

Restoring Self-Image in the Light of Imago Dei for Addictive Substance Abusers in the Contemporary Era

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ABSTRACT

Substance addiction in the contemporary era does not merely create a physical health crisis, but also severely damages the self-image and spiritual identity of the addicted individuals. Social stigma, deep-rooted guilt, and disconnection from God and community further worsen their psychosocial and spiritual condition. However, medical and psychological approaches that have so far dominated treatment often fail to address the core of the spiritual identity crisis. There is a clear research gap in theological studies that specifically examine self-image recovery through reflection on the Imago Dei within the context of addiction. From a theological perspective, restoring self-image is not merely a psychological reconstruction, but also a rediscovery of human identity grounded in the Imago Dei. This article explores how theological reflection on the Imago Dei offers a transformative approach in restoring the self-image of substance abusers. This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive design to gain an in-depth understanding of addiction cases and treatment. Data collection involved non-numerical sources using triangulation methods through pastoral interviews, counseling observations, and spiritual reflection analyses. The findings show that deep reflection on the Imago Dei fosters holistic transformation spiritually, psychologically, and socially which significantly contributes to a sustainable recovery process.

Keywords: *Self-Image, Imago Dei, Substance Abusers, Pastoral Recovery, Pastoral Theology*



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Article History

Submitted:	Revised:	Published:
9 March 2025	22 July 2025	8 September 2025

INTRODUCTION

The abuse of addictive substances in the contemporary era has evolved into a complex multidimensional problem, encompassing physical damage, psychological disorders, the collapse of spiritual awareness, and a disorientation of life's meaning, which ultimately erodes human dignity as God's creation. The World Drug Report 2023 released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) recorded that more than 296 million people worldwide used drugs in 2021, reflecting an increase of 23% over the past decade. Meanwhile, data from Indonesia's National Narcotics Board (BNN) in 2023 indicated that the prevalence of drug abuse in Indonesia has reached 1.95%, equivalent to approximately 3.6 million individuals, with a significant upward trend among adolescents and those in productive age groups. This phenomenon indicates that the abuse of addictive substances is not merely a medical or criminal issue but rather a reflection of a profound spiritual crisis that obscures human awareness of identity, life's purpose, and the transcendental relationship that ought to sustain existence (Adly et al., 2024).

The digital culture, saturated with hedonism, the normalization of addictive behaviors through popular media, and the increasing fragility of family resilience and faith communities, has accelerated the pace of addictive substance abuse, rendering individuals of all ages both young and adult more vulnerable to such destructive behaviors (Lailia Maghfiroh et al., 2023). The abuse of addictive substances not only damages the body physically but also drives individuals into social alienation, the breakdown of healthy relationships, and the loss of meaningful life purpose. Within such conditions of estrangement, individuals often become trapped in social stigma, deep shame, and the burden of guilt, which hinder the process of recovery (Surnata et al., 2022). A similar study was conducted by (Kumalasari et al., 2023), entitled "Factors of Narcotics and Addictive Substance Abuse among Adolescents at the Parmadi Putra 'Insyaf' Rehabilitation Center, North Sumatra 2023," whose findings reveal that the underlying causes of such abuse are highly concerning.

At this point, the theological foundation of *Imago Dei* (the image of God) holds fundamental relevance in the process of pastoral recovery. *Imago Dei* affirms that humanity, even when fallen into sin and dependency, still bears the trace of God's glory that is never entirely extinguished (Genesis 1:26–27). Psalm 8:5 emphasizes that human beings are crowned with glory and honor, signifying that human dignity is not completely erased by moral failure or the destruction of life resulting from addictive substance abuse.

Although a number of studies have discussed the concept of *Imago Dei* both dogmatically and in relation to human dignity (Sipahutar et al., 2024), very little research has specifically linked *Imago Dei* with the pastoral recovery process of substance abusers. Research such as that conducted (Laurina, 2024) places greater emphasis on the aspect of moral theology rather than the reconstruction of existential identity within the framework of relationship with God. In addition, several pastoral writings still tend to be normative and have not yet explored, in a reflective and practical manner, the meaning of *Imago Dei* in the process of spiritual recovery. This gap indicates that theological exploration of the role of *Imago Dei* as a foundation for restoring self-image pastorally remains open for further development.

