currently or had in the past served a prison sentence. One of the young person's mother had also been convicted of a crime and imprisoned. Four (4) out of six (6) participants visited their parents regularly while imprisoned, while two had little or no contact with their fathers. One of these disclosed that he experienced violence within his home while growing up. All participants spoke articulately about their experiences. Participants felt that stigma and shame were among the most difficult challenges of parental imprisonment. The main way of managing shame and stigma used by young people was to maintain a level of secrecy. The loss of a parent was, for most participants, a major life event. The loss and grief described by participants, though, went beyond the loss of a parent and included the loss of friends, family members, financial income, and a sense of belonging and identity. The need for secrecy and silence made it difficult for children to process their sense of loss. One common concern expressed by young people was their sense of having to 'grow up too quickly' and having maturity 'forced upon them' as a result of their experiences. These experiences pre- and post-parental imprisonment inevitably harmed children's emotional and social well-being.

Participants described several coping strategies they developed to help them with the enormous challenges they faced. These included using euphemisms to maintain privacy and avoid shame, finding a trusted individual who can provide support, and, to a greater or lesser degree, self-reliance. Participants recommended ways in which secrecy and shame could be lessened and stereotypes challenged through education and information.

This study confirmed many of the challenges faced by children affected by parental incarceration. These include feelings of stigma, shame, fear of being ostracized (Murray and Farrington 2008; Robertson 2007), feelings of isolation, and a lack of individuals in whom children could confide and seek support (Loureiro 2010). The way these adverse circumstances and experiences interact and their consequences for mental well-being and development through childhood and into adulthood are only just beginning to be recognized (Jones et al. 2013), and more research is needed to turn policy goals into reality.

Children of Imprisoned Parents and their Coping Strategies: A Systematic Review

The increasing number of parents in prison is a global public health concern, especially for their children who face various difficulties such as separation, stigmatization, and increased poverty. In the US, around 5 million children experienced parental incarceration in 2012, while in Europe, approximately 800,000 children experienced this in 2013. Children with incarcerated parents are at risk of social exclusion, mental health problems, and future incarceration. The question that guided this review were as follows: What are the coping strategies that are used by children with imprisoned parents? What interventions exist to support children of imprisoned parents? (Thulstrup & Karlsson, 2017)

The article also discusses the impact of maternal and paternal imprisonment on children and highlights the importance of social welfare services and an unprejudiced public attitude toward their well-being (Flynn, 2023).

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The coping strategies used by these children varied, and some were effective while others were not. Effective strategies included engaging in recreational activities and being socially engaged. Ineffective strategies included keeping the situation a secret, avoiding lying, and minimizing the situation. The review found that interventions such as mentoring programs and family-based programs were promising in helping children cope, but further training for school counselors and health professionals is needed (Child Adolesc. Soc. Work J. 2006). Overall, successful interventions were based on earlier evidence and existing behavioral theories or earlier research on children with imprisoned parents (Thulstrup & Karlsson, 2017).

This review looked at how children cope when their parent is in prison and found out that coping strategies vary depending on the child's age and relationship with the imprisoned parent. Coping mechanisms included de-identification, desensitization, strength through control, distracting activities, and support from peers and school

professionals. Good family backgrounds and social support tended to result in better coping strategies. The review suggests that group interventions and mentoring programs can be helpful for these children, but schools need more staff training and guidelines (Raikes, 2013).

Coping mechanisms used by children with a parent in prison, finding that coping strategies vary depending on age and relationship with the parent. The study highlights the importance of support from peers and school professionals and the negative impact of stigma and bullying. According to Thulstrup and Karlsson (2017), the review recommended group interventions, mentoring programs, and social activities for these children and emphasizes the need for evidence-based interventions, policies, and increased awareness of this public health issue.

A Review of Research on the Likelihood of Children with Incarcerated Parents Becoming Justice-Involved

There has been no documentary evidence to support the widely claimed likelihood of children with incarcerated parents (CIP) becoming justice-involved, but undocumented assertions have been made that CIP is six times more likely to become justice-involved and that seven out of ten CIP will become justice-involved (Siegel, 2011). The mean across estimates approached was slightly more than three out of ten (32.8%). CIP was about three times as likely as non-CIP to become justice-involved. Only one of the three studies employing control variables was consistent with the idea that parental incarceration may be the cause of elevated justice involvement in CIP. The article also noted that the claims of CIP's likelihood of becoming justice-involved are potentially stigmatizing (Conway & Jones, 2015).

The methods used to identify studies on the likelihood of children with incarcerated parents (CIP) becoming justice-involved include searching a suite of 40 databases, examining literature reviews of relevant articles, and drawing from a meta-analysis of studies comparing CIP with non-CIP groups. The inclusion criteria for studies were that they had a sample of children who had a parent incarcerated during the child's lifetime, examined the likelihood of the children becoming justice-involved, and used a representative sampling strategy.

The research found that the claim that "seven out of ten" CIPs will become justice-involved is not supported, with estimates ranging from 35% to 43.1%. The weighted mean estimate is slightly more than three out of ten CIPs becoming justice-involved.

The research found that CIP is more likely to become justice-involved. The non-CIP group had a likelihood ranging from high single digits to low 20s, except for one study that found a likelihood of 32.9% (Conway & Jones, 2015).

The evidence on whether parental incarceration is a plausible cause of the increased risk of justice involvement is mixed. CIP should be disseminated to reduce stigma and advocate for resources. It also highlights potential negative outcomes, such as mental and physical health problems, associated with CIP and argues for sustained attention to CIP by policymakers and researchers. The authors suggest that service providers should be educated about the likelihood of justice involvement for CIP and other outcomes and be more sensitive to the needs and issues specific to this population. There are limitations in the research reviewed, including the fact that the findings are correlational and therefore ambiguous about cause and effect (Conway & Jones, 2015).

Seven out of ten children of incarcerated parents (CIP) became justice-involved and that they are six times more likely than other children to become justice-involved are not supported by studies from various countries. The use of such claims may lead to stigma, which is a significant issue for CIP. Therefore, accurate information about CIP and their needs should be disseminated, and interventions should be developed based on research. It is also essential to listen to CIP and understand the meaning they make of their parent's incarceration when setting policies and developing programs. While the review does not provide clear, direct implications for intervention with CIP, effective interventions need to be developed through conversations and additional research (Conway & Jones, 2015).

Effects of Parental Imprisonment on Child Antisocial Behavior and Mental Health: A Systematic Review

Children of prisoners had about twice the risk of antisocial behavior and poor mental health outcomes compared to children without imprisoned parents. All except one of the studies suggested that parental imprisonment might cause an increase in these outcomes for children.

Sixteen studies of parental imprisonment were eligible for inclusion in this review. A meta-analysis of these studies showed that children of prisoners have about twice the risk of antisocial outcomes and poor mental health problems compared with their peers. Twelve observational studies used matched comparison groups or statistically controlled for covariates to try to isolate the effects of parental imprisonment on children (Murray et al., 2009).

Paternal Imprisonment and Father-Child Relationships: A Systematic Review

The adverse consequences of paternal imprisonment for children include increased chances of engaging in antisocial and delinquent behavior (Murray et al., 2012), traumatic symptoms (Arditti & Savia, 2014; Nesmith & Ruhland, 2008), health vulnerabilities, the stigma of being at risk for intergenerational transmission of criminal behavior (Besemer & Farrington, 2012), and increased vulnerability to internalizing problem behavior (Boswell & Wedge, 2002). Although the effects of parental imprisonment are negative on average, many children are resilient to the negative consequences of paternal imprisonment.

