Voices of Prison: Phenomenologizing motivations for change and reformation of cisgender women and LGBT Filipino detainees

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Abstract

Sexual orientation and gender identity are among the least of considerations in facing life sentences for crimes committed. Prison experiences differ among cisgender and transgender affecting motivations for change and reformation. This phenomenological inquiry aims to capture the lived experiences of 21 Filipino detainees (aged 21-59), disaggregated to: 10 cisgender women, 3 lesbians, 4 gays, 2 bisexual women, 1 bisexual man and 1 transwoman. Using an interview guide, the narratives were subjected to vertical and horizontal analyses yielding a set of emerging themes that describe what the cisgender women and LGBT detainees consider to be their motivations for change and reformation. The emergent taxonomy depicts three motivational frames which structure the mindset of the detainees in their drive for change and reformation: Maturation Motivational frame, Ministration Motivational frame and Management Motivational frame. These three frames are crucial perspectives developed from their pre-prison states, peri-prison states and post-prison expectations. This paper contributes to the knowledge base on Gender and Development and LGBT psychology. Additionally, the findings of this qualitative inquiry deepen the understanding of reformatory care and gender-specific prison management in the Philippines and may assist in promoting the mental health and well-being of Filipino detainees.

INTRODUCTION

In incarceration, any individual conforms to prison policies regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation. Everyone is entitled to certain basic rights under any circumstances (United Nations, 1948), including civil liberties and political rights with the most fundamental rights as the right to life and physical safety (Joseph, 2019). Following the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) in the Philippines has formally adhered to Rule IV, The Treatment of Inmates with Special Needs (BJMP Comprehensive Operations Manual, 2015), creating a basic policy of the best arrangement for inmates with special needs, emphasizing the segregation of female and LGBT inmates from male inmates to prevent their maltreatment and abuse (pp.26-28).

However, contradictions between prison policies and humane treatment still exist. In the global perspective, the history of prison, was dominated by males (Britton, 2005; Carrabine & Longhurst, 2002) but there are contemporary research findings which redounded that although women prisoners still constitute a small portion of the general prison (Bumiller, 2013; Van den Bergh et al., 2011; Walmsley, 2006) showing an increase in number and in rate over the years (Frost et al., 2006; Glaze & Parks, 2011). There is also an awareness of human sexual diversity present in prison populations; pointing out the neglected needs of prisoners for certain sexual orientation (Alarid, 2000), and the need for LGBT-friendly approach for offenders (Marksamer & Tobin, 2013; Pemberton, 2013) as research imperatives to strengthen the promotion of psychological well-being and to stop gender-based violence existing in prisons.

With the sexual diversity present in prison populations, extant literature evinced an attempt to address the gender issues permeating the criminal justice system (Gender Analysis of the Criminal Justice Assessment,
2010), shortcomings in meeting the gender-specific needs of women prisoners (Handbook for Prison Managers and Policymakers on Women and Imprisonment, 2008), and discrimination and abuse suffered by the LGBT offenders (Handbook on Prisoners with special needs, 2009). The prison world is the object of distorted perceptions due to its secluded character (Becchi et al., 2018) and behaviors, attitudes and beliefs may be altered while incarcerated. The prison behaviors vary from cisgender women and men depending on their situations, cultures and historical periods (Wood & Eagly, 2012). Notably, there are also other contributing factors in one’s personal, family and community that will be significant in their behaviors and motivations towards change and reformation.

Tellingly, when one is incarcerated, a behavioral change is desired to allow them the chance to start their life anew. It is aspired that desistance to criminal offending and reformation (Giordano et al., 2002; Gunnison, 2014) will be realized and that true desistance will happen once the offenders’ perspectives of themselves change. According to Hearn (2010), offenders can take a redemption script where a strong sense of self-belief and control over their future that will lead to optimism and the perseverance to change. Thus, the motivation to accomplish this behavioral change is a crucial factor in predicting (Gideon, 2009) a failure or success as the detainee is reintegrated in the community. Previous research highlighted that change is differentiated, depending on biological, sociological and psychological factors. As such, biosocial behaviors such as physical traits (Eagly et al., 2000), age (Hearn, 2010), attribution of success or failure (Zohri, 2011), partner preferences (Eagly et al., 2004), personal growth, social responsibility (Cloyes et al., 2013) and receptiveness to prison management and reformation (Harer & Langan, 2001; Jiang & Winfree, 2006) can all attribute to the development of motivations to change and reformation.