In the context of pastoral counseling, spiritual recovery rooted in the Imago Dei does not merely offer behavioral therapy or psychological support but rather seeks existential reconciliation between human beings and God, others, and themselves, as affirmed in Romans 8:29 regarding humanity's calling to be restored according to the image of Christ (Pratama, 2020). Thus, recovery is not only a matter of moral healing but also a renewal of identity grounded in the grace of creation and redemption.

A pastoral counseling approach based on the Imago Dei encompasses the dimension of proclaiming the Gospel that brings forth hope while also opening the way for genuine life transformation. In this approach, spiritual recovery is not merely an additional activity but rather the very core of the healing process, which integrates medical, psychological, social, and theological dimensions into a holistic unity (Santoso, 2023). Therefore, this approach does not solely focus on freedom from physical dependence but emphasizes the restoration of spiritual identity as God's image loved, accepted, and called into a restorative fellowship of love.

Several recent studies indicate that counseling approaches integrating aspects of modern psychology with the strengthening of spirituality can significantly accelerate the process of addiction recovery. Research by (Iqbal Chailani et al., 2024) affirms that counseling based on motivation theory and centered on the individual is effective in promoting sustainable behavioral change. Meanwhile, the study of (Lailia Maghfiroh et al., 2023) shows that counseling which emphasizes strengthening the relationship with God, the acceptance of forgiveness, and the support of a faith community has been proven to enhance individuals' spiritual resilience in facing addiction. Recent research highlights the urgency of counseling approaches that focus on the meaning of life in the addiction recovery process. This approach does not merely aim to reduce dependency but also to rebuild individuals' psychosocial aspects and strengthen resilience against relapse. A study by (Balannabi, 2024) revealed that rehabilitation counseling plays a crucial role in supporting individuals to live more meaningful lives, improve social relationships, and develop effective coping skills to prevent the risk of returning to addictive behaviors.

This approach places transcendental spirituality as a fundamental element in building psychological resilience and ensuring a sustainable recovery process. Through a re-interpretation of life experiences, individuals undergoing rehabilitation are not only freed from addiction but also experience a deeper existential transformation. In this context, the spiritual dimension does not merely function as a supporting factor but serves as the primary force in shaping a new identity that is more resilient and balanced. Therefore, meaning-centered interventions can serve as the foundation for a holistic and sustainable rehabilitation strategy, helping individuals discover a more meaningful purpose in life after addiction.

Furthermore, the study of (Suryani et al., 2023) highlights that individuals who are actively involved in spiritual communities and consistently engage in spiritual practices tend to have stronger resilience against the pressures of addiction and the temptation of relapse. In a theological context, this aligns with the church's calling to embody love and restoration that originates from God's grace, as affirmed in Luke 19:10 that the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost. A pastoral approach based on the Imago Dei serves as an extension of Christ's

love, which not only restores behavior but also reconstructs individuals' spiritual awareness of their origin as God's precious creation (Lailia Maghfiroh et al., 2023).

Previous research demonstrates strong relevance to this study, although each highlights the issue of addictive substance abuse from different perspectives. The study conducted by (Simanjuntak et al., 2021) on "*Efektifitas Strategi Pelayanan Pastoral Konseling Kepada Pasien Panti Rehabilitasi Narkoba*" emphasized five essential steps in the recovery process, namely understanding the counselee, offering help with love, strengthening the role of the father, and reviving prayer within the family. It was stated that these five aspects have a positive impact on the process of change, although the final outcome (healing) shows variation. Pastoral accompaniment and the attention of family or parents were acknowledged to significantly contribute to strengthening the healing process. This is closely related to spirituality and the pattern of Christian pastoral counseling services applied. (Suharniyati et al., 2022) about *Proses Pemulihan Korban Penyalahgunaan NAPZA di Balai Rehabilitasi Sosial Korban Penyalahgunaan Napza (BRSKPN) "Insyaf" Medan, Sumatera Utara*, emphasized the crucial role of the institution in empowering victims of narcotics abuse through a series of structured programs. These programs have proven effective in promoting independence as well as developing clients' talents and interests. The skills training provided to clients is expected to prepare them to become self-reliant and capable of competing in society after the rehabilitation period. Furthermore, (Arkan, 2024), in his article entitled *The Importance of Awareness of the Dangers of Drugs for the Young Generation in Lhokseumawe City*, highlights the dangers of narcotics, psychotropic substances, and other addictive drugs as a serious threat to the survival of Indonesia's young generation. Addictive substance abuse is considered capable of causing physical, psychological, and social damage, both to individuals and to the wider community. His findings emphasize that individual and environmental factors play a significant role in increasing the risk of involvement in drug abuse. Therefore, synergy between families, communities, and the government is required through comprehensive education, strict supervision, and consistent law enforcement in order to protect the young generation from the dangers of narcotics. Meanwhile, the study conducted by (Winarti et al., 2024) on "*Peran Moderasi Beragama Dalam Pencegahan Penyalahgunaan NAPZA di Kalangan Remaja di SMA Negeri 1 Talawi*" makes a significant contribution by expanding the perspective of prevention based on religious values. The research emphasizes that the application of religious moderation principles serves as an effective strategy in educating students about the dangers of drugs and motivating them to avoid destructive behaviors. The role of religious leaders as agents of social change also contributes to facilitating the integration of balanced and inclusive religious values into everyday life. Thus, religious moderation is regarded as a relevant preventive approach that needs to be integrated into drug prevention programs across various levels of society.

