Recovery and Reintegration Programs for the Victim Survivors of Human Trafficking: An Assessment

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recovery and reintegration, programs and services, victim-survivors of human trafficking, challenges encountered, mitigating strategies

A B S T R A C T

This study assesses recovery and reintegration programs for victim-survivors of human trafficking in the Philippines, focusing on program effectiveness, implementation challenges, and mitigation strategies from the perspectives of service providers and beneficiaries. Using a mixed-methods approach grounded in the Theory of Change, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and reintegration frameworks, the study involved 21 members of the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking and five victim-survivors. Quantitative data were analyzed using a 3-point Likert scale, while qualitative insights were examined through thematic analysis. Findings reveal that while multiple programs are available, most interventions concentrate on the recovery phase, with limited support for long-term economic, personal, and psychosocial reintegration. Financial constraints significantly affect implementation, leading to reliance on inter-agency referrals for social welfare assistance. Although mental and physical health services were positively perceived, the absence of livelihood monitoring tools hampers outcome assessment. The study highlights the need for holistic, survivor-centered programs and policy reforms to ensure sustainable reintegration and comprehensive support.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human trafficking remains a pervasive and severe global challenge, with approximately 27.6 million individuals ensnared in forced labor or exploitation worldwide (United States Department of State, 2023). The Philippines, despite concerted efforts to combat this crime, continues to report rising cases of trafficking. In 2021, authorities identified 1,534 potential victims, a number that grew to 1,802 in 2022, highlighting the urgent need for effective recovery and reintegration programs (United States Department of State, 2023). Recovery efforts, though impactful, often fail to address the long-term needs of survivors, leaving them vulnerable to re-trafficking or psychological distress (Rafferty, 2021).

The process of recovery and reintegration is multifaceted, encompassing physical, emotional, legal, and economic rehabilitation. Programs offering victim-survivors access to health care, legal aid, and skill-building opportunities are essential, yet challenges such as limited resources, implementation gaps, and insufficient collaboration among stakeholders persist. An effective system demands not only immediate intervention but also a sustainable reintegration strategy that addresses survivors' holistic well-being (Surtees & Johnson, 2021).
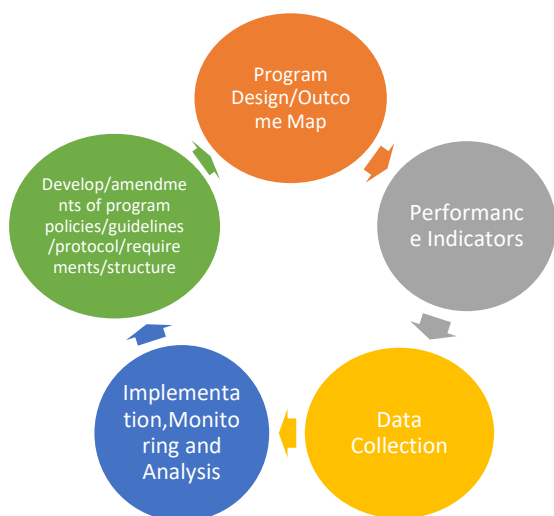
This study seeks to examine the recovery and reintegration programs implemented in the Philippines, focusing on their effectiveness, challenges, and opportunities for improvement. By providing insights into the benefits and shortcomings of these initiatives, this research aims to inform stakeholders about evidence-based strategies that promote sustainable reintegration for trafficking survivors.

2.THEORETICALAND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study employed multiple theoretical frameworks, leveraging a mixed-methods design. This comprehensive strategy can effectively address the research objective by incorporating diverse theories.

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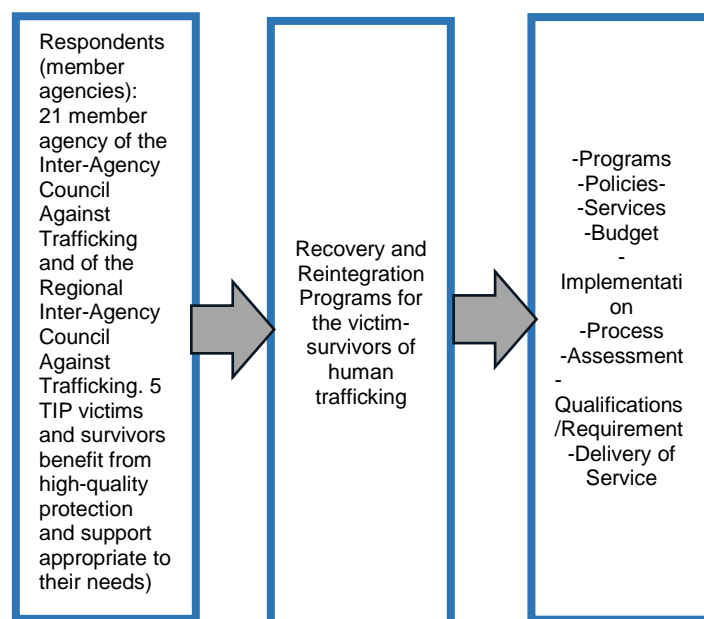
Figure 1
Theory of Change

The Theory of Change (Theory of Change, 2024), which describes how intervention or combination of treatments is anticipated to lead to particular development changes, is one of the theoretical frameworks employed in this study. This theory assists in determining how to effectively address the root causes of issues that impede progress and provides guidance when choosing a method, considering the relative benefits, practicality, efficacy, and uncertainties inherent in every change process. This framework facilitates comprehension of a program's elements, underlying presumptions, and anticipated results. It gives the theory behind the program a visual representation by showing the orderly flow of inputs, actions, outputs, results, and effects.

In public administration, the Theory of Change promotes evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement by providing a clear framework for program planning, implementation, and effectiveness measurement. This makes program assessment and evaluation simpler.