In the Philippines, a handful of research commenced on the quest for addressing gender issues of imprisoned sexual minorities (e.g., Batocabe, 2011; Relis et al., 2016; Villafuerte, 2013). These studies aimed at promoting the importance of looking at particular and specialized needs, risks and interventions for LGBT offenders. However, there are identified blank spots in terms of change and reformation and desistance to crime. This paper contends that despite the budding Philippine literature on LGBT prisoners, it still lacks the evidence on how cisgender women and LGBT detainees define their motivations that will discourage recidivism and create a renewed direction to persevere with life’s adversities without a repeat for criminally offending. Driven by this pressing need, this phenomenological inquiry seeks to characterize the motivations of cisgender women and LGBT Filipino detainees towards change and reformation. It anticipates to contribute to the knowledge base of LGBT psychology, women studies and the ongoing discourse on women and LGBT prisoners in the Philippines. This study sheds light on how these vulnerable and marginalized groups in prison may be provided with psychosocial support specific for them. At an applied level, this research purports to offer empirical source of evidence to assist practitioners, advocates and involved government agencies in women and LGBT-related policies and programs. Most especially, the results of this research will be valuable information in the implementation, revisiting of reformatory care and framework of BJMP in terms of their Therapeutic Community Modality Program.

Theoretical Grounding

This qualitative inquiry is anchored on the Intersectionality theory of Crenshaw (1989) as a guide for a gender-sensitive approach of this study’s participants. This theory was developed to primarily study how different power structures interact in the lives of minorities. This theory also emphasizes that different social identities can lead to interlocking systems of oppression focused on inequality based on gender, race, class and sexuality. According to Bauer (2014), intersectionality has the potential to improve research not only on sex/gender and race/ethnicity, but on all other domains of social position, such as socio-economic status, legal aboriginal status, educational background, or age cohort. An individual can unconsciously imbibe this oppression due to one’s sexual orientation or gender identity, depending on how it was accepted and respected in their respective families and communities. Such that, if an individual encounters another home/work setting, this feeling of subjugation may persist. Thus, the intersectionality theory can elucidate how one’s gender intersects with another social identity such as being detained in a prison cell. Additionally, their ascribed social roles may heighten the oppression in prison and gender inequalities; especially if the
detainees belong to sexual minority groups. This present study is grounded on the principles of this theory particularly with on the prison experiences of cisgender women and LGBT detainees.

METHOD

Research Design

To describe the meaning-making of the Filipino detainees’ motivations for change and reformation as a phenomenon, the descriptive phenomenology was utilized. Phenomenology is a method of inquiry that involves direct interaction between the researcher and respondents in order to capture universal descriptions of the phenomenology from their narratives (Wojnar & Swanson, 2007). This qualitative design typified their motivations towards change and reformation based on their prison experiences.

Selection and Study Site

The locus of this qualitative investigation was the city jail in the capital city of Albay province. A total of 21 Filipino detainees were identified to participate in an in-depth individual interview. The inclusion criteria are as follows: (1) Filipino; (2) aged 21-59 years old; (3) has been detained for not more than 5 years but not less than 6 months, and (4) self-identifies as cisgender woman or LGBT. The selection consists of 10 female detainees, identifying themselves as cisgender or straight, 3 lesbians, 4 gays, 2 bisexual women, 1 bisexual man and 1 transwoman. A preponderance of single (67%), catholic (90%), aged 21-40 years old (67%) detainees gave their commitment and informed consent in taking an active research participation. Most of them reached secondary education (43%) and majority have been staying for 3 to 5 years (52.4%) in jail. In the crimes committed, the violation of Republic Act 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 with 43%. The composite table (Table 1) shows the demographic profile of the Filipino detainees.