Several recent studies indicate that counseling approaches integrating modern psychology with the strengthening of spirituality can significantly accelerate the addiction recovery process. Research by (Ramdi et al., 2024) affirms that counseling based on motivation theory, centered on the individual and combined with spiritual approaches, is effective in fostering sustainable behavioral change. However, this approach remains general and has not explicitly addressed deeper theological dimensions, particularly concerning human identity as

Imago Dei. In Christian theology, Imago Dei serves as the fundamental basis of human dignity and identity as the image of God. A number of theological studies have explored this concept, such as the work of (Sumual et al., 2021) which examined the meaning of the word “*shapak*” in Genesis 9:6 as an affirmation of the divine value of humanity, as well as the study by (Sualang, 2021) regarding God’s act in the creation of woman in Genesis 2:18–22. However, both studies remain focused on textual analysis and have not connected the concept to addiction recovery or direct pastoral applications.

Thus, there is a clear research gap, namely the absence of a pastoral recovery approach that places theological reflection on the Imago Dei as the main foundation for restoring self-image in substance abusers. Most existing studies remain fragmented between medical, psychological, and spiritual perspectives, without achieving a holistic integration rooted in the theology of creation. The core of this research is that theological reflection on the Imago Dei can serve as a transformative foundation in the process of restoring the self-image of substance abusers holistically spiritually, psychologically, and socially an area that has not been widely explored in contemporary pastoral theology studies.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method is a systematic way of obtaining data or information for specific purposes based on scientific principles, namely rational, empirical, and systematic (Sugiyono, 2016). This study employs a qualitative approach with a reflective phenomenological design. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore in depth the spiritual and psychosocial experiences of substance abusers in the process of restoring self-image through theological reflection on the Imago Dei. Reflective phenomenology emphasizes understanding the meaning of individuals’ subjective experiences, particularly how they interpret identity, self-worth, and their relationship with God after undergoing spiritual rehabilitation. Data collection techniques include literature study, semi-structured pastoral interviews, and participatory observation in spiritual counseling sessions (Jaffray, 2016; Moleong, 2019). Additional data were obtained from written faith reflections by individuals undergoing spiritually based rehabilitation. These sources were gathered through triangulation to enhance interpretive and theological validity. Data analysis was conducted thematically and reflectively, focusing on the spiritual and theological meanings emerging from the subjects’ narratives. The researcher employed the conceptual framework of Imago Dei and transformative pastoral theology as the primary analytical lens, supported by academic literature relevant to the study (Bungin, 2023; Zaluchu, 2021). The selection of sources was based on their relevance to the research theme and problem, with the aim of systematically and accurately describing the data, focusing on the exploration of theological and pastoral concepts, and providing a critical analysis of their implications for holistic addiction recovery. The literature served not only as theoretical references but also as a means of identifying issues and developing a multidimensional approach that integrates theological understanding, personal experience, and pastoral practice in self-image restoration (Bungin, 2023; Hamzah, 2020). Structured interviews were conducted to obtain data on substance abuse, its causal factors, as

well as the prevention and recovery efforts undertaken, both individually and within the context of ministry communities.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Self-Image of Addictive Substance Abusers in the Contemporary Era

Addictive substance abuse is often linked to a negative self-concept, which significantly influences an individual's attitude toward drug use. Research by (Awwalya et al., 2024) revealed a linear relationship between self-concept and adolescents' attitudes toward drug abuse, with a correlation value of 0.744. This indicates that adolescents with a negative self-concept tend to be more permissive toward drug use.

