



The Application of Restorative Justice in the City of Dasmariñas, Cavite, Philippines: A Developing Response to Crime Prevention

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Abstract

This study sought to determine how restorative justice was applied by the barangays in the City of Dasmariñas in the Province of Cavite as a response to crime prevention. Specifically, it sought to (1) determine the restorative justice processes implemented in the various barangays of the City of Dasmariñas, (2) determine the outcomes of the restorative justice processes in relation to the peace and order in the barangays, and (3) propose a restorative justice program for the barangay level. The restorative justice framework provided by Van Ness and Strong (2015) served as the foundation of this study. This study used descriptive research through the survey method in gathering data. Participants were 68 barangay captains out of 75 barangays in the city. Most of the respondents were males and many were between 40 to 60 years old. Results showed that the inclusion process and encounter procedures were always implemented in the barangay level. The outcomes in relation to reintegration process were always observed, and the results of the process of making amends were often observed. Findings revealed that the concept of restorative justice was partly implemented in the city and the process of building accountable and responsible constituents was still in the development stage. To address this concern, a three-year comprehensive restorative justice program was proposed.

Keywords: Restorative justice, Peace and order, Barangay justice system, Mediation process, Crime prevention

Introduction

Restorative justice has emerged as a new pattern of thinking in response to the dissatisfaction with modern criminal justice especially in the Western world. It is a shift in responsibility for addressing crime (Gavrielides, 2019). Traditionally, punitive justice was dominant in the criminal justice system. However, it was found that punishment, for instance, incarceration, has little effect on the offenders' behavioral changes, and relatively few initiatives helped to heal crime victims (Armour & Umbreit, 2018). On the other hand, restorative justice humanizes justice, bringing victims and offenders together where victims receive explanation and reparation, and offenders become accountable to the victim and community (Umbreit, 1998 as cited in Naude, 2006). It is a promising response as it acknowledges the interpersonal

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nature of the crime. Through mediated dialogues between the victim and offender, the negative energy or pain from the harm done is channeled to the offenders bringing positive energy or healing, and offenders use that pain “to give back to the victims through remorse -driven responses and behaviors.” However, it should be clear that restorative justice practices complement rather than replace the existing criminal justice system.

Restorative justice is not a new concept in criminal justice. This victim -centered response has been evident in ancient Arab, Greek, Roman, and Asian civilizations, which required compensation for the victims of crime. It was also dominant in indigenous communities in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. In 1974, Western countries re-discovered restorative justice, refocusing on the rights and needs of crime victims. By the end of the 1990, most Western countries had embraced restorative justice programs and made legislative provisions for restorative justice (Naude, 2006).

Restorative processes possess values and follow principles for it to maintain their restorative nature. Values such as the inclusion of affected parties, encounter programs, making amends and reintegration of offenders into the community all contribute to a comprehensive restorative practice (Van Ness & Strong, 2018). Restorative justice is applicable in the barangays, courts, schools, and religious organizations (Garcia, 2019). However, this study will be focusing on restorative justice in the barangays taking into consideration the application of restorative values in the barangay justice system.

There is lacking evidence of the application of restorative justice in the local setting. Also, a review of foreign literature shows that the majority of the studies focused on the experiences of the victims and offenders. The need for studies obtaining the point of view of the government leaders and facilitators was strongly suggested as these entities are equally important in implementing and evaluating restorative justice programmes (UNODC, 2016).

In the Philippines, restorative justice was reflected in the role of the Katarungang Pambarangay or the Barangay Justice System, which manages community and family conflicts and disputes within its scope. The present study examined the restorative processes and outcomes of the Barangay justice system in the City of Dasmariñas, Cavite in addressing crimes and conflicts. A restorative justice program was developed to address peace and order in the barangays (villages).

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to determine how restorative justice was applied by the barangays (villages) in the City of Dasmariñas in the Province of Cavite as a response to crime prevention. Specifically, this study sought to:

1. determine the restorative justice processes implemented in the various barangays (villages) of the City of Dasmariñas;
2. assess the outcomes of the restorative justice processes in relation to the peace and order in the barangays (villages); and,
3. propose a restorative justice program for the barangay level.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the restorative justice theory authored by Van Ness and Strong (2015). According to the authors, restorative justice emphasized repairing the harm caused or revealed by criminal behavior and is best accomplished through cooperative processes that include all stakeholders (i.e. victim, offender and affected communities including the families of victims and offenders).