Instrumentation

A two-part instrument was developed by the researcher to gather data and information for this qualitative investigation. The first part contains the demographic sketch of the participants, which included the sexual orientation/gender identity, age, religion, civil status, highest educational attainment, years in detainment and crime committed by the participants. The second part consisted of an interview guide which probed into the dynamics of their motivations for change and reformation. To capture the disclosures of the Filipino detainees, a priori codes were identified from the existing change and reformation literature to generate a semi-structured interview guide with introductory, transitory, key and closing questions to ultimately answer the central question, “What defines the motivations on change and reformation among cisgender women and LGBT Filipino detainees?” To achieve an emic viewpoint in this phenomenological inquiry, the questions were phrased in Filipino or Bikol language to lessen the discomforts of the interview, build rapport, reinforce trust and develop an exhaustive understanding of the narratives. Table 2 shows the sample interview schedule.

Data Collection Procedure and Ethical considerations

Prior to the start of the data generation, this research was screened and approved by a local university’s technical and ethical review committee. Further, another approval was obtained from the regional director of BJMP and the endorsement of the city jail warden. A consultative-dialogue with the jail warden, the inmates’ social welfare officer and the assigned jail officer, was conducted before the researcher was allowed to have access with the identified cisgender women and LGBT detainees. A face-to-face interview was utilized in order to gain insight and understanding (de Guzman et al., 2019) of their narratives pertaining to motivations for change and reformation. The interviews were conducted in the visiting area of the city jail, where the participants were informed ahead of time through the jail officer of their schedule date and time. The selected Filipino detainees, qualifying for the set inclusion criteria, were carefully informed of the objectives of the research, clarified the concepts of voluntary participation, have given the assurance that the
respondents can withdraw anytime and that their participation does not mean giving up their human rights. They were also reassured that their responses will not implicate them in their on-going cases and that utmost privacy and confidentiality will be practiced in adherence to the Data Privacy Act (Republic Act 10173) of the country. To signify their willingness and commitment, a written informed consent form was secured from the participants and their signing was witnessed by the jail officer who accompanied them during the schedule of orientation and interview. The researcher also provided a briefing and debriefing session as a distress protocol to ensure that the participants were not emotionally or psychologically disturbed about the rigors of the interview, to constantly check their willingness, understanding of privacy and confidentiality. Most of all, the researcher made certain that despite going through the normal authorities and the presence of the jail officers did not in any way affect their participation and interest.

Mode of Analysis

Data generated from the robotfoto are consolidated to form the demographic profile of the Filipino detainees. The interviews were not permitted to be recorded by the warden due to confidentiality of the cases and the ongoing court procedure of the detainees. Thus, the responses from the interview were carefully handwritten and followed spot-checking procedures to ensure quality control of the interview proceedings. Initial reading and rereading of field text were done to re-live the feeling of the narrated experience and to make sense of the collective disclosures. To systematically understand the narratives of the participants, a with-in and cross-case analysis table was completed to have a detailed look at the transcript of the interviews conducted, case by case. Through the significant statements; the codes and categories were drawn out and emergent themes were identified and clustered (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2012) via a repertory grid. Utilizing thematic analysis as the analytical tool, the emergent themes were further subjected to member-checking and correspondence, where the participants were individually approached to validate the accuracy, adeptness and consistency of the interpretation. These validation techniques subsequently assured not only the trustworthiness but also the truthfulness (Catacutan & de Guzman, 2015) of the data collected.

FINDINGS

From the detailed stories narrated by the cisgender women and LGBT Filipino detainees, this phenomenological study unfolded a taxonomy portraying the motivations of the detainees towards change and reformation. Motivation, as a human experience, places the Filipino detainees’ frame of reference that creates a catalyst effect from their incarceration. Table 3 shows the three motivational frames, concerns and attributions. The Maturation Motivational Frame, which was existing from their pre-prison state, dichotomizes if they are still young or too old for criminal offending. The Ministration Motivational Frame, which developed from their peri-prison state, is contingent to their positive or negative prison experiences, considering their gender identity or sexual orientation. Finally, the Management Motivational Frame is composed of their post-prison expectations, of whether they envision reintegration to their community as an aspired or dreaded life event, and becoming a responsible individual or resuming to be free from any personal or social accountability.

Maturation Motivational Frame: Am I still young or too old for this?

