Community-Based Reintegration among Male Prisoners in Malaysia: A Qualitative Study of Support, Challenges & Readiness for Life after Prison

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Community-based reintegration is an important component of the transition from imprisonment to life in society, yet preparation for reintegration begins before release. This study explores the experiences of male prisoners in Malaysia concerning rehabilitation, support, anticipated challenges and readiness for life after prison. A qualitative research design was employed using semi-structured interviews with 30 adult male prisoners from Sungai Udang Prison, Melaka, and Kluang Prison, Johor. Data was analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to examine participants' lived experiences and the meanings they attributed to rehabilitation and future reintegration. Two interconnected

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dimensions emerged. The first was effective rehabilitation during imprisonment, comprising psychological and emotional rehabilitation, skills and employment training, education, and social support and counselling. Participants described these experiences as contributing to self-awareness, emotional regulation, confidence, discipline and future orientation. The second dimension concerned reintegration and positive self-transformation, reflected in aspirations to return to society, family support, changes in attitudes and behaviour, and appreciation of a second chance. Participants also anticipated challenges related to employment, stigma, social acceptance and rebuilding relationships. Overall, the findings suggest that readiness for community reintegration is a developmental and relational process that begins during imprisonment. Rehabilitation may provide important foundations for future community participation, but individual change needs to be supported by family relationships, employment opportunities and a supportive social environment. Because participants were still incarcerated, the findings represent perceived preparation and readiness rather than demonstrated post-release outcomes.

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