In addition, low self-esteem plays a crucial role in increasing social anxiety among drug users during rehabilitation. A study by (Aldiyus et al., 2021) found a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and social anxiety in drug users, with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.482$ and a significance level of $p = 0.007$. These findings highlight the importance of interventions aimed at strengthening self-esteem and fostering a positive self-concept to support recovery and social reintegration in the contemporary era.

Research further indicates that addictive substance abusers in the modern context generally suffer from severe distortions of self-image, shaped by multiple factors such as past traumatic experiences, failed interpersonal relationships, social stigma, and cultural pressures rooted in hedonism that prioritize instant gratification while neglecting spirituality and human dignity. Prolonged social stigma, exclusion from family and community, and persistent feelings of failure in managing life further intensify the self-image crisis experienced by substance abusers (Baxter, 2022). Beyond its physical consequences, substance abuse also inflicts deep psychological wounds that cripple confidence and self-worth.

In the context of the digital era, social media plays a significant role in shaping illusory standards of the "ideal self," thereby worsening negative self-perceptions among addictive substance abusers. This finding aligns with self-concept theory, which asserts that self-image is shaped by an individual's interaction with their social environment (Rosenberg, 2017). The instant, glamorous, and perfectionistic lifestyle standards constructed by social media further deepen the psychological wounds they experience. A study by (Armstrong et al., 2023) revealed that individuals with a history of substance abuse are more vulnerable to self-stigma, namely the tendency to internalize society's negative views, which ultimately reinforces negative self-perceptions while diminishing self-worth and self-efficacy.

From a Christian theological perspective, this distortion of self-image stands in direct contradiction to the concept of *Imago Dei*, which affirms that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27). *Imago Dei* implies that humanity possesses intrinsic worth, inherent dignity, and the potential to reflect the character of God. The inability to recognize this identity leads substance abusers to lose spiritual and existential orientation, trapping them in a destructive spiral that erases awareness of their value before God. In this perspective, the crisis of self-image is rooted in humanity's estrangement from the

consciousness of Imago Dei. (Grenz, 2010) emphasizes that the creation of humanity in God's image affirms divine honor as a reflection of God's love, truth, and holiness. When awareness of this status fades, individuals become vulnerable to identity distortion that may manifest in destructive behaviors, including substance abuse.

The Process of Self-Image Restoration in the Light of the Imago Dei

The process of self-image restoration in the context of pastoral care for substance abusers must be grounded in a solid theological foundation. One of the primary biblical bases is the concept of Imago Dei, which affirms that human beings were created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27). This statement not only reveals the fundamental identity of humanity but also affirms the inherent value and dignity bestowed since creation. Thus, in the context of restoration, a person is not merely regarded as an individual who is “morally broken,” but as someone being restored to the divine image that was once marred by sin. This forms the basis of the argument that genuine restoration must lead to the reconstruction of spiritual identity, rather than merely external behavioral change.

The emphasis on Imago Dei in Genesis is supported by various academic studies. For instance, (Sumual et al., 2021) examined the meaning of the Hebrew word שָׁפַק *shapak* in Genesis 9:6, which refers to the prohibition against killing a human being. They explain that this prohibition does not merely pertain to legal aspects, but more profoundly concerns the divine value that remains inherent in humanity as the image of God, even after the fall into sin. This implies that sin does not erase the divine value of human beings, and herein lies the foundation that spiritual restoration remains possible for everyone.

Furthermore, (Sualang, 2021) provides an expositional discussion on God's act of creating woman according to Genesis 2:18–22. The study highlights that the act of creation was carried out with relational awareness and active love, reflecting that both man and woman were created not only with inherent value but also to live in meaningful relationships with God and with others. This offers a theological foundation that the restoration of self-image also entails the restoration of broken relationships caused by addiction: relationships with oneself, with others, and with God.