In this qualitative inquiry, it is interesting to note that the participants looked back into their lived experiences prior to their incarceration. The reminiscing gave them varied emotional reactions from being happy and hopeful that they may experience these again, to being sad and resentful of the untoward experiences they had. Their reminiscing moments also aided their life review, considering their age as an important factor to consider. As verbalized by one participant who has been staying for five (5) years now in jail, “It will suddenly hit you that you are no longer young, that your life has been wasting inside this jail” (P15). Their reminiscing and realizations include wanting to have a more stable life and with their families outside the prison. “I am done with this kind of life, I am already getting old, I want to have a more stable life” (P17). In warm and delicate ways, most of the older participants tried to express in a light manner their realization that by growing older while detained, they are not only robbed of their youth but also of their beauty. “Experiencing prison life, I want a change of scenery, before I get too old. My age and beauty are
slowly fading away here” (P4). “I have done enough in my younger years, it’s time for me to realize that it is not helping me to be old and gay and still living the same way” (P19).

They also shared the realization that age is synonymous to years that have passed where they could have used for more meaningful life events with their families and friends. And that age should give them clarity and knowing what to do to change. “I regret missing the years of spending my birthdays with my children and husband, I hate to think that 5 years have passed, and I also aged 5 years, without them” (P9). “I am hopeful that with my age now, I can say that I can think more clearly, and know what I should do before it’s too late” (P13). “I don’t want to die of old age in prison, while I am still young and able, I will use that to change” (P7).

In contrast, there are also young participants who did not seem worried of their age and its implication if they will continue to be imprisoned or will be apprehended again for another law violation. As one participant expressed in a joking, yet meaningful manner; “I am not worried at all with my age or aging. I am young and beautiful and I can continue being that even in prison” (P5). Other similar disclosures were: “I am still young, no pressure. Of course, I can change, but I do not let my age bother me” (P1). “I am younger than most of my co-inmates here, so I think, I should not be worried or be pressured that much, let them worry first, I will have my turn when I grow older, and if still in prison” (P16).

Summarily, these revelations and intimate disclosures pertain to their younger or older ages and their indications for maturity and age-readiness. This is referred in this study as the Maturation Frame of Filipino detainees which reflects the motivating dichotomy of attributing either still being young or growing older in as an aspect for change and reformation.

Ministration Motivational Frame: Did I have positive or negative prison experiences?

It was remarkable to reveal that some of the participants, in their prison journey, had positive prison experiences which contributed to how their motives were shaped for changing and reforming. Such is the case of the transwoman detainee who openly expressed that in all honesty, there is nothing abhorrent about the idea of being imprisoned again because her prison experiences were far from horrifying or traumatic. She added that committing another crime and returning to the city jail would not be depressing at all, considering the easy life she is experiencing while detained. “My prison experiences are neither ugly nor bad, that is why I cannot promise that I will not be involved again with drugs or other illegal activities. Because honestly, I know that I will not experience any hardships or torture while inside the jail. Yes, I am a prisoner, but it is not difficult or considered suffering if detained here.” Similar disclosures showed that their pleasant experiences and the appreciation for the good treatment that they receive from the city jail officers are as follows:

“Believe it or not, I am actually happier here, because I have a boyfriend here and he takes care of me sincerely. That’s why I don’t think very negative about my imprisonment. If I become imprisoned again, that’s not a big problem” (P1).

“If my case will be dismissed, it is alright with me, if I will serve my sentence or if I was committed again, it is still fine. Because I know that I will not be in danger in jail. The jail guards take care of my needs, I do not feel mistreated” (P12).

In dissimilarity, there are also a handful of the participants who are quite motivated to change and to aim not to return to jail anymore. Their drive for changing is to avoid experiencing oppression, discrimination and prejudice, not from the jail officers but from other inmates. Sadly, these are mostly gay and lesbian participants and others are cisgender women. The gay detainees received sexually suggestive touches when they pass or encounter some of the male detainees and one even revealed that he was sexually abused in the showers. “I know that I was raped by a male inmate, but I cannot do anything about it because he knows I am gay. If given the chance, I don’t want to be imprisoned anymore, this makes me think hard of what I have to change when given the chance with freedom” (R2). “I am not that kind of gay, I do not seek sexual relationships and I get offended by these. Fearing that I will be sexually abused if my motivation to change,
so when I get out of this jail, I will make sure that I do not return anymore” (P3). From their disclosures, the gay participants usually become the victims for sexual advances. Ironically, some lesbian participants experienced to be accused or suspected as the ones to perpetrate or sexually abuse other cisgender women inmates. This caused a persistent drive for them to reform ways when given the chance of reunification with their family. “I will prove to them that I can change, I hate the feelings and the experiences where they think that I will molest or take advantage of a female inmate, just because I am a lesbian.” (P18) “It does not follow that I am a lesbian and I will sexually abuse my female inmates. It hurts to be accused of something I do not even think of doing. That is why I pray hard to be freed from this imprisonment and I promise myself that I will do better, so I will not experience this mistreatment anymore” (P19).