Another is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, wherein according to the Stages of recovery and reintegration of trafficking victims (Surtees et al., 2022), successful reintegration is composed of five (5) components: (1) an environment that is stable and safe, (2) a fair standard of living (*A. Maslow's hierarchy: Physiological Needs*), (3) mental and physical health, (4) development on the societal, personal and economic aspects (*B. Maslow's hierarchy: Safety Needs)* and (5) support on social And emotional issues (*C. Esteem, Love, and Belongingness).* These components are measured through the ten (10) outcomes of successful reintegration: (1) Safety and Security, (2) a positive social climate and interpersonal relationships, (3) Opportunities for training and education, (4) financial stability, (5) the welfare of the victims' relatives and dependents, (6) judicial access, (7) Legal Status, (8) mental health, (9) physical health and (10) Safe, comfortable, and inexpensive housing.

This pyramid-shaped design highlights the significance of meeting requirements to achieve optimal wellness (Maslow, 1943). In this study, the researcher wanted to learn that the programs available to the victim-survivors of human trafficking are aligned with the needs of every human and will promote the social functioning of the victim-survivors. This theory will serve as a guide to help the study in assessing the available recovery and reintegration programs for victim-survivors of human trafficking.

Figure 2
Conceptual Framework

Assumptions
In conducting this study, the following axiological assumptions were made. It was assumed that:
1. The existing recovery and reintegration programs for the victims and survivors of human trafficking address one or more components for a successful recovery and reintegration.
2. The hindering factors do not affect the whole implementation of the program.

Programs are promoting successful recovery and reintegration and long-term sustainability.

Objectives
This study aims to:
1. Assess the benefits of existing programs in supporting survivors' recovery and reintegration.
2. Examine the challenges faced in implementing these programs and propose strategies to address them.

Rationale
The findings of this study will contribute to enhancing the understanding of recovery and reintegration frameworks for trafficking survivors in the Philippines. It will benefit:

1. **Researchers** by providing data for future studies on anti-trafficking initiatives and social reintegration.
2. **Policy Makers** by offering recommendations to refine regulations and overcome challenges in program implementation.
3. **International Financial Institutions** by identifying areas where funding and support can be optimized for survivor assistance programs.

Scope

The study focuses on programs implemented by 21 member agencies of the Regional Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking and the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking. It includes interviews with five trafficking survivors who successfully reintegrated into their communities last year of 2024 and surveys of program implementors. By evaluating these programs against five reintegration pillars: safety, standard of living, health, personal development, and emotional support, the research seeks to identify both successes and areas requiring enhancement.

3. METHODOLOGY

Participants/Subjects

The study involves two participant groups:
1. **Program Implementors:** A purposive sample of 21 representatives from inter-agency councils combating human trafficking was selected to capture diverse perspectives from law enforcement, social welfare, legal aid, and NGOs involved in recovery and reintegration programs. Participants were chosen for their hands-on experience in handling trafficking cases, assessing survivor needs, and facilitating reintegration. Selection followed data saturation principles to ensure comprehensive insights into program effectiveness, strengths, and gaps. The sample size balances depth of analysis with practical feasibility, aligning with methodologies used in prior anti-human trafficking studies.
2. **Survivors:** Five trafficking survivors, representing experiences of labor and sexual exploitation, were included to provide firsthand accounts of recovery and reintegration services. Selected to capture diverse experiences, they offered insights into the effectiveness of programs in addressing physical, psychological, economic, and social rehabilitation needs. Their testimonies complement implementors' perspectives, highlighting gaps between policy intentions and actual service delivery. By including survivors of different exploitation types, the study provides a comprehensive evaluation of how well existing interventions meet the varied needs of trafficking victims.

Research Design

This study adopts a **mixed-method descriptive survey design** to provide a comprehensive understanding of recovery and reintegration programs. The Theory of Change framework guides the organization of interventions, while Maslow's hierarchy of needs serves as a conceptual anchor for addressing survivors' holistic needs (Maslow, 1943; Theory of Change, 2024). Quantitative data assess program effectiveness, while qualitative insights capture survivors' perspectives and lived experiences.

Data Collection

The research employs a combination of desk reviews, surveys, and interviews:
1. **Desk Reviews**: Secondary data from government reports, memos, and relevant publications.
2. **Surveys**: Structured questionnaires distributed to 21 program implementors to evaluate program components and challenges.
3. **Interviews**: Semi-structured interviews with survivors to explore their experiences and perceptions. Pseudonyms are used to maintain confidentiality.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data are analyzed using descriptive statistics:
- **Weighted Mean** for Likert scale responses to measure program effectiveness.
- **Frequency Percentages and Ranks** to evaluate program challenges.

Qualitative data from survivor interviews are analyzed thematically, using Creswell's approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) to identify recurring patterns and insights.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical safeguards ensure participants' rights and well-being throughout the research process:
1. **Informed Consent:** Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any stage. They signed consent forms, ensuring their participation was voluntary and based on a clear understanding of the research.
2. **Confidentiality:** To protect the identities of the participants, pseudonyms were used, and strict data security protocols were implemented. This ensured that their personal information and responses remained confidential throughout the research process.
3. **Professional Validation:** To guarantee sensitivity and reliability, research tools and procedures were validated by experts. This step ensured the study was conducted respectfully and appropriately, especially given the vulnerable nature of the participants.
4. **Approval:** Finally, the study underwent a thorough review and was approved by the Ethics Review

Board of Western Mindanao State University. This approval confirms that the research complied with established ethical standards, prioritizing participant safety and respect.

4. RESULTS

This part provides the presentation of statistical data relative to the problems posited. This section of the study includes the corresponding data analysis and interpretation.

Existing Recovery And Reintegration Program For The Victim-Survivors of Human Trafficking
The following section draws upon secondary data sources such as official office websites, the official journal of The Republic of the Philippines, Circulars, Department Memorandums and other sources.