The systematic review was conducted following best practice guidelines and the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines (Moher et al., 2009).

As to the result, the studies included in the systematic review used qualitative (n = 19), quantitative (n = 8), and mixed (n = 3) methodologies. The most influential dynamics that shape father-child relationships during imprisonment are as follows: (a) the quality of pre-prison father-child relationships; (b) the frequency and experience of in-prison contact; (c) the caregiver's gatekeeping role in facilitating or restricting father-child contact; and (d) prison's barriers for maintaining father-child relationships (Venema, Haan, & Veenstra, 2022).

Children of Imprisoned Parents and their Coping Strategies

Children must cope with the separation from their parents and often struggle with several situations, such as insecurity due to their new living conditions, stigmatization in

school, and an increased risk of poverty due to no income from the incarcerated parent (Thulstrup & Karlsson, 2017).

Children of imprisoned parents used several coping strategies. Some of these strategies were described as creative when children identified that different individual activities helped them cope. Furthermore, coping strategies were resourceful, such that children found successful ways to address parental imprisonment. Other coping strategies tended to be ineffective when children had difficulties coping with parental imprisonment and lacked social support from their environments. Children primarily used a combination of strategies, which included distraction (strength through control) through school, participating in sports, going to the theater, relying on their faith, spending time with friends, and talking to supportive people, such as family members, caregivers, friends, and school professionals.

This review found that there was variability and individual multidimensional use of coping mechanisms among children who had a parent in prison. The coping strategies were dependent on the age of the child and their relationships with their imprisoned family members. As mentioned in the findings of Jakobsen and Smith (2016), children reacted and handled themselves differently based on their relationship with their parents and the individual circumstances in their lives. The variety of coping strategies is explained through the different compositions of the sample in terms of age and participants' relationships to their imprisoned family members, and to what extent coping was a central focus in the included studies. Additionally, the results indicate that children cope in very different, individual ways.

The results suggested that coping strategies often include a combination of de-identification, desensitization, and strength through control, as well as distracting activities and support from peers and school professionals (Thulstrup & Karlsson, 2017).

Children of Incarcerated Parents: Problems and Resilience

Children face a variety of risks when their parents are incarcerated (Pech & Bloom, 2016). To explain the impact of parental incarceration, one study examined the association between children's health and parental incarceration. The findings revealed that children with incarcerated parents, in comparison to children without incarcerated parents, had worse health outcomes.

Aside from the few longitudinal studies that have analyzed the relationship between parental incarceration and juvenile delinquency, no causal relationship can be determined (Pech & Bloom, 2016).

Economic instability has been examined for a possible effect on children's health and well-being. Risk factors for children with incarcerated parents intersect with the children's school, community, and familial environments, as well as the prison system itself. Previous studies have analyzed the negative impacts of parental incarceration on children. Major findings concluded that maternal and paternal incarceration have different effects on children, such that paternal incarceration puts children at risk for homelessness, whereas maternal incarceration results in foster care placement (Pech & Bloom, 2016).

The Impact of Parental Incarceration: Adults Reflect on their Juvenile Years

The National Resource Center on Children and Families of the Incarcerated recorded that there are more than 2.7 million children who have a parent in prison, and

some may have one or both in county jail. There are psychological implications in terms of the child's well-being, behavioral, academic, and emotional outcomes, and family-level processes.

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to describe the impact that a parent's incarceration has on a child. Data were collected for this study through interviews with 12 adults who had a parent who had been or, in many cases, was still incarcerated. This study aims to fill the gap by contributing to the literature, and policymakers can then possibly use the results of this study to develop programs that can assist this targeted group and help them to break the cycle of incarceration and become productive citizens in their communities.

The findings illustrated that there is a significant impact on juveniles when a parent is incarcerated. Some expressed their experience as one that they have moved on from, but many still spoke as if they were still living the trauma. There are different adverse reactions displayed by the child when the parent is no longer there. Young children with incarcerated parents show signs of emotional or psychological problems. Children also exhibit internalizing problems, such as anxiety, withdrawal, depression, and shame. Many of the adult participants in this study spoke about the hurt and embarrassment they felt when their parents were incarcerated. The parent is not the only person who is being punished when a crime is committed; the innocent child also spends time with the parent. If every effort is put into place to ensure that the bond continues for the child and parent, this impact can be less hurtful for both the child and parent (Allen, 2019).

Throughout this study, it became apparent the true impact that is felt when a child loses their parent to incarceration. The criminal justice system needed to be involved in decision-making about family contacts and family support. The social welfare system needed to be involved with the family members of incarcerated parents to provide services such as visitation and reentry.

When courts, schools, social services, and policymakers in this traumatizing event coordinate with one another to come up with policies that will make this transition less traumatizing for the child, stories of empowerment rather than trauma (Allen, 2019).

Children of Incarcerated Parents: An Application of the Stress Process Model

According to the United States, the best way to examine the lives and experiences of children of incarcerated parents from a theoretical perspective is through the application of the social stress process. Previous research on children of incarcerated parents has neglected to add a theoretical component to their research, which is the intention of this research. The results organized around the theoretical domains of the stress process applied to findings from the analysis of eleven qualitative interviews of mothers and/or caregivers of youth(s) of an incarcerated parent. Guided by analytic induction, the themes that emerged from the transcripts were applied to the theoretical propositions of the social stress process: stressors, mediators, and manifestations. Stressors experienced by children of incarcerated parents include the incarceration of a parent, financial difficulties, and residential instability. Stress mediators include coping mechanisms and the importance of maintaining familial ties during parental incarceration.

It is a qualitative study, and the data collection instruments used in this research were a brief, open-ended demographic questionnaire and a structured interview guide. The demographic questionnaire addressed family characteristics such as the number and ages of the children being cared for, who was incarcerated, and the relationship between the interview participant and the children. Topics addressed in the interview included: whether the incarcerated parent was a topic of discussion with the child or children; behavioral changes at home or school in the child or children; communication with the incarcerated parent; and family history of jail or imprisonment.

There are several significant findings. First, the children also tend to experience financial difficulties and consequences, regardless of the sex of the incarcerated parent, which typically causes families to have to move, and as a result, the children are forced to change schools. That is, the incarceration of a parent is the primary stressor, which is further exacerbated by secondary stressors such as financial difficulties and residential instability. Regardless of whether the children were cared for by their biological mothers or extended family members, most mothers and caregivers reported that the children were often forced to deal with and cope with more than the incarceration of a parent. Second were the mental health outcomes that emerged from the transcripts. As previously stated, internalizing behaviors are a broad class of behaviors that involve inner conflict, whereas externalizing behaviors are characterized by “conflicts with others and with social mores.” Externalizing behaviors previously identified in this population include aggression, acting out, academic problems, classroom behavior difficulties, truancy, and substance abuse.

The literature lacks longitudinal data looking at the children of incarcerated parents at two or more points in time. Also, it may be interesting to compare the children of mothers who are incarcerated to the children of fathers who are incarcerated.

Lastly, gender, race, and ethnicity need to be addressed from a theoretical perspective in research on the children of incarcerated parents. It is important to examine the links between an individual's well-being and the greater society. It is also of great significance to give this invisible and often forgotten population a voice in society. The number of incarcerated individuals in the United States has increased steadily over the years, and there is no sign that this institutionalization will cease anytime soon.