Additionally, the female detainees shared more positive prison experiences that fueled their drive to improve themselves and avoid illegal involvements in the future. One cisgender woman inmate, who had been involved in human trafficking, remorsefully expressed the willingness to change and to stop her illegal activities. Even though her prison experiences were positive, she said that being free cannot measure up to an imprisoned life. Another cisgender woman inmate, who was charged with illegal recruitment of overseas Filipino workers, expressed the same sentiment. “Yes, I am treated well by jail officers and inmates but that does not mean that I will repeat my life’s mistakes. Staying in jail made me appreciate more of my life outside and this motivates me to stop my involvement in illegal recruiting” (P8).

The foregoing situations have brought the Filipino detainees into a terrain where they utilize a Ministration frame in order to realize their need for changing and reforming. This approach is attributed to their peri-prison states, of experiencing either positive or negative prison circumstances.

Management Motivational Frame: To become responsible or return to a carefree life?

Motivated by the aspiration of unifying with their families, the participants interestingly shared how they expect their lives will be in post-imprisonment. A larger number among the cisgender women detainees look forward to fulfilling their maternal, marital and other family roles when they return to their respective families. One married cisgender woman detainee, who has stayed in prison for four (4) years now, expressed, “I am praying for the day that I will be united with my family. I will make sure that this time, I will take care of my children’s needs without resorting to selling illegal drugs. I will find a better employment and strive the best I can to be a good mother and wife” (P10). Another cisgender woman detainee shared, “It will be so selfish of me if I do not change. It will be very irresponsible of me if I return to illegal drugs again. I know I can change for the better and avoid illegal dealings. I need that change to take charge of my family, and relieve my parents in taking care of them. I want to be reunited with them and start anew” (P11). “As the oldest sister, I am promising to devote more of my time to my siblings, I now realize that I need to be responsible for my family because my parents are gone now. I know I must accept that, and carry on with my role as the protector of our family” (P14). “I still have plans for myself, I want to return going to school, so that I will land a better job and my parents will be proud of me” (P12).

On one hand, the LGBT detainees showed diverse expectations after being freed from prison. The single lesbian and bisexual woman detainees were similar in their aspirations of compensating for the lost years with their loved ones and of trying harder to fulfill their obligations either as a daughter, a granddaughter, a sister or a partner. They collectively shared short and long-term goals to improve their lives and to use their prison experiences as life’s lessons to know what can help and hurt in dealing with challenges and tribulations. “I know my mistakes, I admit my shortcomings, whatever I can offer to my family as a sign of my remorse, I will gladly do because I will really strive harder at life” (P20). “Whatever remaining years I can spend with my aging grandmother, I will share with her. I know that I need to compensate my shortcomings to her, and deciding to change and reform my old habits will make her really happy” (P21).

On the other hand, there are also those who were very honest in revealing that they really do not know if they will not commit illegal activities anymore. They shared that they acknowledge their weakness and are easily tempted to go with the wants of their hearts and knowing with a comforting feeling that jail experiences are not that bad, does not really pressure them to change or reform. Hence, they will just continue what they
have been accustomed with, and will not pretend to suddenly become responsible and accountable. “I will not be pretentious; I know I am not perfect. I fall in love easily, I trust easily, I may commit mistakes again, maybe be apprehended with some illegal activities that may be me in jail again, so let me just go on with my usual life.” (P6). “Promises are made to be broken, so I will not promise anything, especially that I will not commit again any criminal offenses. My partner also used drugs, so if he will not change, then most likely, I will also return to using, hopefully, we will not be caught again” (P1).

Collectively, the participants’ utilized management frame connects to how they are attached to their previous lives, prior detainment and how experiences either positively or negatively shaped while imprisoned. This will subsequently determine how they will perceive or expect their lives after imprisonment. Ultimately, this will lead to whether they will have higher or lower desistance to crimes following their aspiration to be more responsible or resume living a carefree life.