Restorative processes and practices reflect certain values for it to maintain being restorative rather than destructive. Braithwaite (2002) claimed that restorative justice is founded by core values of “healing rather than hurting, moral learning, community caring, respectful dialogue, forgiveness, responsibility, apology and making amends” (p.11). Van Ness and Strong (2015) identified corner post values that should influence restorative justice programs and processes such as:

- (a) inclusion, which engages all affected parties in the restorative processes in response to crime,
- (b) encounter, which gives all affected parties the opportunity to meet in a safe environment to discuss the offense, harms and courses of action,
- (c) amends, which encourages offenders to take responsibility to repair the harm to the extent possible. An offender can make amends through apology, changed behavior, restitution and generosity;
- (d) reintegration, which gives parties the means and opportunities to rejoin and contribute to their communities.

In the present study, the role of the barangay government in crime prevention and participation in restorative justice was scrutinized. The application of restorative justice in the Barangay justice system was analyzed using the corner post values suggested by Van Ness and Strong (2015). As shown in Figure 1, this study examined the current practices of inclusion and encounter to provide insight on the restorative justice approaches implemented in the barangays (villages). The current practices on making amends and reintegration gave insights on their restorative justice outcomes. Altogether, the combination of best practices in both restorative justice processes and outcomes translated into a restorative justice program applicable to the barangays (villages).

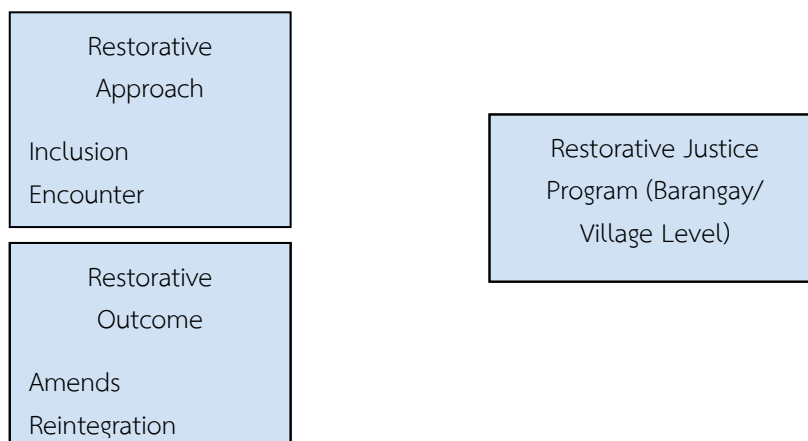


Figure 1. Paradigm of the Study

Scope and Limitations

This study focused mainly on determining the restorative justice processes and restorative outcomes of the Barangay justice system in the City of Dasmariñas, Province of Cavite, Philippines as the basis for designing a restorative justice program applicable for the barangays (villages). The City of Dasmariñas was chosen as the research locale due to the record of having the highest number of crimes incidents in Cavite in the year 2015 according to the Cavite Socio-economic and Physical Profile 2015.

Review of Related Literature

Restorative justice practices

The implementation of restorative justice in countries follows a set of standards. The UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Canada approved a resolution to encourage countries, including the Philippines, to adopt the Basic Principles on the Use of Restorative Justice Programmes in Criminal Matters. In 2002, this resolution was adopted by the Economic and Social Council of the UN Organization, which has become the standard in the field of mediation and restorative justice (Skelton, 2019). Since these standards are not country-specific, individual countries may set more detailed standards such as legislation or codes of conduct. However, it is more favorable to use a value-infused approach than to have a set of inflexible procedural rules, which may be more harmful as it defeats the purpose of what restorative justice aims to achieve (Skelton, 2019).

Restorative justice processes can be applied in a variety of contexts at the formal or informal levels. Naude (2006) stated that at a formal level, restorative justice can be applied during the pre-trial process, during the pre-sentencing process as part of a condition for a sentence, or in pre-release programmes. At the informal level, it can be applied to resolve corporate conflicts and disputes and community conflicts, such as bullying in schools, neighborhood conflicts, and family conflicts (alternative dispute resolution) (Naude, 2006).