Therefore, this process will affect more and more children and families. Children of incarcerated parents are a great example of how connected humans are to the greater society (Jarvis, 2007).

Parental Incarceration and Child Risk Factors

There was a particular concern that a parent's imprisonment would lead to a cycle of intergenerational criminal behavior. One statistic indicated that children of incarcerated parents are, on average, six times more likely to become incarcerated themselves. But risk factors rarely present themselves across all children, and these behaviors are difficult to understand or predict. Although each case is unique and each child responds differently, research has established that a parent's incarceration poses several threats to a child's emotional, physical, educational, and financial well-being.

The method that was used in this study is a qualitative research study to determine the psychological problems, antisocial behavior, educational attainment, economic well-

being, and parent-child attachment and contact while their parents are incarcerated with connection to their gender, age, race, and family situation.

The results of the study showed that children who have both a mother and father incarcerated are experiencing an increase in depression. Twenty percent of sampled children did see an increase in aggression; boys who tended to be aggressive before a parent's incarceration were at risk for a trajectory of increased aggression. The study found that children of incarcerated parents are significantly more likely to be suspended and expelled from school.

The researcher found out that the family's income was 22 percent lower during the incarceration period and 15 percent lower after the parent's re-entry, which affected the children's monetary hardship.

The study did explain that having incarcerated parents would affect not just the emotional factors of the child but also the social and economic life of the child. Children with incarcerated parents would experience more difficulties in dealing with their depression and behavior. It may also lead the child to have criminal behavior compared to those without incarcerated children (Marvin, 2017).

Sins of Our Father: The Lived Experiences of Children and Young People with a Parent in Prison

The awareness that prisoners may also be parents has only recently been recognized by policymakers—subsequently, the broader consequences of parental incarceration, particularly on children and young people, are now being made visible (Mumola, 2000; Sheehan, 2011). Much of this research highlights the 'unintended consequences or collateral damage' of imprisonment, such as the social and economic

changes experienced by families when a parent goes into prison. (Christian, Mellow, & Thomas, 2006). Yet their understanding of the experiences and needs of children and young people with a parent in prison is limited (Sanders, 2018).

Children and young people experienced a range of negative effects as a result of the stigma raised by parental incarceration, and this situation created a dilemma for them in which they must weigh the costs of seeking support against others learning about their circumstances. Helping children and young people to challenge the stigma associated with parental incarceration while providing them with the tools and supports to do this is an important undertaking for social workers and other professionals working with this group of children. It is the responsibility of academics and policymakers to work together to create the change necessary to better support this group of children and young people. Without challenging the attitudes and beliefs that currently surround this, children are at risk of remaining hidden and marginalized (Sanders, 2018).

It was apparent in the study of Sanders (2018) that as children and young people became older and as their worlds became bigger, they also became more aware of their parents' incarceration and the impact that this had on them. However, while young people had a larger number of experiences of stigma to describe, younger children also described similar experiences. Many of the children and young people described feeling discriminated against, judged, and shamed by their peers, family members, the general community, and the broader society for simply being associated with a stigmatized person, their incarcerated parent. The idea of courtesy stigma originates from kinship and family connections and is underpinned by the notion of contamination. In addition, children and young people who had not experienced tangible acts of discrimination still

identified that they experienced considerable anticipated judgment and fear of stereotyping. This perceived or felt stigma was described by children and young people as distressing as it was for those who had experienced direct discrimination (Phillips & Gats, 2011).

Parental Incarceration and Child Wellbeing: Implications for Urban Families

The United States had over two million people incarcerated in Federal or State prisons or local jails (Harrison and Beck, 2004), a majority of whom had children under 18. The large and growing number of incarcerated parents has raised concerns about child wellbeing and made understanding the effects of parental incarceration on child development a primary goal of social scientists. Several family interventions have also been proposed to address the needs of families facing parental incarceration, including healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood initiatives. Despite the growing prevalence of parental incarceration, little is known about the specific risks facing children of incarcerated parents from parental incarceration.

This study of Geller et al., (2009) used the qualitative methodology in exploring this topic. They used parental reports of incarceration history, demographic background, and a rich set of child and family outcomes in a series of multivariate regression models.

Children of incarcerated parents face more economic and residential instability than their counterparts. Sons or daughters of incarcerated fathers display more behavior problems, though other developmental differences are insignificant. They also found out that incarceration identifies families facing severe hardship, which cannot be explained by other observed family characteristics. Given the prevalence of incarceration, the findings suggest that a large population of children suffers from unmet material needs,

residential instability, and behavior problems. These risks may be best addressed by using the point of incarceration as an opportunity for intervention and the administration of age-appropriate social services.

Experiences of Adult Children with Previously Incarcerated Parents: A Qualitative Study

The experiences of adult children whose parents have served time in prison are explored in this research study. The study may look at how adult children's relationships, mental health, and general well-being are affected by their parent's incarceration.

This study used qualitative methods to gather information through in-depth interviews and focus groups. The study also explored the coping mechanisms and resilience among this population.

It was proven that when there was little to no contact while incarcerated, the child with incarcerated parents suffered stigma, communication gaps, internalizing tendencies, and reductions in the parent-child connection. It was established that parental imprisonment had a precipitating influence on other risk variables that had a stronger direct impact on the child with an incarcerated parent than the actual incarceration. Parental imprisonment was found to raise financial stress in the home and the child with incarcerated parent's responsibilities, however, some children with incarcerated parents had access to work-study alternatives, which reduced their financial instability. The participants confirmed that there were developmental speech deficits, anxiety, sadness, and substance addiction (Opeletia, 2019).

Examining the Lived Experiences of Children of Incarcerated Black Males

Children with incarcerated parents are at risk for a variety of problematic outcomes, yet research has rarely examined protective factors or resilience processes that might mitigate such risk in this population. Extensive research shows the importance of the parent-child relationship and the deep and often traumatic effect that the loss of a parent can have on a child. The focus is on maintaining the parent-child bond in the face of a parent's absence due to incarceration. The principle of our research is to give voice from the perspective of children who have experienced the absence of their biological father due to conviction and time spent in the United States incarceration system. This study seeks to gain insight into the lived experiences of children with formerly or currently incarcerated black fathers (Rogers, 2018).

Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this study based on their history of having a formerly or currently incarcerated black father. Participants were adult children (18 years of age or older) with formerly or currently incarcerated black fathers. Participants ranged in age from 21 to 46 and included four adult women and four adult men.

Interviews were conducted with participants living in the greater Houston area. Interview questions measured the earliest age of their father's incarceration, engaged the participants on how they best understood their father's convictions, inquired about how the participants perceived social changes in their immediate and third-party relationships, and asked questions related to health and wellness issues they may have experienced or not experienced.

A heavy burden to achieve love that was never present becomes the goal. Unable to articulate the gap, one mother is the victim of unrequited love in relationships and romance, while a father responds with unconditional love for his children to an unimaginable height. The absence of their father while incarcerated did not go unnoticed; even as adults, our participants recount shared moments of communication and longing for relationships. A type of emotional reserve was built as a response to their father's absence. Filling shoes characterizes the ability of each participant to live and walk in their own experience and moral standard versus the expectations and conflicting moral obligation to fill the shoes of others. Filling shoes addresses the pressure and conscious choices made to walk beyond the shadows of expectation (Rogers, 2018).

The mature father overcompensated in love and relationships with his children to affirm the role of a father he never had. The resolve of our participants was to become more focused on achieving the childhood values and memories they could never share with their fathers. As our results have shown, children are often silent third parties, navigating through the shame and frustration of their father's imprisonment. To rehabilitate the self-esteem and self-worth of young black males (Rogers, 2018).