DISCUSSION

This phenomenological inquiry surfaced the motivations for change and reformation as a human experience consists of three interrelated frames, namely: Maturation Motivational Frame (age concerns), Ministration Motivational Frame (prison experiences), and Management Motivational Frame (responsibilities). The findings may not universally reflect the motivations for change and reformation of a more culturally diverse jail population, but the emerged taxonomy exemplify a valuable entry point for understanding the change and reformation motivations of Filipino detainees. This can subsequently serve as a frame of reference to bring more focus on the needs and perspectives of detained sexual minorities groups that will assist in advancing gender and development programs and services, LGBT psychology and to contribute in scientific knowledge along social development and promotion.

Incarceration’s higher aim for change and reformation of the individuals is part of Restorative Justice. The 21 cisgender women and LGBT detainees who took part in this research collectively shared the same goal of envisioning themselves in reintegration in their respective community, but their motivational frames reflected differing perspectives which were dependent on their pre-prison states (maturity level—younger or older), peri-prison states (positive and negative prison experiences) and post-prison expectations (assigned roles, responsibilities).

In the first motivational frame, the Maturation Motivational Frame, age is confirmed as a vital factor attributed to the detainees’ aim for returning to their lives outside prison. This research finding is consistent with previous research findings (Kazemian & Maruna, 2009; Laub & Sampson, 2001) which established that aging plays a role in the process of desistance. They expressed wanting to reform as proof that they have outgrown the misdirected life. This is consistent with the Maturational Frame which emphasized that from a development, life-course perspective, people change constantly (Hearn, 2010) and adults’ transition (Uggen & Massoglia, 2003). Most of the participants had the realization that in considering their age and time spent in jail would mean that they are also wasting away what they could have done more for themselves and for their loved ones. Their maturation, particularly based on their age, became the most dominant enabler to aspire a change in their ways before they will be too old to do so.

In another important motivation, the Ministration Motivational Frame used by the cisgender women and LGBT detainees showed a question of effective intervention/ offender management (McNeill, 2004) and policy issues (Kazemian, 2007). Alarming, there are younger gay, bisexual man and transwoman detainees who disclosed of having a low desistance from crimes because they believed having a better life inside the jail as nothing to be threatened and scared about with how they jail officers treat them. This is mentioned in work of McCulloch and McNeill (2008) where the prisoners who are identified as desisting related to probations workers as a positive influence (Hearn, 2010). However, in this research’s finding, the non-threatening prison management is linked with high risk for recidivism, which is not entirely related to their sexual orientation. In contrast, there are also gay detainees who expressed concern over their prison experiences with male detainees and not with the jail officers. There are moments when they feel most vulnerable and their being gay are used for sexual advances of other inmates. The research work of Lara (2009), Marksamer, & Tobin, (2013) and
Villafuerte (2013), emphasized that because the detainees are gay, they receive sexual attacks, harassment and abuse because of the lack of gender-appropriate prison management for gays or LGBT. Further, in the present study, although some of the gay detainees do not consider the teasing as offending and abusing, these are evidences that the generalized prison management is not effective in providing gender-specific needs, intervention for reformation and gender-sensitive activities for people with different sexual orientation or gender identity. They also further validate the claims of Intersectionality theory when applied to generalized prison management, which oppresses gender and sexual minorities and does not give class attention to specific needs of gay detainees. Moreover, the lesbian detainees were labelled as sexual perpetrators, being together cellmates with cisgender women detainees. This reasoning mirrors homophobia and homonegativity which are prevalent in prison cultures (Blackburn et al., 2011; Sit & Ricciardelli, 2013) and is contrary to the research of Ritchers, and associates (2008), which implored that cisgender women detainees do not pose threats to the lesbians. Collectively, the negative experiences related to their lesbian sexual orientation motivated them to aspire for behavioral change. Despite these prison experiences, their aspired change did not depend on being with or separated from detainees having different sexual orientations, which Van den Bergh et al., (2014) redounded as risky for psychological impacts. This study showed that in terms of prison experiences, the perspectives vary from one sexual orientation or gender identity to another, depending on the ministration received from the jail system and co-detainees.