The role of the restorative justice practitioners/facilitators can either hinder or contribute to the success of restorative justice. For instance, Chinese facilitators are more successful when they pay more attention to engaging participants in the mediation process with culture-specific skills such as “building trust, respecting family values, balancing power, and ultimately aiming to restore relationships” (Wong & Lui, 2019). The Basic Principles require that facilitators receive training and should have an understanding of the local culture and communities (UNODC, 2016). Also, victims wish for facilitators they know or trust, those who will not approach them as commodities through a sales pitch (Gavrielides, 2019). The UNODC (2016) enumerated the basic skills required of facilitators such as the ability to create a safe environment for parties, communication skills, active listening skills, the ability to manage and help people deal with emotional intensity, ability to help parties say and hear different things, ability to balance the interest/power of participants and ability to express support and empathy. It is therefore imperative that countries develop standards/protocols and ethical guidelines for restorative justice facilitators which deal with aspects such



as the “training and education of practitioners, the handling of the restorative justice process, victim and offender safety, victim and offender choice, the importance of impartiality and neutrality of the facilitator, confidentiality and the exchange of information, professional advice, how to avoid manipulative or intimidating negotiating techniques, informed negotiations and/or dialogue, costs, and fees, advertising, relationship with other professionals, media policy, facilitating when different cultural and racial groups are involved, screening of cases, follow-up procedures and quality control through program evaluation” (Naude, 2006).

Research and Restorative justice

International evaluations of restorative justice utilized five success indicators namely, rates of participation, the nature and extent of engagement, participant satisfaction, restoration, and the impact on recidivism rates (Doak and O’Mahoney, 2019).

The willingness to participate and the underlying reasons for participation give useful insight into how victims and offenders perceive restorative justice. Victims spotted to participate in restorative justice to bring closure, to have their say and explain the impact of the offenders’ actions, and to ask the offender questions. The majority of offenders opted for restorative justice in order to give the victim the opportunity to ask questions, to have their say and explain their actions, demonstrate that they are working to stop offending and offer an apology or compensation (Gavrielides, 2019). There are also instances when victims or offenders do not participate in restorative justice for reasons such as the offense appears negligible or it had a traumatizing effect on the victim (Hartmann, 2019), and the lack of desire to meet the victim or offender (Gavrielides, 2019).

The application of restorative justice showed positive effects compared to contemporary criminal justice. A review of studies by Sherman and Strang (2007) as cited in Van Ness and Strong (2018) discovered that crime victims do better especially in dealing with post-traumatic stress and have a reduced desire to retaliate against their offenders. Offenders who received restorative justice commit fewer repeat crimes than offenders who do not, thereby leading to substantial crime reductions. Also, restorative justice increases the odds of an offender being brought to justice.

The majority of the evaluations conducted on restorative justice programmes have focused on the experiences of crime victims and offenders (UNODC, 2016). There has been less attention given to the views of the politicians and senior law enforcement and criminal justice personnel. Similarly, there is little focus on the role played by the facilitators in the success of restorative practices.

Barangay Justice System and restorative justice

It has been said that restorative justice models vary from country to country and area to area depending on local needs and customs (Naude, 2006). Examples of models or programmes are victim-offender mediation, community and family group conferencing, circle sentencing, and indigenous and customary forums (UNODC, 2016). The restorative programmes and processes adopted by countries vary depending on their circumstances such as limits in the existing legal framework, limited support from criminal justice officials, and cultural obstacles, among others. In the Philippines, the legal framework that reflects restorative

justice is Republic Act 9344 (Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act), Republic Act 10389 (An Act Institutionalizing Recognition as a Mode of Granting the Release of an Indigent Person in Custody as an Accused in a Criminal Case and for Other Purposes) and Republic Act 7160 (Local Government Code of 1991) which clarified the role of the Barangay Justice System.