Children with Incarcerated Parents – Considering Children's Outcomes in the Context of Complex Family Experiences

Children of incarcerated parents were at increased risk for both internalizing (depression, anxiety, withdrawal) and externalizing (delinquency, substance use) behavior problems, cognitive delays, and difficulties in school (school failure). Children with incarcerated parents were also at increased risk for insecure attachment –

experiencing relationships with primary caregivers who are inconsistent, insensitive, or unresponsive to children's social and emotional needs.

The method used in the study was mixed method obtaining the different experiences of a child with incarcerated parents, the ages of the child, the child's living situation, the person taking care of the child, how incarceration affects family income and household stability, and if the children still have contact with their incarcerated parents.

In their study of 32 children (7-17 years old) with jailed parents, it was found that 36% of incarcerated parents reported that their children witnessed the parents' criminal activity, arrest, or sentencing. Witnessing a parent's arrest – seeing the police arrive (likely without warning and often with weapons drawn), watching the parent be handcuffed and arrested, and being separated when the parent has driven away in a police car – was often emotionally charged and may be confusing or frightening for children.

More than 50% of children with incarcerated parents were under the age of 10 years, and more than 1 in 5 are under the age of 4 years. Compared to older children and adolescents, infants and young children cannot understand the facts about a parent's incarceration, have fewer emotional and cognitive capacities to process the loss of the parent, and lack the language and cognitive abilities needed to express their preferences about their living arrangements or contact with the incarcerated parent. Only a quarter of fathers compared to three-quarters of mothers reported providing primary care for their children before arrest. In addition, children with incarcerated mothers were more likely than children with incarcerated fathers to be exposed to their parent's criminal activity, arrest, and sentencing. Among incarcerated fathers, approximately 36% reported living with their minor children in the month before their arrest. Among incarcerated mothers,

more than half reported living with their minor children in the month before their arrest.

The person taking care of the child when a father is incarcerated was the mother.

In contrast, when their mother was incarcerated, a majority of children lived with their grandparents. Among parents who lived with their minor children in the month before their arrest or just before their incarceration, nearly all mothers (89%) and most fathers (67%) reported providing financial support to the family. Researchers found that the child's caregiver often acts as a gatekeeper between the child and the incarcerated parent. Although the majority of incarcerated parents have some contact with their children while serving their sentence, mail contact is much more common than visitation. More than three-quarters reported mail contact with their children (52% reported at least monthly mail contact) and more than half reported phone contact (38% reported at least monthly phone calls). In contrast, fewer than half of state prisoners report ever receiving a visit with their children during incarceration (Shlafer et al., 2013).

A Phenomenology of Children with Incarcerated Fathers in the New Bilibid Prison in the Philippines

The study utilized interpretative phenomenological analysis, which relied heavily on the observation of the researchers and the interviews of participants with different perspectives and roles in the social or cultural condition being examined. The study valued insights into how prison-related experiences may have affected the children's affective behavior and cognitions about their father's incarceration.

Using quantitative content analysis, four subordinate themes were established: (1) anxieties alongside comfort in prison; (2) stigma and the loss of the father; (3) emphasizing a father in prison; and (4) compensating to maintain family cohesion. The

first subordinate theme revolved around the children's various interactions within the prison, some of which may cause anxiety and others that provide comfort. The second superordinate theme focused on the children's interactions outside prison involving their peers; they face stigma, and the absence of their father is felt more deeply as a result of their interaction with their peers. The third superordinate theme discussed the children's feelings of empathy towards their fathers. The children continued to believe in their fathers' innocence and to continue seeing their fathers as their fathers. The final subordinate theme discussed the child's efforts to maintain family cohesion upon viewing the rest of the member's attempts to maintain closely-knit ties with the family (Go et al., 2019).

The question is: What are the subjective experiences of children with incarcerated fathers was answered by four themes presented in the previous section, namely: (1) interaction with strangers in prison as negative; (2) interactions with fathers' friends as positive; (2) negative interactions with peers outside prison; (3) pessimistic views of prison; and (4) guy effort to maintain family cohesion. The results of the current study emphasize the anxiety experienced by children. This anxiety was found to be present across several subthemes.

In conclusion, the children of incarcerated fathers experience a great deal of hardship stemming from the prison environment, societal views, and financial concerns. They tended to assume responsibility for maintaining family cohesion. However, this assumption of responsibility eventually transitioned into "pagsasalo," which puts an immense burden on the shoulders of these young children (Go et al., 2019).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods employed and procedures during the study. It specifically includes the research method, participants of the study, sampling procedures, instruments, and validation of the instruments. Data gathering procedures as well as the treatment of the data.

Research Design and Methodology

A qualitative research method was used in this study. Qualitative research is the exploratory scientific method of measurement to collect non-numerical information. Rather than specifying counts or measures as in quantitative research, qualitative research requires the statement of feelings, related features and meanings, and fundamental observations and interpretations (Bhandari, 2023). This method is not only about "what" people think but also "why" they think so.

Under this method, this study used phenomenological studies as it helps to understand and explore the children with incarcerated parent's lived experiences. It focuses on exploring the subjective perspectives, meanings, and essence of human experiences through systematic and in-depth exploration (Bliss, 2016). Through semi-structured interviews, the investigator explores the subject's thoughts and feelings to elicit the essence of an individual's experience. By employing phenomenological research design in this context, the researchers can gain a nuanced understanding of the lived experiences of these children, shedding light on the complexities and unique perspective associated with having incarcerated parents.

Population and Locale of the Study

The participants chosen in this study were those children who have incarcerated parents in the Province of Ilocos Norte, specifically, two (2) participants from Brgy. 46 Nalbo, one (1) from Brgy. 32-C Lapaz, one (1) from Brgy. 54-A Lagui Sail, and one (1) from Brgy. 44 Zamboanga. The participants were still under 18 years old when their parents, specifically their father, were incarcerated.

The researchers used purposeful sampling as a sampling method to gather in-depth knowledge and detailed information from the five (5) chosen participants in order to learn about and assess their experiences with having an incarcerated parent. Purposeful sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units or individuals are selected because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study. This sampling method relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases and events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives (Nikolopoulou, 2022).

Data Gathering Tool

An interview guide, recording device and interview was used as the data gathering tool. The researchers constructed an interview guide composed of a series of questions about the lived experiences of children with incarcerated parents their coping mechanisms and ways of the parents to maintain parental responsibilities which were validated by the guidance counselor. The validated interview guide was used to administer the interview proper which it includes the questions that were asked to the respondents. A recording device is any mechanical or digital equipment fashioned to

collect and store audio or visual contents. This device is actually useful for many reasons such as permanently keeping memories, data, and even pieces of evidence.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers created an interview guide consisting of questions regarding the lived experiences of children with incarcerated parents, their coping mechanisms, and ways for their parents to maintain parental responsibilities, which was validated by the guidance counselor. After the validation of the interview guide, the researchers conducted the reliability test with two participants in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, through interview and recording devices. The researchers explained to the participants the importance of their response to the study. The researchers clarified some terms for the participants that made them answer the questions asked with full knowledge of their responsibility as the subject of the study. The researchers requested that the participants answer honestly. The interviews were conducted in a safe and confidential environment based on the participants' preferences and circumstances. The interview used a recording device for the researchers to have accurate documentation of the interview as well as to fill in the gaps in the information missed during the actual interview while note-taking. When all the participants have already been interviewed, the recorded answers are transcribed into texts for analysis, allowing the researchers to have a structured interview guide to get the information needed for the actual interview. The procedure used in the actual interview is the same as the interview conducted for reliability and validity testing, as stated above. Based on the data, the researchers came up with conclusions and recommendations for this study.