Both studies affirm that the Imago Dei in the Book of Genesis is neither abstract nor metaphorical, but concrete and functional. Thus, the restoration of self-image through a theological approach not only touches the spiritual dimension but also reaffirms one's divine identity as a person worthy of life, redemption, and holistic restoration. For this reason, the author positions the Imago Dei as the central framework in a faith-based approach to recovery, emphasizing that rediscovering one's true identity before God is the gateway to genuine healing.

Findings from in-depth interviews and observations of substance abusers undergoing spiritual rehabilitation reveal that the restoration of self-image through the understanding of Imago Dei plays a significant role in reshaping a healthy and dignified identity. Pastoral care grounded in theological reflection helps individuals realize that their self-worth is not determined by achievements, social status, or external acceptance, but by their very existence as bearers of God's image.

Field data further indicate that this approach has a profound impact on reconstructing self-image, not only through psychotherapeutic means but also by emphasizing the spiritual and theological dimensions. This aligns with the study of (Louw, 2021), which stresses that pastoral healing for substance abusers requires an integrative approach that holistically connects body, soul, and spirit.

This recovery process consists of several stages:

1. Self-acceptance in the light of grace. Substance abusers are guided to understand that God's love is unconditional, transcending past sins and failures. The theology of reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5:17 affirms that in Christ, human beings are restored as new creations. A grace-based spirituality approach is effective in awakening hope and motivating the process of recovery.
2. Theological reflection on the Imago Dei. In pastoral counseling sessions, individuals are invited to contemplate their status as Imago Dei, namely God's creation who is precious and called to reflect His goodness (Psalm 139:13–16). The concept of Imago Dei not only affirms human dignity as the image of God but also defines life's purpose in reflecting divine love and goodness. Substance abusers are directed to understand that self-worth is not determined by the world's judgment but by the divine reality that affirms their existence as a reflection of the Creator.
3. Reconstruction of self-identity. The understanding that self-worth is rooted in the truth that humans are created in the image of God encourages a transformation of perspective. This awareness strengthens spiritual resilience and awakens new hope. A healthy identity is grounded in a vertical relationship with God. According to (Scazzero, 2017), a mature spiritual identity enables individuals to accept themselves realistically, love with God's love, and live out their calling as His image-bearers. Theology-based identity counseling is effective in reducing self-stigma while enhancing spiritual resilience among rehabilitation clients.
4. Internalization of practical spirituality. Substance abusers are guided to develop a healthy spirituality through prayer, Bible reading, faith reflection, and involvement in a supportive church community. These practices reinforce a self-image rooted in the awareness of being Imago Dei while deepening the experience of faith. Participation in communal worship and social ministry creates a recovery environment shaped by love and acceptance.

Challenges of Self-Image Restoration in the Contemporary Era

Although recovery through reflection on the Imago Dei has shown positive outcomes, several challenges continue to emerge. The contemporary era, characterized by an instant culture, materialistic lifestyles, and the glorification of momentary pleasures, often becomes an obstacle to deeper reflection on spirituality and theological identity. While reflection on the Imago Dei has proven effective in accelerating recovery, the challenges posed by modern dynamics cannot be overlooked. A study conducted (Kim et al., 2023) reveals that rampant consumerism and individualism have fostered an instant mentality, in which the meaning of

recovery is reduced merely to liberation from dependence, without addressing the deeper aspect of spiritual transformation.

The phenomenon of instant culture developing within modern society not only hinders deep theological reflection but also gives rise to a pattern of instant religiosity, in which spiritual recovery is perceived as sufficient merely through short prayers without the accompaniment of continuous character formation. According to (Iskandar, 2022), this tendency creates an illusion of spiritual recovery that is shallow and fragile, making individuals struggling in the recovery process more vulnerable to relapse. Furthermore, within the ecclesial context in Indonesia, the stigma toward substance abusers remains highly prevalent, particularly in communities that uphold perfectionist morality. Research conducted by (Tambunan, 2020) found that such stigma often leads individuals battling dependency to withdraw from faith communities. The church, perhaps unintentionally, can become an agent of spiritual stigmatization that further widens the gap of spiritual alienation experienced by substance abusers, so that instead of supporting recovery, the ecclesial environment may in fact exacerbate the spiritual isolation they feel.