The Barangay justice system (Katarungang Pambarangay) was created by Presidential Decree No. 1508 as amended by Republic Act No. 7160 (Local Government Code of 1991). These laws recognized the time-honored tradition of amicably settling disputes at the barangay level to promote speedy administration of justice and decongest court dockets. The Barangay justice system, consisting of the barangay captain and “peacekeeping committee,” provides an avenue to hear and mediate conflicts between residents, and reach an agreement, which is legally binding and recognized by the courts (UNODC, 2016). In a study of restorative justice in Kalinga Province, Garcia (2019) found that the barangay officials observed mediation, conciliation, and arbitration as restorative justice practices. The barangay court resolved light offenses such as violation of rules and ordinances, as well as crimes that do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Regional Trial Court such as public disturbances, oral defamation, non-payment of monetary obligations, less serious physical injuries, land disputes, unjust vexation, violations against women and their children, threat, malicious mischiefs, and scandals. As part of the resolution, the barangay court imposes penalties such as reprimand, warning or citation, or returning of the victim’s expenses in a reasonable amount of damage or injury. The equivalent payment of the crime committed was said to be favorable to the affected parties.

However, the studies of Parker (2004) and Golub (2003) mentioned in UNODC (2016) stressed that the Barangay Justice System has been criticized due to “unjust outcomes, gender bias, corruption, domination of the process by the local elite and political patronage.” As cited from training community leaders and Barangay justice advocates, there is a need to address the “structural problems at the root of corruption and the power imbalances that characterize these informal processes,” which hinders fair restorative justice outcomes.

Methodology

This study utilized the descriptive research design using the survey method in gathering data. The City of Dasmariñas, Cavite was selected as the locale of the study considering the high crime rates in 2015.

The study utilized the purposive sampling technique in selecting the respondents. The barangay (village) captains were chosen as respondents because they chaired the Lupon Tagapamaya, the implementing arm of the Barangay Justice system. The population of barangay captains in the City of Dasmariñas is 75. Using the Raosoft Sample size calculator, the ideal sample size is equivalent to 68 at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The researchers intended to distribute the questionnaires to all the barangay captains, but according to the Association of Barangay Councils (ABC) Chairperson, there were seven (7) barangay captains who were not available due to health conditions and leave of absence. As a result, 68 Barangay Captains from the City of Dasmariñas, Cavite participated in this study.



Prior to the data gathering, the researchers submitted a written permission to the office of the mayor to conduct the study. Upon approval, the researchers coordinated with the ABC Chairperson for further discussion of the data gathering procedure. Survey questionnaires were administered to the Barangay Captains on the schedule and venue designated by the ABC Chair. The respondents were given the informed Consent form, which was discussed in a caucus to better understand how this study will become useful to the barangay justice system. After the survey administration, the accomplished questionnaires were collected, tallied, computed, and analyzed.

A researcher-made survey questionnaire with a 4-point Likert Scale was used to gather data about restorative justice processes and restorative justice outcomes in the barangays. It also included a checklist of community service programs and reintegration activities. Prior to its actual administration, questionnaire underwent validity review and was pretested among 10 first councilors of a selected barangay. Statistics showed that the questionnaire has an excellent internal consistency with a reliability score of Cronbach alpha .97.

Frequency and percentage distribution and Mean were used to analyze data. The mean scores for restorative justice processes and outcomes were interpreted as follows:

Interpretation		
Range of scores	Implementation of Restorative Processes	Outcomes of the Restorative Process
3.26 – 4.00	Always implemented	Always observed
2.60 – 3.25	Of ten implemented	Of ten observed
1.76 – 2.50	Sometimes implemented	Sometimes observed
1.00 – 1.75	Never implemented	Never observed

Ethical Consideration

The researchers assured the voluntary participation of the respondents in this study and provided them with sufficient information about taking part in this study. They also considered the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. The research was subjected to ethics review and was given clearance certification by the Institutional Ethics Review Board.

Results

Profile of the Respondents

Table 1 Age of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
40-45	4	6%
46-50	12	18%
51-55	17	25%

Age	Frequency	Percentage
56-60	14	21%
61-65	7	10%
66-70	2	3%
Not indicated	12	18%
Total	68	100%

Table 1 showed that there was a considerable number of respondents with ages ranging from 46 to 60. Specifically, 25% were at the age bracket of 51-55, 21% under age bracket of 56-60 and 18% under the age bracket of 46-50. Only 6% are at the age bracket of 40-45 and the senior age of 61 and above.