Treatment of Data

Thematic analysis was used in this study; it identifies, analyzes, and interprets qualitative data patterns. It is used to find common themes and interpret qualitative data patterns. Thematic analysis is a method for analyzing qualitative data that involves reading through a set of data and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data to find themes (Villegas, 2023).

Data Familiarization. The researchers transcribed and familiarized themselves with the data that was obtained from the participants through interviews and recording devices with the participants who experienced having incarcerated parents.

Data Quotation. The researchers identified and labeled important information in the responses of the participants that was relevant or potentially interesting.

Coding. The researchers developed initial codes that summarize the salient aspects of the subjects' experiences.

Theme Identification. The researchers examined the data that was coded and found overarching themes that represent the patterns and significance found in the data.

Interpretation. The themes were interpreted by the researchers, who established and explained the results using theory and literature.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers explained the purpose of the research and the protection of their identity through oral and written explanation to the participants. By the sign of the participants in the informed consent form, they understand about the purpose of the study, fully disclose any risks associated with participation in the study and protect their privacy and confidentiality. The researchers followed ethical guidelines, obtaining

necessary approvals, and maintaining transparency with participants regarding their rights and potential risks associated with participation.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter presents the data gathered from the participants as well as detailing the codes and themes that emerged from their answers. In this study, it explores the life experiences of children who have incarcerated parents, specifically to determine the life experiences before, during, and after the incarceration of parents, coping mechanisms, and ways of the parent in maintaining parental responsibilities while being incarcerated.

Life of Children before the Incarceration of Parent

Everyone dreams of having a complete family. Life is almost as perfect, with fewer undesirable situations to conquer. There are enough resources to sufficiently meet the needs of everyday life. This section of the research study discussed the lives of children before the incarceration of their parents.

Peaceful Life

Peaceful life is defined as a state of inner calm and harmony where individuals are free from conflict and stress and experience a sense of wellbeing and contentment (Diener et. al., 1999). Feeling peaceful has been identified in the literature as important for health and quality of life. The women stated that their ultimate goal was to find peace and that participating in their cultural practices allowed them to feel peaceful and improve their quality of life (Ross et al., 2007).

In this study, a peaceful life was defined as a happy family, a harmonious life, a focus on achieving a goal, being unbothered by innocence, and having sufficient needs.

These are supported by the statements of Participant 1. She stated that:

“We lived happily and normal.

Awan pampanunoten nga problema. Awan conflict between our families and enemies”

(We led a contented and typical life. There was nothing to worry about. There is no conflict between our families and enemies.)

Participant 3 further support the theme, as he claimed:

“Mayat met idi kas lang awan problema”

(It was fine back then, as if there were no problems.)

Participant 4 also supplement the theme, as he asserted:

“Mayat ti pinagbiagmi idi”

(Our life was fine before.)

Participant 5 additionally aided the theme, as he stated:

“Mayat kasi naragsak, nakamaymayat, kanayonkam rumrummuar idi.”

(It was good because we were happy; in fact, we went out a lot back then.)

According to Hanh (1991), feeling peaceful is an individual experience that can touch other individuals, families, and societies. Hanh (1991) reiterated the individualistic nature of feeling peaceful when he wrote, “Peace is present right here and now, in ourselves and in everything we do and see. Every breath we take and every step we take can be filled with peace, joy, and serenity” (p. 5). Hanh (1991) believed that people can cultivate their own peace by practicing mindfulness, which he described as “clarity, determination, and patience—the fruits of meditation.”

Based on the transcribed and coded data, the lives of children with incarcerated parents before the incarceration of their parents were harmonious and peaceful because they did not experience any major problems in their lives. Prior to their parents' incarceration, they were simply happy because they spent time with them and lived their lives normally. They lived their lives without causing any conflict with their families or friends. Living without major problems and being happy equated to living a peaceful life, according to the study's participants. Parents play an important role in their children's development because they provide for their children's needs, give time to the family to strengthen their relationship, and guide their children to live a peaceful life.

Life of Children during the Incarceration of Parent

The incarceration of a parent is a life-altering and difficult experience for children. During their parents' incarceration, these children face difficult circumstances that have an impact on their emotional, social, and developmental well-being. There is one theme developed, which describes the life experiences of children during their parents' incarceration.

Emotional Turmoil

Emotional turmoil refers to a state of inner conflict or intense emotional disturbance. It is characterized by a range of strong and often negative emotions, such as anxiety, stress, anger, confusion, sadness, or fear that can disrupt a person's mental and emotional well-being. This turmoil may result from various factors, including personal experiences, external stressors, or internal struggles (Writer, 2020).

Emotional turmoil is defined in this research as emotional upheaval due to a lack of parental guidance, being emotionally disoriented in academics, psychological distress, separation anxiety, mistrust of others, and social anxiety.

This is supported by the statement of Participant 1. She stated that:

*“Frustrated, madep-
depress... Han maka-
concentrate agbasbasa, no
mabalin lang hanko kayat
sumrek that time.”*

(Frustrated and depressed, I struggled to focus on my studies and would prefer not to attend school at that time.)

Participant 2 further support the theme Emotional Turmoil, as she stated:

*“Narigat kase limited lang ti
oras nga pinagkakadua mi nga
agpapamilya”*

(It is hard because the time we spend as a family is limited.)

In addition, Participant 2 stated that:

*“Haan umanay tapnu
maitedda ti parental guidance
a kasapulak nga kas ubing”*

(It wasn't enough for them to provide me with the parental guidance that I needed as a child.)

Furthermore, the theme Emotional Turmoil was greatly supported by Participant 3, stating that:

*“Siempre agnerbios idi kase
alaendan papangmo tapos
kasla mano aldaw dimo makita
isuna.”*

(Of course, I was nervous at the time because they were going to take my father, and it seemed like I wouldn't see him for how many days.)

Participant 3 further stated that:

*“Kasla naawananka ti trust
didiay maysa tao nga uray
hanmo am-ammo didiay tao,
kase adda didiay impulse nga
kaam-amom lang ket nagdakkell
trust-mon ngem kaniak ngamin
ket, kaam-ammok lang ket kas
lang adayo latta kas lang am-*

ammom”

(It’s like I lost trust to others even though I did not know that person or if I have just previously met that person.)

Moreover, Emotional Turmoil was also supported with the statements provided by Participant 4 states that:

*“Mabainak met rummuar ti
balaymin... ken mabain nak
agpakita dagidiay barkadako.
Diak pay kayat agbasa idin.”*

(I was embarrassed to leave our house and embarrassed to meet with my friends. I no longer even want to attend school.)

The statement of Participant 5 also connects to the theme Emotional Turmoil where the researchers arrived, she stated that;

*“Kanayonko sarsaraken ni
papa idi kasi ubingnak idi, tas
ti ammok ngamin nagbakasion*

lang, kasdiy.”

(I constantly search for my father before because I was still a child and I used to think that my father was only on vacation.)