On the other hand, the challenges in recovery are becoming increasingly complex due to the limited competence of pastoral counselors in understanding the psychology of addiction. (Purwanto et al., 2023) show that many pastoral counselors in Indonesia still place greater emphasis on spiritual approaches without integrating a comprehensive psychological understanding, thus reducing the effectiveness of counseling. Pastoral counseling that truly supports the recovery of substance abusers should be able to integrate theological insights on restoration with scientific understanding of addiction psychology, so that the applied approach is not merely normative but also transformative.

In addition, the strong social stigma attached to substance abusers creates psychological pressure that further slows down the recovery process. Support from family and faith communities becomes a key factor to ensure that reflection on the Imago Dei does not remain only as theological discourse but is truly experienced as a reality of faith. However, the reality shows that many church communities are still unable to develop an inclusive pastoral approach, resulting in slow social reintegration for former substance abusers (Corrigan, 2022). More inclusive ecclesial education rooted in grace-based acceptance becomes a crucial element in strengthening theological reflection on the Imago Dei and ensuring that spiritual recovery is not merely a concept but is truly embodied in the lived experience of the congregation.

The Contribution of Imago Dei Reflection to Holistic Transformation

Reflection on the essence of human beings as creatures of inherent worth significantly contributes to comprehensive change in various aspects of life. A deep understanding of life's value and purpose can help individuals build self-confidence, overcome feelings of worthlessness, and discover meaning in every life experience. This statement is reinforced by the explanation that: "In the Christian spiritual tradition, the Jesus Prayer is practiced as a form of contemplation that invites individuals into inner silence, namely a state of serenity of the soul free from external and internal noise. This silence is regarded as a sacred space that enables the establishment of a profound relationship with God, when all attention is directed solely to

Him” (Sapatandekan et al., 2025). When individuals realize that their worth does not depend on achievements or external judgments but rather on the essence of their being, a transformation occurs in the way they think and act. This awareness also helps in developing emotional resilience, reducing feelings of alienation, and strengthening motivation to live life with greater optimism and meaning.

The transformation that takes place through this reflection encompasses various aspects, including mindset, behavior, and relationships with the surrounding environment. Awareness of true self-worth encourages individuals to behave more positively, build healthier relationships with others, and develop a greater sense of social responsibility. In addition, this understanding also plays a role in shaping a more inclusive and supportive community, where every individual is valued and given space to grow. Thus, reflection on self-worth not only impacts personal change but also brings a positive influence within the wider social environment.

The analysis shows that reflection on the Imago Dei not only affects the reconstruction of self-image but also enriches the dimensions of spirituality, morality, and social relationships of substance abusers. The awareness that humans are Imago Dei gives rise to a renewed commitment to live a meaningful, responsible life and to respect the sacred value of life. Reflection on the Imago Dei, when deeply internalized, brings forth holistic transformation that includes:

1. Acceptance in grace. A grace-based counseling approach is effectively applied in the pastoral context in Indonesia. This is because many substance abusers come from families with a history of violence, making the concept of unconditional love a liberating experience. Grace not only heals inner wounds but also reintroduces the meaning of self as God’s creation, precious in His sight.
2. Theological reflection on the Imago Dei. Recovery based on the Imago Dei in Indonesia needs to take into account the local cultural context, where self-concept is often closely tied to the notion of family honor. In theological reflection, emphasizing that each individual is created in the image of God can help release the burden of social and familial stigma that has long been attached. The Imago Dei becomes a transformative theological narrative because it affirms that one’s divine dignity is not determined by social status or past moral failures.
3. Reconstruction of spiritual identity. The formation of spiritual identity in the pastoral counseling process is not sufficient to be merely cognitive or informative, but must involve a profound faith experience through rites of recovery and the renewal of faith commitment. Spiritual identity as the Imago Dei is effectively restored through liturgical processes that include confession of sin, acceptance of grace, and reconnection with the community of the body of Christ.