Table 1
Available Recovery and Reintegration Programs for The Victim-Survivors of Trafficking

Agency	Services
Government: -Department of Justice-IACAT -Overseas Workers Welfare Administration -Department of Labor and Employment -City Social Welfare and Development -National Bureau of Investigation -Philippine National Police (WCPC, RMU, AVSEU, WCPD) - National Intelligence Coordinating Agency Philippine Ports Authority-Port Police - Department of Health - Technical Education and Skills Development - National Commission on Indigenous People	• Psychosocial Counseling • Skills development • Financial Literacy • Employment Placement • Livelihood Assistance • Free legal assistance • Medical Assistance (Physical and Psychological Aspect) • Criminal Investigation • Filing of formal complaints • Surveillance • Arrest of suspects • Transportation Assistance • Scholarship Program • Faith-based activities • Education program Sources: Republic Act No. 9208, n.d., Overseas Workers Welfare Administration, n.d., DOLE Distressed OFWs| GOVPH"2016, *Philippine Commission on Women*, 2021, Section 16 of the Republic Act No. 9208, TESDA Circular No.018-2022, NCIP.GOV.PH n.d., DM 060, S. 2022| Department of Education, 2022., Department of Tourism-Philippines,"n.d..
-Department of Social Welfare and Development - Department of Foreign Affairs -Department of Education - Department of Tourism -Non-government Organization: -Katilingban sa Kalambuan Inc., Org	• Psychosocial Counseling • Temporary Shelter • Psychological assistance • Therapeutic activities (emotional, spiritual, social and personal) • Livelihood Assistance • Life-skills training • Financial literacy training • Educational Assistance • Transportation Services Sources: Katilingban Sa Kalambuan, n.d

The study combined secondary data and key informant interviews to assess recovery and reintegration programs for trafficking survivors. Findings show that service providers prioritize safety, protection, and transportation, in line with RA 9208 and UNICEF guidelines, with most beneficiaries accessing services via inter-agency referrals. Interviews with five survivors revealed limited prior awareness of available programs, though referrals enabled access to multiple forms of assistance. The study emphasizes the need for secure, confidential, and accessible services, supported by safety protocols, and recommends stronger advocacy and localized information campaigns to increase public awareness, service accessibility, and community engagement in combating human trafficking.

Discernible benefits of the existing recovery and reintegration programs in terms of providing:
The following section shows the service user's perspective on the benefits of the existing recovery and reintegration program using a 3-point Likert scale(quantitative), followed by a thematic analysis (Cresswell & Poth, 2018) for the qualitative data gathered from the five victim-survivors.

A : Stable and Safe Environment (Quantitative Data)

Table 2
Stable and Safe Environment

Services	AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE	
	3		2		1	
	F	Weighted mean	F	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean
Criminal Investigation	21	3.00	-	-	-	-
Filing of formal complaint	21	3.00	-	-	-	-
Transportation	21	3.00	-	-	-	-

Analysis continues from previous page. Table 2 (continued):

Services	AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE		Overall Mean	Qualitative Description
	F	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean		
Assistance								
Residential Facility/Shelter	21	3.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	Agree
Child Placement (Foster/Adoption)	1	0.14	20	1.90	-	-	2.05	Neutral
Witness-protection program	8	1.14	13	1.24	-	-	2.38	Neutral
Ancestral domain sustainable development and protection	-	-	21	2.00	-	-	2.00	Neutral
Safety and protection of the community	21	3.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	Agree
Total							2.68	Neutral

Legend:

Analysis of Table 2, based on responses from 21 stakeholders, examines the perceived benefits of recovery and reintegration programs in ensuring a stable and safe environment for victim-survivors of human trafficking. Respondents unanimously affirmed the effectiveness of core protection-oriented interventions—criminal investigation, filing of formal complaints, transportation assistance, provision of shelters, and community safety—each receiving the highest mean score (3.00). In contrast, interventions requiring longer-term institutional commitment, such as witness protection, child placement (foster or adoption), and ancestral domain security, received neutral assessments, resulting in an overall mean of 2.68.

These findings suggest that current policy implementation prioritizes immediate recovery and risk mitigation, while long-term protective mechanisms remain underdeveloped or insufficiently institutionalized. From a policy perspective, this imbalance reflects a security- and case-processing–driven approach rather than a comprehensive protection continuum. Strengthening underutilized components—particularly witness protection and child placement—requires clearer policy directives, sustained funding, and inter-agency accountability to ensure durable safety and social reintegration outcomes for victim-survivors.

B. Stable and Safe Environment (Qualitative Data)

Table 3
Stable and Safe Environment

THEMES	Responses/Transcript
Protection	R1: "… to prevent in exposing me I was in a shelter..When I decided to return home, they escorted me to my family to ensure that I safely reached home." R2: "…immediately brought to safe place and escorted…" R4: "...stayed in a temporary shelter.."
Legal Procedure	R3: "..rescued by law enforcers and I filed formal complaint" R5: "I refused to file a case because I am afraid…"

Clients emphasized "protection and legal procedures" as key to a stable and safe environment. Programs focus on safeguarding communities, preventing threats, investigating crimes, and providing legal assistance, ensuring survivors can choose whether to file complaints. A safe environment is essential for overall well-being and successful reintegration. Administrators should prioritize developing or amending policies to uphold safety and protection, as exposure to threats or harm undermines reintegration efforts, aligning with the principles of Maslow's needs, successful reintegration components, and the Theory of Change.