In the final frame of motivation, the Management Motivational frame, most of the cisgender women and LGBT detainees curbed their change and reformation with a strong focus on the role of religion (Clear et al., 2000), marriages, employment, transformation of identity (Laub & Sampson; Sampson & Laub, 1993) and altering relations with delinquent peers (Warr, 1998). Most of the cisgender women detainees conformed to the previous research findings, specifically Laub and Sampson’s work (1993, 2001), where the primary reason for desistance is to resume to ascribed (head of the family) and achieved (breadwinner, stable income-earner in the family) social roles centered in family life. Moreover, the respondents wanted to gain back the care of their dependent children and achieving the custody and welfare of family members who were subsequently left to relatives or alternative care while they were in prison. There were also concerns on studying again and establishing a better career path as their way of being able to take control or place their lives into normalcy again. According to the Narrative Identity theory, if prisoners create their redemption script (Maruna, 2004) they will be able to take control of their deviant actions and the higher possible for crime desistance. There are also lesbian and gay detainees, especially those with partners and showed more maturity, who collectively expressed that they positively aspire to become better and to continue their lives involving more of their loved ones, thus turning back to their old selves. By doing this, they justify their past and move forward with their present (Hearn, 2010). As to the handful of younger gay, bisexual and transwoman detainees, their honesty in expressing their motivations for change and reformation centering around their partners and admitting to being emotionally permissive in their relationships will hopefully be altered as they come of age and when they develop a more refractive perspective and build a concept of cultural humility (Holman, 2020) and create a deeper meaning of their life experiences.

CONCLUSION

This qualitative investigation sought to describe the motivations on change and reformation as narrated by cisgender women and LGBT Filipino detainees. However, it does not seek to generalize but to note distinction from assumptions of homogeneity within prison populations which are actually cisgender men-centric. The emerged taxonomy of motivational frames of the Filipino detainees is an interesting lens through which to structure the mind-setting and emotional states in pre-prison (Maturation), peri-prison (Ministration) and post-prison expectations (Management). The extent to which these frames are utilized by the Filipino detainees are valuable and significant mechanisms to strengthen desistance to crimes and the avoidance of recidivism.

Notably, this study contributes to the understanding of motivations on change and reformation among the cisgender women and LGBT detainees which carefully unraveled the consistency and contradictions from previous research findings. The existing literature is based on very large to largely populated prisons, thus,
with the locale of this study and the total number of participants, rendered differing perspectives. However, it may not be discounted that the taxonomy of motivational frames which emerged from this phenomenological investigation will greatly contribute to the dearth of Philippine literature on gender and prison and may be the basis for further investigations with cross-culture comparisons and larger samples.

The findings of this study further attest to the fundamental belief that cisgender women and LGBT detainees are a special and important minority group today, more than ever, who need understanding, support and be given a voice to be heard. The findings of this research can also provide baseline information for empirically-evidenced investigations for reformatory care and gender-specific prison management in the Philippines. Moreover, the phenomenon of motivations for change and reformation involving cross-country and global comparisons, reaching out to adequate representations in individualistic and collectivistic cultures may be further investigated. Ultimately, this paper may contribute to the collective Gender and Development literature and LGBT research worldwide as a springboard for more specific programs and policies aligned in promoting the mental health and well-being of Filipino detainees.

References


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**Table 1.**

**Demographic profile of the participants (n=21)**

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<td>67</td>
<td>1 year to 2 years &amp; 11 months</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-60</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3 years to 5 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Crime Committed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Theft/Robbery</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Catholic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Dangerous Drugs</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Civil Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trafficking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Rape</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.

*Interview Schedule*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Question</th>
<th>Sample Interview Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introductory</td>
<td>What happenings and life events outside jail do you miss most?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitory</td>
<td>How did these changes affect you while detained?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key</td>
<td>What gives you the motivation to change and reform?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closure</td>
<td>How do you envision yourself when you return home?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.

*Taxonomy of motivational frames of the straight and LGBT Filipino detainees*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frame</th>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Attribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maturation</td>
<td>Still young or too old for this?</td>
<td>Pre-prison state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministration</td>
<td>Positive or negative prison experiences?</td>
<td>Peri-prison state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Responsible or Carefree way of life?</td>
<td>Post-prison expectation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>