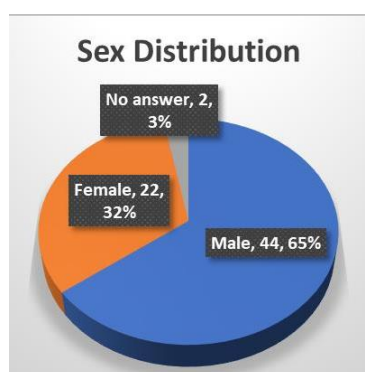


Figure 2. Sex of Respondents

Figure 2 showed that most of the respondents were males (65%) compared to females (32%).

Restorative Process Implemented in the Barangays in the City of Dasmariñas, Cavite

Table 2 Implementation of Inclusion Processes

Process	Mean	Interpretation
1. Victims' preference for the time, date, and place of the meeting is given the greatest weight.	3.00	Of ten implemented
2. Victims are fully informed about their rights and the nature of the restorative process.	3.53	Always implemented
3. Offenders are fully informed about their rights and the nature of the restorative process.	3.46	Always implemented
4. Parties who wish to observe the proceedings are allowed to do so.	2.84	Of ten implemented
5. Victims are given the opportunity to seek restitution in the proceedings.	3.50	Always implemented
6. There is an avenue for the victims to appeal when they disagree with the decision.	3.50	Always implemented



Process	Mean	Interpretation
7. Offenders are given the opportunity to speak about their case.	3.54	Always implemented
8. Community members affected by the offense are invited to speak on behalf of the community's interest.	3.29	Always implemented
9. Victims and offenders are given complete and accurate information about the alternatives they have for resolving the dispute.	3.62	Always implemented
10. Victims are given the opportunity to air their decision on the matter at hand.	3.41	Always implemented
Average	3.37	Always implemented

Table 2 showed the implementation of the inclusion process of restorative justice observed in the barangay (village) level with the aim of attaining an orderly community. Data revealed that overall, the inclusion of parties in the restorative processes were always implemented (3.37).

Among the processes that were always implemented, giving information to the victims and offenders on the alternative remedy to resolve them was given the highest priority without disregarding the issue at hand. This was followed by giving offenders the opportunity to speak about their cases. Under the restorative process, the victim was fully informed of their rights and was given the opportunity to disagree, appeal, and decide on their complaint, or to seek restitution in the proceedings either through service by the offender including compensation for damages or community service and restoration of any damage incurred. The barangay also ensured that the offenders were fully informed of their rights and the nature of the restorative process that is practiced to attain a peaceful resolution of the issue without disregarding the best interest of the community.

The two processes that obtained lower mean scores (“of ten implemented”) were giving victims the preference to choose the time, date, and place of the meeting and allowing parties directly or indirectly affected to observe the proceedings as witnesses. According to the respondents, these were not given the highest priority because they needed to ensure that both sides will be present during the mediation process to ensure that there is a fair and appropriate resolution of the problem. Other parties were sometimes not encouraged to observe as this causes more problem and becomes the reason for the non-resolution of the case.

Table 3 Implementation of Encounter Procedures

Process	Mean	Interpretation
Victims meet with their offenders.	2.94	Of ten implemented
Victims and offenders are encouraged to tell their stories.	3.41	Always implemented
The meeting allows both parties to express their emotions (for example, anger, sorrow, fear).	3.38	Always implemented

Process	Mean	Interpretation
Both victims and offenders listen with understanding.	3.40	Always implemented
Responsible community members are involved in determining community service that is meaningful for both community and offender.	3.18	Of ten implemented
The meeting usually ends in an acceptable agreement to make things right.	3.56	Always implemented
Victim safety and dignity are diligently protected.	3.44	Always implemented
Offenders are given respect and are not dehumanized or threatened.	3.46	Always implemented
Average	3.35	Always implemented

Table 3 showed the implementation of the encounter procedures of restorative justice observed at the barangay (village) level with the aim of giving the affected parties the opportunity to meet in a safe environment to discuss the offense, harm, and courses of action to be taken.

Among the procedures mentioned in the above table, most the barangays usually ended the mediation positively by coming to terms with an acceptable condition agreeable to the aggrieved party. This is in consideration that the impact of the decision will not dehumanize or threaten the well-being of the offenders.

The mediation also ensured that the safety and dignity of the victims will be protected through the execution of the written agreement explicitly stating that all matters discussed pertaining to the case will be treated with confidentiality. The said agreement was signed by both parties and witnessed by the mediation council.