Similar to the study of Allen (2019), in her study “The Impact of Parental Incarceration: Adults Reflect on Their Juvenile Years,” the participants show emotional problems such as separation anxiety, social anxiety, being emotionally disoriented in academics, and psychological distress during the incarceration of their parent(s). Parental incarceration produces menacing effects on children of all races (Suskind, 2020). The effects of childhood trauma may be observed in the ways individuals form relationships with their family and friends (Yumbul, Cavusoglu, & Geyimici, 2010). Allen (2019) also pointed out that this type of emotional problem can have a negative impact on the child and that, over time, these problems may become worse and become toxic emotions into adulthood.

The experience during the incarceration of parent(s) with their children was based on the child’s emotions, more specifically emotional turmoil, as the theme created by their responses. One of the participants answered that she is frustrated and depressed because of the negative impact of not continuing her own studies. The other participants developed mistrust of others due to difficulty in forming trusting relationships and found it challenging to believe or rely on people. With these problems that children encountered during the incarceration of their parent(s), they slowly separated themselves from other people because they were too afraid to express themselves or simply did not know how to express themselves as there were many things going through their minds. There are different adverse reactions displayed by the child when the parent is no longer there;

these are signs of emotional or psychological problems as well as internalizing problems, such as anxiety, withdrawal, depression, and shame.

Life of Children after the Incarceration of Parent

The incarceration of the parents can be a deeply challenging and life-altering experience for the children left behind. These young individuals often find themselves navigating a complex and emotionally turbulent journey, marked by a myriad of difficulties. From disruptions in their daily routines to the stigma they may encounter, the impact of parental incarceration on children is profound. The following are the formulated themes describing the life experiences of children after the incarceration of their parents.

Affective Separation

The term "affective separation" describes the psychological or emotional distance that develops between people, frequently as a result of conflict, relocation, or other life transitions. People may feel emotionally detached, alone, or distressed as a result of this separation since their emotional intimacy and connection to one another have changed or decreased (Abelacio, 2005).

As to the statements provided by the participants, affective separation refers to the detachment of affection due to parental incarceration; it emphasizes the emotional separation and the impact on the parent-child relationship resulting from the incarceration of the parent.

The theme formulated by the researchers was supported by the statement provided by Participant 2.

***“Naiyadayo ti riknak kaniana
gapu ti panakaawanna”***

(I became distant from him because of his absence.)

The theme that was formulated was also supported by the statement given by Participant 4.

***“Mas lalo nga immadayo ti
rikna’k kanianan”***

(I felt even more distant.)

Broadly speaking, emotional detachment is the inability or unwillingness to connect with others on an emotional level. Emotional detachment can also mean that people do not engage with their feelings, which can translate into repeatedly being disconnected or disengaged from what other people are feeling. It can be adaptive at the time of the trauma, and it can protect one from unwanted thoughts of feelings (Clohessy & Ehlers, 1999).

According to Opeletia (2019), it was proven that when there was little to no contact while incarcerated, the child with incarcerated parents suffered stigma, communication gaps, internalizing tendencies, and reductions in the parent-child connection. The interplay between minimal contact during incarceration, affective separation, and its associated consequences underlines the critical importance of maintaining and nurturing the parent-child relationship during challenging circumstances such as parental incarceration. It also emphasizes the need for support systems and interventions aimed at minimizing the negative effects of emotional detachment on the child's overall well-being.

Parental incarceration, while primarily affecting the incarcerated individual, has far-reaching consequences, particularly on the parent-child relationship after the incarceration of parents. Affective separation is a complex and often painful outcome as a result of the incarceration of parents, driven by the physical separation, emotional distress, communication barriers, stigma, and a loss of routine. Recognizing the impact of affective separation is the first step in addressing it and working towards mitigating its effects. Ultimately, it is crucial to support both incarcerated parents and their children, offering resources and strategies to help bridge the emotional chasm created by incarceration and maintain a healthy parent-child bond.

Parental incarceration indeed has profound and far-reaching consequences, especially on the parent-child relationship after the incarceration of parents. The impact extends beyond the incarcerated individual and affects the relationship between parents and their children, particularly the emotional connection. Affective separation, characterized by emotional distance and strain in the relationship, is a complex outcome influenced by various factors.

Revitalize Family Bond

Spending time with younger children reinforces a strong emotional bond and allows parents to impart their own life values. Teenagers can be resilient to a parent's teachings, but continuing to spend time with them lets them know that they always have a safe space. It is important to keep up a support system (Camp Rainbow Gold, 2023)

This means to renew, strengthen, or restore the connections and relationships within a family. It involves taking deliberate actions to improve communication, understanding,

and emotional connections among family members. This includes spending more time together, resolving conflicts, and working to reestablish a sense of closeness and unity within the family.

Revitalize family bonds, as defined based on the statements of the participants, was a resurgence of parental support, which focused on how to restore and strengthen family relationships, particularly with a focus on the increased support provided by the parents after a period of separation or absence, such as due to parental incarceration. The statement of Participant 1 supports the theme Revitalize Family Bond that was formulated by the researchers, as she stated:

“I feel relieved and comfortable.

“Back to normal after didiay”

(I felt relieved and comfortable, and everything returned to normal after that.)

The statement of Participant 2 further said that;

“Naisubli ti oras ti maysa a

nagannak nga mangsuporta

kaniak dagiti kasapulak”

(A parent's time to support my needs was restored.

The statement of Participant 3 likewise supports the theme, as mentioned;

“Idi malpas didiay kasla nagsubli

met lang talaga biagmin.”

(When my parents' incarceration ended, our lives returned to normal.)

Lastly, participant 5 added that;

*“Immay nagpakita kaniak isu
didiay naparang ‘tay feeling-ko idi
nga naragsak”*

(He came to see me, and it made me happy.)

The relief and resurgence experienced by children and families after parental incarceration highlights the capacity for healing, resilience, and positive transformation, even in the face of significant adversity.

As stated in the study of Rogers (2018), children with incarcerated parents are at risk for a variety of problematic outcomes, yet research has rarely examined protective factors or resilience processes that might mitigate such risk in this population. Extensive research shows the importance of the parent-child relationship and the deep and often traumatic effect that the loss of a parent can have on a child. The focus is on maintaining the parent-child bond in the face of a parent’s absence due to incarceration.

Understanding the dynamics of this process can be beneficial to professionals involved in family support, rehabilitation, and community reintegration programs. It also demonstrates the strength of familial bonds and the possibility of positive change following difficult life circumstances. Parental incarceration can strain the parent-child relationship due to separation, emotional distress, and communication breakdowns. Mutual understanding, joint efforts, and seeking internal support can all help to revitalize the relationship. Parental incarceration can be a difficult and emotionally draining experience for both parents and children. It may disrupt the fundamental parent-child bond, but it is critical to find ways to maintain and strengthen this bond despite physical separation.

Coping Mechanism of the Life of Children with Incarcerated Parents

One of the most difficult challenges children face in their lives is the separation from their parents, whom they seek or require for supervision, support, nurturing, and protection in their daily lives. Children with incarcerated parents develop coping strategies that serve the purpose of avoiding pain or suffering in terms of problems that they encounter.

Positive Reframing

Positive reframing has been described as the act of "perceiving something that was previously viewed as negative in a positive light, for example, as an opportunity, a chance to learn something new, a chance to gain a new skill, or to deepen a relationship," which has relevance to the fact that children often cope with the challenges of parental incarceration in positive, resourceful, and multifaceted ways (Johnson & Easterling 2015; Nesmith & Ruhland 2008; Thulstrup & Karlsson 2017).

In this study, positive reframing was defined based on the codes interpreted, which are focusing to achieve goals, faith in divine justice, playing to divert attention, codependent friendship, and reenacting family bound.