Ensuring A Fair Standard of Living (Quantitative Data)

Table 4
Ensuring A Fair Standard of Living

Services	AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE		Overall Mean	Qualitative Description
	3		2		1			
	F	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean		
Employment Placement	6	0.86	15	1.43	-	-	2.29	Neutral
Livelihood Assistance	21	3.00	-	-	-	-	3.00	Agree
Total							2.64	Neutral

Legend:

1.00 - 1.99	Disagree
2.00 - 2.99	Neutral
3.00	Agree

Stakeholders agree that livelihood assistance benefits trafficking survivors, but employment placement outcomes are largely viewed as neutral. This highlights a gap between short-term economic support and sustainable reintegration. Service providers are uncertain about the long-term impact of grants, as many beneficiaries struggle to maintain income-generating activities. The findings underscore the need for standardized monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Implementing an outcome-based economic monitoring tool is essential to assess program effectiveness, guide resource allocation, and strengthen survivors' pathways to economic independence and successful long-term reintegration.

B : Ensuring A Fair Standard Of Living (Qualitative Data)

Table 5
Ensuring A Fair Standard Of Living

THEMES	Responses/Transcript
After-Care Assistance	R2: *"...they gave capital and I have a small store..."* R3: *"...I was provided with initial capital for business because I have knowledge about fish; that's what I sell now..."* R4: *"... and I also added the livelihood assistance they gave me to our small store..."* R5: *"...I am waiting for the schedule of the livelihood assistance..."*
Sustainable Livelihood	R1: *"...they gave me a chance to work..."*

1.00 - 1.99	Disagree
2.00 - 2.99	Neutral
3.00	Agree

Human trafficking stems from social and economic vulnerabilities, making structural interventions essential to prevent re-victimization. Survivors mainly receive livelihood-based after-care, yet service providers struggle to assess long-term effectiveness due to the lack of systematic monitoring. Employment-focused support offers more sustainable financial stability for survivors and families. Policy implications highlight the need to shift from input-driven aid to outcome-oriented economic reintegration. Implementing a standardized livelihood-support monitoring tool is recommended to improve accountability, evaluate program impact, manage risks, and guide adaptive policies, thereby enhancing long-term reintegration and reducing susceptibility to re-trafficking.

A : Promoting Mental And Physical Health (Quantitative Data)

Table 6
Promoting Mental And Physical Health

Services	AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE	Overall mean	Qualitative Description
	3		**2**		**1**		
	F	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean	f		
Continue Table 6							
Medical Assistance (Physical)	21	3.00	-	-	-	3.00	Agree
Medical Assistance (Mental/Psychological)	21	3.00	-	-	-	3.00	Agree
Psychosocial Counseling	21	3.00	-	-	-	3.00	Agree
Total						3.00	Agree

Legend:

All 21 respondents agreed that recovery programs effectively promote survivors' mental and physical health through medical assistance and psychosocial counseling (mean = 3.00). Addressing physical, mental, and emotional well-being is crucial, as lack of social support and stigmatization can worsen health outcomes. The results show that taskforce members prioritize survivor health, significantly impacting overall recovery. Administrators should similarly emphasize these services to ensure optimal rehabilitation and reintegration, supporting survivors' holistic well-being.

B: Promoting Mental And Physical Health (Qualitative Data)

Table 7
Promoting Mental And Physical Health

THEME	Responses/Transcript
Psychosocial Counseling	R1: *"... counseled by my social worker and mental health worker from the office..."* R2: *"...advise and guide me on what needs to be done..."* R3: *"...I am being advised by the social workers and they guide me on the right things to do and remind me of various matters..."* R4: *"... gave me advice on what happened to me and guidance on the abuse I experienced..."* R5: *"... my social worker provided counseling and it eased my feeling because someone listened to my story and realize there is help available..."*

Human trafficking survivors often face severe psychological and physical harm, compounded by emotions like anger, fear, and shame, which hinder recovery. Psychosocial counseling is crucial for restoring social functioning, self-esteem, and agency. International human rights frameworks affirm survivors' right to equitable access to health services. Policy implications emphasize integrating trauma-informed care into recovery programs through standardized protocols, inter-agency coordination, and dedicated resources. Strengthening these measures ensures sustainable healing, rights-based service delivery, and long-term well-being for trafficking survivors.

A: - Facilitating Development In Societal, Personal, And Economic Dimensions (Quantitative Data)

Table 8
Facilitating Development In Societal, Personal, And Economic Dimensions

Table 8

Services	AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE		Overall Mean	Qualitative Description
	3		2		1			
	F	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean		
Financial Literacy or any related activities	8	1.14	5	0.48	8	0.38	2.00	Neutral
Educational Assistance (Academic)	18	2.57	3	0.29	-	-	2.86	Neutral
Educational for skills enhancement /development	8	1.14	8	0.76	5	0.24	2.14	Neutral
Total							2.33	Neutral

Legend:

1.00 - 1.99	Disagree
2.00 - 2.99	Neutral
3.00	Agree

Table 8 summarizes stakeholder assessments of recovery and reintegration programs in promoting societal, personal, and economic development among victim-survivors. While educational assistance for academic support was generally viewed as beneficial, perceptions of financial literacy and skills development interventions remained neutral, yielding an overall mean of 2.33. This neutrality reflects inconsistent program availability and limited institutional capacity to deliver development-oriented services. Service providers cited resource constraints, fragmented mandates, and the concentration of such interventions within only a few agencies. From a policy perspective, the findings highlight a gap between short-term recovery interventions and long-term reintegration strategies. Strengthening development-focused programming requires clearer policy mandates, sustained funding, and coordinated inter-agency implementation.

B: Facilitating Development In Societal, Personal, And Economic Dimensions (Qualitative Data)

Table 9
Facilitating Development In Societal, Personal, And Economic Dimensions

THEMES	Responses/Transcript
Education	*R1: "...I was able to finish my studies because of the help and they teached us on how to spend and save money wisely..."*
Financial Literacy	*R3: "...I was advised on how to properly spend and save money for the business to prevent losses." R4: "...attended an orientation on financial literacy..." R5: "I was able to attend orientation on how to properly spend and save money especially business related income"*
Finanicial Stability	*R2: "...I was advised on how to properly roll capital and save money..." "...form to assess my readiness for entrepreneurship."*

Qualitative findings reveal uneven access to development-oriented support among victim-survivors. One respondent reported completing formal education through available assistance, while three participated in financial literacy activities that improved budgeting and business management skills. Only one respondent experienced pre-assistance business readiness assessment. These disparities reflect fragmented service delivery rather than a systematic reintegration framework. Given that trafficking vulnerability is closely linked to pre-existing socio-economic disruption, access to education, skills training, and livelihood preparation is essential for economic independence and prevention of re-trafficking. From a policy perspective, institutionalizing skills development requires coordinated implementation. Establishing a centralized registry of stakeholders, their mandates, and available services is recommended to improve coordination, coverage, and accountability across reintegration programs.