In the proceedings, the victims and offenders were given the opportunity to hear their side, narrate what happened, and explain the causes of any misunderstanding. They were advised to listen and try to understand each side from a more mature perspective. They were also made to understand that emotions which include anger, sorrow and fear are part of the natural reaction of any individual who was a victim of any incident.

The process of involving the community members to determine the community service or any other meaningful activities was least among the procedures which is expected because, in Table 2, it was shown that the barangay limited the parties who can observe the proceedings.

Outcomes of the Restorative Process implemented in the Barangay

Table 4 Outcomes in Relation to Making Amends

Outcome	Mean	Interpretation
The offender offers a written or oral apology to the victim.	3.13	Often observed
Offender chooses to pay back their victim, whether financial or non-financial.	3.02	Often observed
The offender engages in community service.	3.15	Often observed
Average	3.10	Often observed



Table 4 showed the outcomes in relation to making amends as part of the restorative justice process observed at the barangay (village) level. Amends aim to encourage offenders to take responsibility to repair the harm to the extent possible. This includes the values of confession, repentance, forgiveness, and leniency. Data revealed that good results from making amends are often observed (3.10).

Table 4 showed that the offender accepted his wrongdoings and in return, repaid this through community service and offers both written and spoken apology to the victim. The offender also accepted to pay back the victim in either financial or non-financial means depending on the capability of the offender.

Table 5 Outcomes in Relation to Reintegration Process

Process	Mean	Interpretation
Parties show respect to each other.	3.44	Always observed
Parties are given the material, moral and spiritual assistance they need.	3.29	Always observed
Parties are protected and kept safe.	3.52	Always observed
Community members embrace the victims as part of the community.	3.29	Always observed
Community members embrace the offenders as part of the community.	3.17	Often observed
Community members assist the victims to cope with the painful experiences.	3.21	Often observed
Community members assist in the reformation of the offenders.	3.08	Often observed
Average	3.29	Always observed

Table 5 showed the outcomes of the reintegration processes implemented at the barangay (village) level with the aim of giving parties the means and opportunities to be active members of the community. Data revealed that the good outcomes of the reintegration process were always observed (3.29).

Table 5 showed a kind of program that will protect both victims and offenders from the discrimination of the other members of the community by giving them the respect they deserve. This was augmented through the incorporation of moral and spiritual programs that boost their sense of dignity. The barangays (villages) also extended material assistance needed to sustain the transformation to becoming a more responsible citizen.

However, though the barangays implemented programs that will assist the victims to cope with painful experiences, encourage community members to embrace them as part of the community, and assist them in the process of change, these were not consistently observed in general.

Table 6 Community service programs adopted in the barangays (villages)

Community Service	Frequency	Percentage
Helping in dealing with street children	26	38%
Cleaning downtown area	23	34%
Tree planting	19	28%

Community Service	Frequency	Percentage
Cleaning of esteros	25	37%
Repair of streets	20	29%
Peer counseling	22	32%
Assisting handicapped	22	32%
Barangay Ronda	21	31%
Giving testimony to the youth	19	28%
Others	6	9%

Table 6 showed that among the commonly adopted community service programs, the top three (3) programs that were implemented at the barangay level for the offenders are helping in dealing with street children, cleaning esteros, and cleaning the downtown area. This may be attributed to the prioritization made by the government regarding the campaign on the wolf are of women and children. The conduct of peer counseling and assisting the handicapped were not the priorities since according to the respondents, most of the barangays did not have the capability to implement the program due to lack of qualified experts who will oversee the implementation. Barangay Ronda was also not an option to many as this may compromise the safety of the parties involved considering the COVID-19 pandemic. Seldom adopted were repairing of streets as this requires skills; tree planting requires available spaces which sometimes are not possible since the City of Dasmariñas is already highly populated and government - owned lands were limited. Giving testimony to the youth was also seldom adopted since other programs were not consistently implemented and this may not be to the advantage of the audience.