Pastoral Implications for the Church and Christian Rehabilitation Institutions

The pastoral implications for the church and Christian rehabilitation institutions require a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, emotional, and social restoration for individuals

experiencing brokenness. The church has a role as a recovery community that provides pastoral support, spiritual nurturing, and accompaniment rooted in love and unconditional acceptance, where teaching that affirms identity in Christ, pastoral guidance grounded in grace, and involvement in a supportive community become essential elements in the recovery process of individuals. Christian rehabilitation institutions need to develop programs that not only focus on physical and psychological recovery but also emphasize the spiritual dimension as the core of transformation, since a theology of reconciliation and recovery-oriented spirituality enables individuals to overcome self-stigma, rebuild self-worth, and rediscover the meaning of life within their divine calling. In pastoral ministry, the role of the counselor is not to create dependency but to cultivate the individual's capacity to manage life struggles independently, and through encouragement to grow in prayer, personal reflection, and inner strength, each person is accompanied to face daily challenges with steadfast faith and trust in God's providence (Kowal, 2016). Therefore, the synergy between the church and Christian rehabilitation institutions is crucial in creating a recovery ecosystem founded on faith, hope, and love.

Imago Dei Based Recovery in Indonesia requires a contextual, integrative, and holistic approach. (Putri Yulia Citra Br. Berutu, Friska Deniwaty Pasaribu, Desy Mariana Siringoringo, Fritcen Vanny M Pardede, Elfrida Tampubolon, Ferdinan Majefat, 2024) emphasizes that the restoration of self-image among substance abusers cannot merely stop at medical rehabilitation or psychological counseling. Spiritual recovery that touches upon a deep awareness of divine dignity as the image of God is required. Based on the findings obtained, several practical implications need to be considered:

1. Integration of Imago Dei reflection in rehabilitation programs. Recovery programs should systematically integrate theological reflection on Imago Dei so that individuals may gain a deeper understanding of their identity and dignity.
2. Pastoral theological education sensitive to addiction issues. Future church leaders and Christian counselors need to be equipped with theological competence as well as relevant pastoral skills in order to minister effectively to substance abusers.
3. Development of inclusive church communities. The church needs to cultivate patterns of warm and supportive acceptance toward former substance abusers so that the faith community may function as a recovery space grounded in grace and the embodiment of Imago Dei.
4. Family empowerment. Families, as the closest circle, must be involved in the recovery process through family theology education, psychospiritual accompaniment, and the strengthening of loving communication.

Therefore, several practical steps that can be implemented include: regularly organizing spiritual recovery groups in the church, for example through weekly support groups based on prayer and reflection on identity in Christ. Christian rehabilitation centers can provide daily personal reflection modules on the Imago Dei, prepared by a team of counselors and theologians, to be used in counseling sessions or personal devotions. Local churches can train ministry teams to form communities of embracing love that specifically welcome, visit, and

pray personally for former substance abusers. In addition, pastoral counseling training based on real case studies needs to be held for church leaders, in collaboration with seminaries and rehabilitation institutions. Through these simple steps, recovery ministry does not merely rely on structural approaches, but is truly present in a relational, practical way that touches the existential needs of wounded individuals.

CONCLUSION

The restoration of self-image in the light of the Imago Dei for substance abusers in the contemporary era is a pastoral approach that not only touches on the psychological dimension but more profoundly addresses the spiritual and existential recovery of the individual. Based on theological studies and reflections on recovery experiences, it is found that the awareness of being the Imago Dei provides a foundation for a new identity that is dignified, relational, and resilient. This responds to the fundamental issues in addiction recovery, which often stem from an identity crisis, alienation from God, and the loss of life's meaning.

This approach is relevant to the aim of the research, namely to explore how theological reflection on the Imago Dei can contribute to the holistic recovery of self-image. In this context, spiritually based rehabilitation not only frees individuals from substance dependence but also restores divine dignity, reshapes relationships with God and others, and helps individuals rediscover the meaning and purpose of their lives. Thus, reflection on the Imago Dei can serve as a transformative theological model in the development of pastoral ministry and Christian rehabilitation methods that are contextual and impactful.

As a continuation of the findings and reflections in this study, it is recommended that future research further examine the implementation of the doctrine of the Imago Dei in the context of community-based pastoral counseling, particularly in Christian rehabilitation centers. In addition, the development of deeper exegetical studies of key texts in Genesis, such as Genesis 1:26–28 and 9:6, can be carried out to enrich theological understanding of human dignity after the fall. Further research may also take into account interdisciplinary aspects between theology, psychology, and sociology in developing recovery models that are contextual and relevant to the needs of substance abusers in Indonesia.

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