A: Offering Support For Social And Emotional Issues (Quantitative Data)

Table 10
Offering Support For Social And Emotional Issues

Services	AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGRE E		Overall Mean	Qualitative Description
	3		2		1			
	F	Weighted mean	F	Weighted mean	f	Weighted mean		
Faith-based activity to promote emotional/spiritual balance	3	0.429	8	0.76	10	0.48	1.667	Disagree

Family/ Peer- client activity to promote social balance	3	0.429	8	0.76	1	0.40 8	1.667	Disagr ee
Total							**1.67**	**Disag ree**

Legend:
1.00 - 1.99   Disagree
2.00 - 2.99   Neutral
3.00   Agree

Table 10 highlights stakeholder perceptions of recovery and reintegration programs addressing social and emotional needs. Services such as faith-based activities and family/peer-client interventions received mixed to negative responses, with an overall mean of 1.67, indicating disagreement on their effectiveness. Findings suggest that trauma-focused reintegration and psychosocial support are minimal, leaving many survivors feeling isolated upon returning home. Service providers acknowledge office limitations and policy constraints that hinder adequate intervention. From a policy perspective, strengthening structured emotional and social support systems is essential to restore social functioning, foster community connections, and promote long-term reintegration and well-being for trafficking survivors.

B: Offering Support For Social And Emotional Issues (Qualitative Data)

Table 11
Offering Support For Social And Emotional Issues

THEMES	Responses/Transcript
Faith-based approach	R1: "...even though I am Muslim, I did not felt any difference because they respected my religion and beliefs. I used to be shy, but now, because of the activities in the shelter, I can speak in front of many people..."
No assistance availed/participated in this area	R2: "...no activity attended..." R3: "...I was not referred to attend similar activities..." R4: "...and I am not aware of this activity." R5: "...no information about this activity..."

Interviews revealed limited access to emotional and spiritual support among victim-survivors: only one respondent participated in such activities, while four were unaware of available programs. This aligns with previous research highlighting the scarcity of trauma-focused care and reintegration services (Garcia, 2021). The findings underscore the need for policy-driven approaches that institutionalize psychosocial and emotional support within recovery programs. Applying frameworks such as the Theory of Change (2024) can guide program design to ensure survivors receive consistent, structured interventions that promote emotional and social balance. Strengthening these supports is crucial for facilitating successful, sustainable reintegration into their communities.

PART 3: Structural And Institutional Challenges Were Encountered In Implementing The Recovery And Reintegration Program

The following section will illustrate the responses of the identified respondents on the structural and institutional challenges encountered in implementing the recovery and reintegration program. For the quantitative data the respondents are the program implementors and frequency rank and percentage were employed, and for the qualitative data wherein vitim-survivors were interviewed and a thematic analysis was employed.

Quantitative Data
Table 12
Resources And Sustainability

Indicator	Frequency	Rank
Limited funding allocation for program implementation	21	1
Limited manpower/staffing issue	6	2
Failure to properly turn-over of documents/files from the previous worker	1	3
*Multiple Response		

Table 12 highlights structural and institutional challenges in implementing recovery and reintegration programs. Limited funding ranked as the most significant barrier (21 responses), followed by staffing shortages (6 responses) and incomplete document turnover (1 response). These findings reflect widespread acknowledgment of resource constraints among service providers. Previous studies underscore that funding gaps hinder the delivery and sustainability of essential services despite national, ASEAN, and international mandates for victim protection (Balkans, Surtees, & de Kerchove, 2014). Policy implications emphasize the need for adequate budget allocation and inter-agency collaboration to fulfill office mandates, ensure program continuity, and provide comprehensive support to trafficking victim-survivors.
Table 13

Program Process

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Services are only focused to TIP victims and could not extend to their families	2	9.52
Assistance can only be access once	1	4.76
No challenges encountered in this category	18	85.71
Total	21	100.00

Table 13 highlights structural and institutional challenges in the program process of recovery and reintegration initiatives. Three respondents reported difficulties: two (9.52%) could not assist family members of TIP victims due to program restrictions, and one (4.76%) noted that assistance is only accessible once. The remaining respondents (85.71%) did not report challenges, as their offices were able to provide support to families. Limitations in funding and program guidelines prevent offices from addressing family needs, despite preexisting socio-economic vulnerabilities being a major push factor for trafficking (Surtees et al., 2021). Policy revisions are recommended to expand program scope, enabling support for victim-survivors' families and mitigating re-trafficking risks.

Table 14
Recruiting Staff

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
No Trauma Informed Care Training	12	57.14
Untrained workers	6	28.57
No challenges encountered in this category	3	14.28
Total	21	100.00

Table 14 highlights structural and institutional challenges in implementing recovery and reintegration programs. Among 21 respondents, 18 reported difficulties recruiting staff, with 12 (57.14%) lacking trauma-informed care training and six (28.57%) being untrained. High staff turnover further disrupts continuity, affecting case management and risking re-traumatization, given victims' anger, fear, and shame (Lisborg & Plambech, 2009). Cultural and social challenges were minimal, with only one respondent reporting distrust in external actors due to confidentiality concerns. Language barriers affected four respondents, while 17 relied on multilingual staff. Policy implications emphasize trauma-informed training, multilingual capacity, and standardized protocols to ensure effective, sensitive, and safe reintegration services.