Table 7 Reintegration Programs adopted in the barangays (villages)

Reintegration Program	Frequency	Percentage
Counseling (whether individual, group or family)	20	29%
Attendance to trainings, seminars and lectures	20	29%
Participation in education, vocation or life skills program	17	25%
Group Therapy Session	10	15%
Spiritual development session/faith-based session	16	24%
Submission to psychological/psychiatric assessment	10	15%

The reintegration process gives both parties the means and opportunities to be active members of the community. Table 7 showed that the reintegration process was not given focus as the result shows the very low adoption of the different suggested reintegration programs. Only 29% of the barangays implemented the counseling activities and attendance to training, seminars, and lectures. Another situation was the lack of implementation with regard to the development of the parties that may give sustainable



impact on the changes of a person like education, vocation or life-skills program. Spiritual development was also not consistently encouraged. Another important area that might help to understand both parties were the psychological and psychiatric assessment, however, this was least considered due to the unavailability of free services, including group therapy session.

Discussion

Restorative justice practices as applied in the Criminal Justice System have been based on the premise that crime is a violation of people and of international relationships and therefore it is important to be remedied (Maryfield, Przybylski & Myrent, 2020). To be fully accountable, offenders need to acknowledge their blunders and take responsibility to restore the self -dignity and orderliness of society.

The inclusion process involved the determination of the willingness of the victims to participate in the conference, making them understand their role, and informing them of their rights and the process that they will undertake. Victims must clearly understand that the end objective of the process is to have a peaceful resolution of the problem.

The above findings on the implementation of the inclusion process were always implemented and encounter procedures of restorative justice were always observed in the barangay (village). These demonstrated that the attainment of peaceful resolutions among constituents was given importance and was considered as a best solution in attaining peace and order in the barangay or village.

Further, the outcomes in relation to the reintegration process were always observed and making amends was often observed, which are indications that the barangay was integrated in the process and worked toward the realization of the city's peace and order. However, community service programs and reintegration process needed to be given more focus to make the actors more responsible and thereby realize the long-term solutions to the peace and order problem.

The mediator was usually a member of the barangay council. It would be an advantage if an invitation to responsible non-partisan members of the community will be included in the procedure as this will balance the views of both the victim and the offender.

Each actor was informed of the step-by-step process of the caucus and reminded of their respective responsibility to listen and respect the opinion of the actors present.

Considering these principles, the study revealed that the barangays followed the Inclusion process. The average mean is 3.37 interpreted as Always Implemented. However, it is observed that its difference from often Implemented is only 0.11 points. This conveys that though the 68 barangays are all located in the City of Dasmariñas, the implementation of the process varies. There were some who consistently follow the process while others chose only those that are easy and applicable and what they think will give the best result.

The encounter procedure is critical as this stage included the expressions of the victim's emotions, fear, anguish, and dehumanized feelings due to the offense or blunder made by the offender. The role of

the mediator is not only to listen but to observe every action of the victim and offender and ensure that alternative measure is in place in case failure of proceedings become evident.

Safety of all parties is a primordial concern; proceedings may be suspended, and rescheduling is an alternative, in case the environment is becoming hostile. On the other hand, a peaceful meeting will give the offender the chance to explain his side, admit the offense, and accept accountability. This is also a good venue to make amends and ask for forgiveness from the victim including a discussion of the compensation for the damages incurred.

The reintegration process is a way to meet the end goal of restoring peace between the victim and offender and will reflect in the community. Parties involved in the mediation process are expected to respect each other. The process of healing includes continuous moral and spiritual assistance from the community members.

It is evident that all processes and procedures of restorative justice were observed and followed, as a result, an agreement between parties was attained. However, the supposed outcome of the program, which is to develop a responsible constituent and build a strong community were not materialized. They seldom implemented the earlier mentioned community service programs which will make the offender and the victim realize the depth of their accountability. Most of the challenges encountered by the barangay s were the non-availability of a pool of experts who will study the problem in the interrelationship of people and environment, lack of concern of some community members evident in their low participation in the proceedings, and absence of provision of other services to support the implementation of the community service program.

Conclusion

The results of the study suggested that the concept of restorative justice process was partly implemented in the City of Dasmariñas and the process of building accountable and responsible constituents was still in the development stage. The peace and order in the barangays could be improved if the full implementation of the restorative justice program will be adopted.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are suggested in order to realize the full benefits of the restorative justice program.

1. For the barangay cap tains to review the existing restorative programs and share their best practices that can be adopted by many barangays.
2. Develop a Three-Year Comprehensive Restorative Justice Program applicable to the type and characteristics of the community.
3. Implement the Three-Year Comprehensive Restorative Justice Program.



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