The statement made by the Participant 1 supported the core idea of Positive Reframing, who stated:

***“Life must go on, didiay I finished my
Studies ”***

(Life must go on, and I completed my studies.)

”Believe in God, siguro He has his purpose no apay nga napasamak kaniami didiay. Ammomi nga God is watching with us, nag-pray-nak nga ni Dios ti makaammo kaniadan”

(Believe in God; He probably has a reason why that happened to us. We know God is watching over us. I prayed, lifting their fate to God.)

Participant 2's statement also supplied support to the main theme of Positive Reframing.

“Inpasnekkko latta nagadalen”

(I just studied hard.)

The Participant 3 statements additionally backed the theme that was developed.

“Makiay-ayam ka pelang tapno lang kasla awan lang tapno lang hanmo malagip didiay napasamak kasdiay kasla malipatam nga napasamak kasdiay kenni papangmo”

(I would play games as if that event had never occurred in order to forget what happened to your father.)

Positive reframing as a coping mechanism is also supported by the statements from Participant 4.

***“Inragragsakko lattan. Imbag adda
lagita barkadak”***

(I kept myself happy, and luckily, my friends were around.)

Further, the statement of Participant 5 also supports the positive reframing as a form of mechanism.

***“Inkarigatak lattan du
nakapagturposnak met ti high school***

(I just worked hard and was able to finish high school.)



***“Ni mama kanayonnak nga ipan ti
idiay favourite place-mi kada papa
idi... kanayonnak nga ikabil ni mama
idiay idi nu ma-miss-ko ni papang ko”***

(My mother used to take me to our favorite place whenever I missed my father.)

According to Thulstrup & Karlsson (2017) in their study "Children Of Imprisoned Parents And Their Coping Strategies", children primarily used a combination of strategies, which included distraction strength through control) through school, participating in sports, going to the theatre, relying on their faith, spending time with friends, and talking to supportive people, such as family members, caregivers, friends, and school professionals. Positive reframing coping was particularly helpful for children high in perfectionistic concerns predicting increased satisfaction; the more children high in perfectionistic concerns used positive reframing coping to deal with the day's most

bothersome failure, the more satisfied they felt at the end of the day. Instead putting themselves on a situation where negativity grows, the children with incarcerated parents redirect themselves to do things that can bring back them to normalcy.

In the face of challenges, individuals with incarcerated parents often show remarkable resilience. They maintain a strong focus on their goals, finding empowerment in various pursuits. Their faith provides comfort and strength during tough times, guiding them forward. Instead of giving in to despair, they seek solace in engaging activities, finding moments of joy amidst hardships. They build supportive friendships, relying on each other for understanding and teaching them the importance of interdependence. Furthermore, they exhibit strength by forming new family-like bonds, creating stability in their lives. The resilience displayed by individuals with incarcerated parents underscores the remarkable strength of the human spirit in overcoming challenges. Despite their adversities, these individuals often show exceptional determination to succeed, channeling their energy into empowering endeavors. Their ability to find moments of happiness amid adversity through engaging activities demonstrates their capacity to derive joy from simple pleasures, offering them comfort and distraction from their struggles. Additionally, the formation of interdependent friendships emphasizes their social resilience, showcasing their ability to build supportive connections with others, further reinforcing their resilience in the face of difficulties.

Ways of the Parent to Maintain their Parental Responsibilities while being Incarcerated

Being a parent is a big responsibility that cannot be removed throughout the existence of their children despite the fact that they are maturing. This section talks about

what are the ways of the parent/s to maintain their parental responsibilities while being incarcerated. Based on the gathered data, the following themes were formulated as to the ways of the parents to maintain their parental responsibilities while being incarcerated.

Paterfamilias Wisdom

Paterfamilias wisdom refers to the guidance, advice, or wisdom passed down by the male head of a family, typically the father or patriarch. It emphasizes the role of the father as the authoritative figure within the family, providing valuable insights, knowledge, and advice to other family members based on his life experiences and accumulated wisdom. It implies a sense of respect and authority associated with the paternal figure within the family unit (Samuel, 2015).

In this study, paterfamilias wisdom, which was defined as fatherly advice, stands out as a way for the parent(s) to maintain parental responsibilities while incarcerated and was supported by the statement provided by Participant 1. She stated that:

*"Suna ti mangel-encourage
kaniami nga haan unay
agpanpanunot and all"*

(He was the one who encouraged me not to overthink everything.)

Participant 3 further support the paterfamilias wisdom, as she claimed:

*"Bilinennakam lang nga
agsingsingpet, kasdiy"*

(He would simply remind us to be good.)

According to Murray et al., (2012), their study, as a support to the statements of the participants, states that whereas children considered father-child contact to be valuable

when pre-prison Father-Child Relationships were good, it was reported to be awkward, unenjoyable, and of low quality when pre-prison relationships were fragile (Chui, 2010; Oldrup, 2018; Smith & Young, 2017). While surrounded by logistical and emotional challenges, family contact was also reported to be a source of relief and happiness for children (Lanskey et al., 2016).

Parental responsibilities do not end when parents are behind bars. Obtaining or attempting to regain parental rights is incredibly difficult while an individual is incarcerated. The theory of Father-Child Activation Relationship states that fathers play a crucial role in encouraging their children to open up to the world, explore, and defend themselves when necessary (Sanz, 2023).

In relation to this study, based on the statements of the participants, paterfamilias wisdom was still being executed given the circumstances in which their father was incarcerated. The presence of a father figure in the lives of their children is still being felt despite the incarceration of their father. Truly, a father's love for their children is so absolute that it cannot be withdrawn. Paterfamilias wisdom assures a father's love, care, and wisdom by providing the necessary advice that their children can use in dealing with their everyday lives. The advice of a father is not just advice. It is the foundation of every child's building self and integrating their lives to be able to conquer unreasonable fear. Hence, fathers act as a bridge to the outside world, catalyzing the development of various skills.

Parental Support

Parental support refers to the different types of assistance provided by a parent or parents to their children. It is a way for parents to continue to assist their children and to

ensure the well-being and financial stability of their children as they grow (Nichols, 2020).

In this study, the code of parental financial supports, defined as financial assistance through savings and financial assistance through the BJMP Livelihood Program, stands out as supported by the statement from Participant 1. She stated that:

***“Adda dagitay nai-save-na nga isut’
inut-inutko nga inus-usar”***

(He was able to save some money, which I used.)

Participant 2 further states that:



***“Daydiay met father-ko, kas kuma
adda project-ko ti eskuela nga kasla
kuma parol wenno flower vase, isuna
ti mangob-obra***

(When I have a school project to submit, such as a lantern or flower vase, my father makes it for me.)

Parental support as a way of their parent(s) to maintain parental responsibilities while being incarcerated is also supported by the statement of Participant 3.

***“Urnong na idi agpaspasada pay
lang”***

(We used his savings from when he was a tricycle driver.)

Parental support as a way of their parent(s) to maintain parental responsibilities while being incarcerated is also supported by the statement of Participant 4.

*“Adda gamin dagidiay ob-obraenda
nga kasla agaramidda ti origami,
parols tapno adda met itedna kenni*

(They make origami or lanterns as a source of income, so he has something to give to our mother.)

Parental support as a way of their parent (s) to maintain parental responsibilities while being incarcerated is also supported by the statement of Participant 5.