Table 15
Keeping the community motivated

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Target populations are unaware of the programs and services	4	19.04
Lack of support from leaders/management	1	4.76
No challenges encountered in this category	16	76.19
Total	21	100.00

Table 15 examines challenges in keeping the community motivated in supporting recovery and reintegration programs. Five respondents reported difficulties, primarily due to victim-survivors' lack of awareness of available services (four responses, 80%) and limited support from management (one response). The remaining 16 respondents noted effective initiatives and supportive leadership. Findings indicate that low awareness prevents survivors from accessing services, despite existing mandates and guidelines (Rafferty, 2021). Effective community outreach fosters informed, resilient communities, supports reintegration, and reduces re-trafficking risk (Gallagher, 2012). Policy implications emphasize sufficient funding, trauma-informed training for staff, nationwide program implementation, regular evaluation, and advocacy campaigns to raise public awareness and strengthen survivor support networks.

Qualitative Data

Table 16:
Structural And Institutional Challenges were Encountered In Implementing The Recovery and Reintegration Program

THEME	Responses/Transcript
Lack of awareness on support available for victim	R2: "...I thought there was no help for people like me." "...livelihood assistance wasn't available from the agency that helped us." R4: "...because I didn't know there was assistance available for me." "...I could no longer ask again for help there because of the 1 client: 1 service only policy."

Language barriers	R1: "... I struggled to communicate with them because I didn't know how to speak Tagalog, and my social workers at that time didn't speak Tausug either."
Unavailability of services	R3:"...livelihood assistance is not available at the office that rescued me." R5: "...because my work was illegal, they couldn't provide financial assistance but they referred me to an agency that could provide assistance..."

Despite government and NGO efforts, few assessments of reintegration programs address the financial vulnerabilities of trafficking survivors (Tsai, Seballos-Liena, & Datta, 2017). Structural and institutional challenges include lack of awareness, with victims unaware of available services (R2, R4), language barriers limiting understanding (R1), and unavailability of after-care assistance at initial contact agencies. These gaps prevent survivors from accessing financial and reintegration support. Policy implications emphasize the need for effective community outreach, public awareness campaigns, and administrative coordination to inform survivors of available services, promote access to assistance, and foster well-informed communities that support anti-trafficking initiatives and long-term reintegration.

PART 4: Mitigating strategies and mechanisms to address the above-mentioned

In this section, the mitigating strategies and mechanisms to address the identified challenges and difficulties are shown. For the quantitative data, service implementors were surveyed and for the qualitative data, victim-survivors were interviewed.

Quantitative Data
Table 17:
Resources and Sustainability

Indicator	Frequency	Rank
Having network of stakeholders in the campaign to access resources	21	1
Additional task/role for the existing (regular, contractual) workers	6	2
Interviewing the client again	1	3

*Multiple Response

Table 17 presents mitigating strategies addressing resource and sustainability challenges in recovery and reintegration programs. Among 28 responses, all 21 respondents highlighted leveraging stakeholder networks to access resources, ranking first. Adding additional tasks to existing staff received six responses (ranked second), while re-interviewing clients had one response (ranked third). Findings indicate that program limitations in funding, mandates, and staffing are mitigated through inter-agency collaboration, particularly within the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking and Sea-Based Anti-Trafficking networks (RA 9208, Section 26, Article VII). Referrals to partner agencies enable comprehensive support for victim-survivors, ensuring access to needed services despite institutional constraints and programmatic limitations.

Table 18:
Program process

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Referral to other agency to address the needs of their relatives	2	9.52
Crafting justification for service availment of the client who already availed service from the program	1	4.76
No mitigating strategies or mechanisms employed	18	85.71
Total	21	100.00

Table 18 highlights mitigating strategies addressing challenges in the program process. Of three respondents, two (9.53%) referred family members of victim-survivors to other agencies, while one (4.76%) crafted justifications for clients who had already accessed services. The remaining 18 respondents (85.71%) reported no difficulties due to existing program guidelines. Studies emphasize that effective service delivery requires case management, multidisciplinary approaches, and inter-agency collaboration (Muraya Fry, 2015), considering pre-existing vulnerabilities. In public administration, agencies must navigate funding, mandates, and policy limitations to ensure appropriate referrals, guaranteeing that victim-survivors and their families access comprehensive support and reintegration services.

Table 19:
Recruiting staff

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Working with retired practitioners, volunteers, and/or consultants with the required expertise	12	57.14
Networking with partners with the required staff	6	28.57
No mitigating strategies or mechanisms employed	3	14.28
Total	21	100.00

Table 19 presents mitigating strategies for staff recruitment challenges. Of 18 responses, 12 (57.14%) reported engaging retired practitioners, volunteers, or consultants with relevant expertise, while six (28.57%) relied on partner networks to access skilled staff. Three respondents (14.28%) did not employ strategies due to the availability of trained personnel. Utilizing experienced staff ensures a trauma-informed care approach, preventing re-traumatization among victims (Surtees, 2021). Given limited permanent personnel, these measures are commendable, addressing gaps in specialized support. Studies note that while the Philippine government recognizes trafficking, trauma-focused interventions remain limited (Garcia, 2021). Strategic staffing mitigates service delivery challenges and enhances survivor protection.

Table 20:
Cultural and social issues

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Safety of the client is the outmost priority and to provide his/her immediate needs	1	4.76
Ensure to establish rapport with the client and to build trust and confidence	1	4.76
Ensure that workers involve are only the key implementors	1	4.76
No mitigating strategies or mechanisms employed	18	85.71
Total	21	100.00

The above table 20 shows the mitigating strategies and mechanisms employed to address the difficulties mentioned in the Cultural and social issues. Overall, there were three (3) respondents and expressed their strategy and mechanisms employed. One (1) response, with a percentage of 4.76% each. It is evident that the above-mentioned are to ensure the quality of confidentiality, protection from perpetrators, and freedom from risk brought by external factors (Nas, 2015). For the remaining eighteen (18) or 85.71% program implementors, they did not expressed any mitigating strategies employed in this area because of the available measures in their office in ensuring safe environment.

Handling victim-survivors of human trafficking is crucial and requires various aspects to be considered, and most of these efforts are focused on the safety of the victim-survivors as a whole. These initiatives should be one of the priorities of leaders in a management.

Table 21:
Language

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Using "tagalog" as primary dialect	4	19.04
Resource mobilization of internal personnel to intervene	3	14.28
Availability of trained worker with sign language	3	14.28
No mitigating strategies or mechanisms employed	11	52.38
Total	21	100.00

Table 21 shows the mitigating strategies and mechanisms employed to address the difficulties mentioned in the Language; four, or 19.04% of the respondents used "Tagalog" as their primary dialect in communicating with the victim-survivors to fully understand and assess their circumstances. Next is the resource mobilization of internal personnel to intervene and the availability of trained workers with sign language with three (3) responses each, or 14.28%. For the eleven (11) or 52.38% remaining respondents, they shared that they are equipped with internal personnels that helps them in interpreting and understanding informations.

Most of the responses expressed that they are using "tagalog" to communicate with the victim-survivors effectively. Thus, it is imperative for successful recovery and reintegration services and for accurately assessing and understanding the expressed needs (Boothby, 2006; Kryger & Lindgren, 2011; Williamson, 2006).

Given its impact on diverse individuals, it's imperative for organizations to employ or equip multilingual staff to assess and communicate effectively

with the victim-survivors of human trafficking. Another good practice is the use of "Tagalog" as primary dialect in communicating with the service users. Another, with the active membership of the respondents on the anti-trafficking task force, it is also recommended to resource mobilize experts from other agency.

Table 22:
Keeping the community motivated

Indicator	Frequency	Percentage
Advocacy initiatives to schools and community level	4	19.04
Availability of information, education, campaign materials (electronical, posters, brochures, tri-media, AVP)	4	19.04
Availability of school-community group for anti-human trafficking	1	4.76
Ensure that supervisors are aware of the anti-TIP activities and of the office mandate according to the anti-trafficking law	1	4.76
No mitigating strategies or mechanisms employed	11	52.39
Total	21	100.00

Table 22 highlights mitigating strategies to maintain community motivation in anti-trafficking programs. Key strategies include school- and community-level advocacy, information and campaign materials, school-community groups, and supervisor awareness of anti-TIP mandates. Most respondents emphasized organizational support for program awareness initiatives. These efforts aim to raise public knowledge, target beneficiaries, and facilitate access to reintegration services for victims and families. While commendable, such measures provide only temporary relief. Policy recommendations include amending guidelines to ensure sufficient funding, include families in services, develop a harmonized "all-in-one" service system, strengthen staff training and language capacity, and expand timely advocacy initiatives.

Qualitative Data
Table 23:
Mitigating Strategies And Mechanisms To Address The Above-Mentioned

THEME	Responses/Transcript
Referral	R1: "...to address my needs to finish...I was referred to another agency..." R2: "...I was referred to another office to receive startup funds for my small store." R4: "...when my child got sick, I was sent to another government agency to address my needs."
Financial Assistance	R3: "...I was given financial assistance by another agency because my case was also referred to them." R5: "...they provided me with a referral letter, which I presented to that office to request financial assistance, even though the recruitment was illegal and I didn't have a work permit."

For research question 4, mitigating strategies focused on referrals and financial assistance. Respondents R1, R2, and R4 reported being referred to other agencies to access economic support unavailable at the initial service point, highlighting gaps in reintegration-phase assistance. Effective recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration require psychosocial care, education, and economic opportunities, achievable only through coordinated stakeholder efforts (Surtees et al., 2021). Despite resource and mandate limitations, service providers addressed victims' and families' financial needs by leveraging social welfare networks. From a policy perspective, administrators benefit from strong inter-agency networks and resource mobilization to ensure comprehensive, holistic reintegration and support for trafficking survivors.

5. DISCUSSIONS

This section provides an overview of the study conducted, the results drawn, suggestions for further development, and most importantly, the learnings and life implications from this research.

Interpretation
1. Human trafficking affects 27.6 million people worldwide, and the Philippines has experienced a steady rise in reported cases, highlighting the ongoing national and global challenge.
2. Programs focus on the recovery phase, ensuring a safe and stable environment for survivors, but insufficiently address long-term reintegration.
3. The lack of a livelihood-monitoring tool limits assessment of reintegration program effectiveness, and implementers lack resources to address this gap.
4. Programs inadequately address survivors' personal, societal, economic, emotional, and

spiritual needs, often requiring them to seek services through referrals to other agencies.

5. Survivors often lack awareness of available recovery and reintegration programs, highlighting the need for stronger advocacy and information dissemination.

6. Implementor Limitations: Funding constraints, restricted office mandates, and lack of training limit service providers' ability to deliver comprehensive support, particularly in psychosocial counseling and emotional balance.

7. Temporary Mitigation Strategies: Current strategies provide short-term relief but fail to address systemic issues, leaving survivors vulnerable to re-trafficking or continued distress.

Implications

1. Policy Development: Comprehensive policies addressing both immediate recovery and long-term reintegration are crucial. This includes amending laws to ensure sufficient funding, a harmonized inter-agency service system, and inclusion of family members in programs.

2. Creation of Monitoring Tools: Developing and implementing economic/livelihood-support monitoring tools is essential to track the effectiveness of assistance and make data-driven improvements.

3. Holistic Program Design: Recovery and reintegration programs must integrate personal, societal, economic, emotional, and spiritual dimensions to ensure a survivor-centered approach.

4. Training and Capacity Building: Service providers require extensive training in trauma-informed care to prevent retraumatization and enhance service delivery effectiveness.