*“Didiay no adda kuartana nga mapan
kanyana nga ‘tay agilakoda koma
dagidiay activities-da idiy uneg ket
ipadpadalana ken mama pagnayon
tuition ko, kasdiay”*

(Whenever he receives money by selling their products, he or she will send it to my mother as an addition to my tuition funds.)

According to Opeletia (2019), in her study, financial instability stands out among the others, as supported by the number of studies that stated that parental imprisonment was found to raise financial stress in the home and the child's incarcerated parent's responsibilities. The incarcerated parents showed resilience as to their finances. The study entitled "Economic Consequences of Incarceration" states that nearly half of incarcerated men contributed 50% or more of their families' income prior to incarceration, and this loss of income resulted in difficulties covering basic costs of living

such as food, housing, utilities, and clothing (deVuono-Powell et al., 2015). Men also make in-kind contributions—such as childcare and home repairs—to their families prior to incarceration (Braman, 2004). The inability to provide in-kind support while incarcerated may have financial consequences for families if replacing the contributions requires purchasing goods or services.

The incarceration of the parent(s) leads to a major life change, especially in terms of finances. It challenges every family that is experiencing this kind of situation. Amidst the circumstances of a parent being incarcerated, it does not mean that the well-being of the child is being left behind. A parent or parents who have been incarcerated are still responsible for their children's needs. Through the BJMP livelihood programs, parents can still provide assistance for their families outside prison by making origami, lanterns, or paper and plastic vases. There is still financial stress experienced during the incarceration of a parent or parents, but they prove that it is not a hindrance for them to provide for the needs of their children while being incarcerated.

SILENT SENTENCES

(Research Output)

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Rationale

Family is the building block of a human being (Briggs, 2020). Family is important because they can offer support and security, coupled with unconditional love. However, a family can also be a reason for negative growth in the lives of the children. While children are dependent on their parents, sudden detachment leads to negative circumstances such as separation anxiety, depression, emotional neediness, and a string of failed relationships (Spelman, 2022). The incarceration of their parents is deeply affecting and a life-altering experience for the children left behind.

The central point of the documentary video entitled “Silence Sentences,” concerning the life experiences of children with incarcerated parents, is to raise awareness about how to provide support to children as they transition into their lives. It is expected that through this documentary video, it can shed light on the life experiences of children that could bring significant changes to the lives of the children affected by the incarceration of their parents.

This documentary video provides insight regarding the lived experiences of children with incarcerated parents. Possible interventions may be formulated, and the transition will be less traumatizing for the affected children, promoting stories of empowerment rather than trauma.

Objectives

- Orient children on their rights as individuals and provide assistance to children who have incarcerated parents.

- Provide insight to ordinary and common people regarding the life experiences of children with incarcerated parents to create possible interventions, and the transition will be less traumatizing for the affected children.
- To encourage children with incarcerated parents to share their life experiences when it comes to having incarcerated parents to promote stories of empowerment to inspire and uplift the spirits of others.

Strategy

- Coordinate with the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Philippine National Police to post the documentary video online.

RESEARCH OUTPUT

In local settings, there is inadequate research and statistics on the number of children in the Philippines who have incarcerated parents. Although various attempts are being made to assist children whose parents are incarcerated, there is still a need for increased awareness and support for this vulnerable demographic (Reynolds, 2003).

Through creating a documentary video entitled “Silent Sentences” concerning the lived experiences of children with incarcerated parents, it could shed light on and give significance to such an undesirable life event. The experience they went through related to the incarceration of their parents was documented to understand the side of the children, to give significance, and not to invalidate what they had gone through. Silent Sentences refers to the unheard voices of the children toward the people that surround them. These are the silent battles that the children have gone through throughout the

incarceration of their parents. Their situation was sensitive for them to share with other people and maintain a level of secrecy to manage these challenges.

Those children with incarcerated parents, the unseen victims, were able to share their thoughts about having incarcerated parents. This kind of situation does exist, and it affects the life of every child with incarcerated parents. The documentary video was made to raise awareness about the silent battles of the children who were affected by the incarceration of their parents. The target audience of this documentary video is both ordinary and common people. This could give information that is essential, and people will get something from it that can help them formulate possible interventions to address the effects of the incarceration of their parents. The transition will be less traumatizing for the children, promoting stories of empowerment rather than trauma.



CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains the research conclusion and recommendation of the study entitled "Bars Between Us: Unveiling the Lived Experiences of Children with Incarcerated Parents." This chapter summarizes all the results and findings of the researchers, formulates a conclusion, and offers recommendations based on the data gathered and analyzed.

Summary of the Findings

The findings show that those children with incarcerated parents lived a life like a roller-coaster ride. Enduring a variety of life challenges but sharing the same thought of having parents behind bars. To provide insights into the lived experiences of children with incarcerated parents. The researchers asked the participants what their life experiences with incarcerated parents were. In this study, the researchers found out that before the incarceration of their parents, the theme emerged: 1) Peaceful Life. Furthermore, in this study, it was also found that during the incarceration of their parents, the theme formulated was: 1) emotional turmoil. Moreover, it was also found that after the incarceration of their parents, the theme appears to be: 1) Affective Separation; and 2) Revitalizing Family Bond. It is heartbreaking that they go through these kinds of life experiences at such a young age. However, these life experiences did not hinder them from regaining a sense of normalcy. The researchers learned how children with incarcerated parents cope given all the challenges they have encountered, and the theme was 1) Positive Reframing. They showcase great resilience in that they choose to focus on achieving their goals, playing to divert attention, forming codependent friendships,

and reenacting family relationships instead of staying or thinking about the undesirable situation they experienced. Finally, when asked how their parents maintain parental responsibilities while being incarcerated, the researchers found that it was through: 1) Paterfamilias Wisdom; and 2) Parental Financial Support. Given the circumstance that their parents are behind bars, it did not stop them from finding ways to maintain their parental responsibilities. That parental responsibilities are absolute, and it shall find ways to manage to be consistent with such big responsibilities.

Conclusions

Based on the statements provided by the participants, it can be seen that there was a transition in their lives as a result of the incarceration of their parents. The life they had before was far different from the life they experienced during and after the incarceration of their parents.

The children with incarcerated parents developed a way to cope with their problems. They redirect their attention in order to distract themselves and forget the lived experiences that they went through. Despite experiencing this dire circumstance, they showed great resilience by keeping it in their minds to do something and not just staying in that situation and doing nothing.

Even though their parents are incarcerated, their parents have managed to fulfill their parental duties despite their incarceration. Parental responsibilities are unavoidable, and parents must find ways to balance their enormous responsibilities. Based on the statements of the participants, parental responsibilities do exist through paterfamilias wisdom and parental financial support.

Recommendations

From the aforementioned findings and conclusions, the following are hereby recommended:

- The Department of Social Welfare and Development may provide a safe space for the children to express these emotions and be able to provide effective coping strategies, as it is essential for children with incarcerated parents. The eclectic approach is more appropriate in the case of these children because it is able to focus on the specific needs of the children depending on the gravity of the impact of the incarceration of their parents.
- The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology may conduct Family Day to promote close family ties, which are one of the truest Filipino traditions.
- The Women and Children Protection Desk may conduct a counseling program after the arrest of the parent to know the side of the affected child and determine the appropriate approach to them.
- The Ilocos Norte Youth Development Office may provide a scholarship program for the children of incarcerated parents to lessen the financial burden and help children perform well in school.
- The provincial government must give out more publicity about the “Speak Up, I’m Here Campaign,” a mental health movement that aims to expand service delivery.

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