5. Strengthened Advocacy: Localized information campaigns and advocacy initiatives are needed to raise public awareness and ensure survivors know about available resources.

6. Sustainability Focus: Temporary relief measures should be replaced or supplemented with sustainable strategies that address the root causes of trafficking and support survivors' long-term independence.

7. Inter-Agency Collaboration: Enhanced coordination among agencies, potentially through an "all-in-one service center," would streamline services and reduce duplication while maintaining compliance with data privacy laws.

8. Comprehensive Resource Allocation: Adequate budgeting and resource allocation must match the scope of services required to support victim-survivors and prevent program gaps.

9. Macro-Level Reforms: Addressing pre-existing vulnerabilities and societal conditions that contribute to trafficking requires macro-level interventions, including poverty alleviation, education, and community development.

Limitation

1. **Inadequate Focus on Long-Term Reintegration:** The study primarily identifies gaps in reintegration programs without exploring how these gaps can be systematically addressed or how best practices from other countries could be adapted.

2. **Limited Policy Recommendations**: Although the study emphasizes the need for comprehensive policies, it does not propose specific actionable steps or detailed strategies for improving recovery and reintegration programs.

3. **No Assessment of Preventive Measures:** The study fails to link recovery and reintegration efforts with preventive strategies to address the root causes of trafficking.

4. **Time Constraint:** The limited time available for conducting interviews during the holiday season poses a significant challenge. Many potential respondents may be occupied with personal commitments, travel plans, or holiday festivities, making it difficult to schedule effective interviews.

6. CONCLUSION

While agencies have made notable achievements in protecting trafficking survivors, service providers face challenges in supporting optimal social recovery and reintegration. Applying the Theory of Change helps organize actions, resources, and conditions to achieve desired outcomes, while programs must address survivors' specific needs to prevent re-trafficking and ensure services are anchored in their vulnerabilities and priorities (Maslow, 1943).

The researcher's purpose of the study is to assess the existing recovery and reintegration programs offered to the victim-survivors of human trafficking and to shed light on the benefits, challenges encountered, and mitigating strategies and mechanisms employed.

1. Most agencies provide recovery and reintegration assistance, but programs primarily focus on the recovery phase to ensure a stable and safe environment. This emphasis is reflected in survivor feedback, who reported feeling safe even after reintegration.

2. Findings reveal a gap between implementors and survivors in ensuring a fair standard of living, highlighting the need for a livelihood-support monitoring tool to enhance accountability, effectiveness, and communication. All respondents also emphasized the importance of psychosocial counseling to restore survivors' social functioning and overall well-being.

3. Service providers acknowledge limitations in supporting survivors' societal, personal, and economic development, though education and financial literacy activities help promote financial stability. Gaps remain in addressing psychological and social needs, with few

opportunities for emotional or spiritual support. The study highlights the need for livelihood-monitoring tools, trauma-informed staff training, adequate budgeting, nationwide program evaluation, and policies supporting survivors' holistic well-being. Strengthened advocacy and public awareness are also essential to ensure effective reintegration, prevent re-traumatization, and address underlying factors contributing to human trafficking vulnerability.

4. While current mitigating strategies are commendable, they offer only temporary relief. The study recommends revising policies to ensure adequate funding, include family members in services, and develop a harmonized "all-in-one" service system with trained personnel, streamlined interviews, and efficient service tracking. Strengthened, timely advocacy and educational materials are also essential to enhance program effectiveness and better support survivors' long-term reintegration.

This study guides social work administrators in developing policies to improve service delivery for human trafficking survivors. While recovery programs ensure safety and stability, few reintegration programs provide direct support, and many survivors are referred elsewhere. Service providers lack tools to assess livelihood assistance, and mental, physical, and holistic needs—personal, societal, economic, emotional, and spiritual—are often unmet. Addressing pre-existing vulnerabilities is essential, requiring administrators to prioritize comprehensive well-being, integrate trauma-informed care, and amend policies and laws to ensure survivors' successful reintegration into families and communities.

7. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, the researcher recommends the following in consideration of the above-mentioned results and conclusion:

1. The service provider should assess the client's needs holistically and not only on the expressed needs.
2. Organizations should consider activities to promote support in personal, societal, emotional, spiritual, and social balance to help the victim-survivors in their social recovery and reintegration and create support groups.

3. Organizations, both government and non-government, should ensure that front liners are trained in trauma-informed care.
4. Creating an "all-in-one center" or a harmonized referral system that considers the data privacy law for easy referral flow, omitting repetitive steps such as interviewing, confidentiality, and monitoring purposes on the availed services from other anti-trafficking agencies to avoid duplicated services. With this, resources will be utilized for other victim-survivors of human trafficking.
5. Develop a monitoring tool to oversee the livelihood assistance provided and evaluate its impact on the beneficiaries' lives and its sustainability.
6. Consider amending the existing policy of the programs and adding direct family members to receive other assistance.
7. Another, with the active membership of the respondents on the anti-trafficking task force, it is also recommended to resource mobilize experts (language and trained personnels) from other agency.
8. Service providers should conduct advocacy initiatives and produce localized information education campaign materials for information understanding and dissemination especially on the existing recovery and reintegration programs.
9. For the financial institution, it is recommended to aid programs and services for the reintegration assistance to include economic aspect of the victim-survivors of human trafficking and to build a new residential care facility or temporary shelter for victims of human trafficking specifically for male LGBTQI+ who are also victim-survivors.
10. For the future researcher, conducting further in-depth studies on the effect of minimal number of agencies providing reintegration assistance to address their needs in a long-term perspective.

For the readers, in order to properly address this issue, one must have a thorough understanding of its complexity. We should support anti-trafficking initiatives, spread the anti-trafficking campaign, and be part of the support groups in the community to promote emotional, spiritual, and social balance to victim-survivors.

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