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Research Article

Dimensions of Surrender Beliefs Among NPA Rebel Returnees: An Exploratory Sequential Design

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the dimensions of surrender beliefs among New People's Army (NPA) rebel returnees in Region XI, Philippines. Employing an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design, qualitative data from in-depth interviews with five rebel returnees guided the development of a survey instrument. The quantitative phase involved randomly selecting 300 respondents and analyzing them through exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS software were the analytical tools that facilitated the identification and validation of latent constructs, assessed model fit indices, and confirmed the factorial structure of surrender beliefs. Results initially identified six key dimensions of surrender beliefs: personal, social, economic, environmental, political, and law enforcement factors. Social, economic, and ecological factors emerged as the final constructs of surrender beliefs using the CFA and SEM. Findings contribute to formulating more effective reintegration strategies, addressing gaps in literature and policy, and aligning with peacebuilding initiatives under the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP).

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INTRODUCTION

The persistence of insurgency in the Philippines highlights significant challenges in addressing the beliefs and decisions of rebels to surrender to the government. Despite ongoing reintegration initiatives, numerous rebel groups, including the New People's Army (NPA), continue to operate in various regions across the country, undermining efforts toward national peace and stability (Eisuek, 2020). Key concerns include the insufficiency of existing reintegration programs in comprehensively addressing the psychological, social, and economic factors that influence surrender beliefs (Lupao & Cawi, 2019).

Surrender is a critical decision influenced by various human motivations, including fear, honor, and personal interests, which collectively shape the dynamics of conflict resolution (Macdonald & Kerali, 2020). However, fear of retaliation, perceived gaps in the legal protections offered by the state, and challenges in post-surrender reintegration deter many rebels from laying down their arms (Edrolin, 2021). These factors emphasize the necessity for a deeper understanding of the dimensions of surrender beliefs, which encompass the psychological, social, and structural drivers of decision-making among rebel returnees. This study addresses the urgent need to explore these dimensions, offering insights that can inform the development of evidence-based reintegration strategies to support sustainable peace efforts in the Philippines.

Consequently, the insurgency in the Philippines has persisted for over fifty years, rendering it among the most protracted

armed struggles in contemporary history. With armed units deployed across the archipelago from Luzon and Mindanao to Palawan and Samar, the revolution evolved into a widespread mass movement. Above-ground political organizations worked in tandem with an underground guerrilla force to sustain a protracted resistance against the Philippine government. Both the NPA and the CPP's political arm, the National Democratic Front (NDF), continue to be active despite the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) greatest efforts to subjugate them and the government's 40 rounds of peace negotiations (Eisuek, 2020).

In response to the insurgency, President Duterte issued Administrative Order No. 10 in 2018, which formally instituted the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP). This initiative was designed to support former members of the New People's Army (NPA) and Militia ng Bayan (MB) who chose to return to the fold of the law. The current administration has since strengthened and continued the program to encourage more members of the CPP-NPA to lay down their arms and reintegrate into society. According to Lupao and Cawi (2019), E-CLIP is a program for reintegration. However, the program is not enough to persuade rebels to surrender.

NPA rebel returnees hold diverse beliefs that shape their decision to surrender and reintegrate into society. These surrender beliefs are influenced by personal aspirations for family unity and peace (Ruiz, 2022), the pursuit of social acceptance and community reintegration (Quimpo, 2021), trust in

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government reforms and peacebuilding initiatives (Santos & Ferrer, 2020), as well as economic hardship and livelihood insecurity (De Vera et al., 2023). Environmental threats such as displacement due to armed conflict or climate-related risks also play a role in surrender motivations (Tolentino & Ocampo, 2022). Additionally, fear of law enforcement operations or military retaliation remains a strong psychological trigger for voluntary return (Reyes & Carreon, 2021). Exploring and understanding these multidimensional beliefs is vital for developing effective, context-sensitive reintegration strategies grounded in local realities and human security approaches (Garcia & Manlulo, 2024).

Despite ongoing national reintegration efforts, there is a dearth of empirical data that sheds light on how New People's Army (NPA) rebel returnees perceive the dimensions of surrender beliefs. Existing literature tends to focus on macro-level peace policies or socioeconomic drivers of conflict, while neglecting the personal, psychosocial, and cognitive dimensions that inform an insurgent's decision to disengage (Ruiz, 2022; Garcia & Manlulo, 2024). Furthermore, the specific dimensions of surrender beliefs as directly viewed and articulated by NPA rebel returnees remain unexplored, and to date, there is no validated instrument or tool designed to contextualize these beliefs within the Philippine setting (Santos & Ferrer, 2020; Quimpo, 2021). Considering this research gap, this study explores and establishes the underlying dimensions of surrender beliefs among NPA rebel returnees in Region XI. By identifying

these dimensions, this study aims to contribute to localized peacebuilding frameworks and evidence-based reintegration programs that are culturally and psychologically responsive to the unique lived experiences of rebel returnees in the southern Philippines (De Vera et al., 2023; Tolentino & Ocampo, 2022).

The Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), launched during the Duterte administration, serves as a key government initiative aimed at assisting former members of the Communist Party of the Philippines–New People's Army–National Democratic Front (CPP-NPA-NDF) and the Militia ng Bayan in their transition back into mainstream Philippine society (Department of the Interior and Local Government [DILG], 2020). Anchored in the whole-of-nation approach as articulated in Executive Order No. 70, the program promotes social healing, national unity, and the attainment of a just and lasting peace (Office of the Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU, 2023). E-CLIP emphasizes social equity by offering a holistic package of assistance, including financial aid, livelihood support, housing, and psychosocial services to former rebels (FRs) who voluntarily surrender and return to the fold of the law (Ballaran, 2021; Rocamora, 2022). These provisions are not ends in themselves, but rather strategic mechanisms to empower returnees to rebuild their lives, reduce their vulnerability to recidivism, and promote sustainable peace and reintegration at the community level (Garcia & Manlulo, 2024).

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Several empirical evidence provide essential knowledge on the dimensions of surrender beliefs. In fact, in the study of Estrera and Wei Liang Lai (2017), they describe that predominantly humans are illogical, with false perceptions that lead to violence. Disregarding the potential costs, such a decision may not necessarily gain the approval of military leaders. While it may be low-cost and potentially beneficial, challenges remain. Even the most pragmatic leaders are not immune to internal disagreements. Notably, no conclusive evidence suggests that a formal peace agreement is a prerequisite for achieving meaningful outcomes, provided that the objectives pursued are realistic. In civil conflicts, it is evident that rebel groups often operate with clearly defined goals. A settlement has been feasible since the beginning of the civil war, since the government and the rebel organization have a shared purpose, if the organization's expectations and objectives are met. This is the place to be if you are seeking peace and quiet.

Despite numerous studies on insurgency, armed conflict, and reintegration, there remains a dearth of empirical research specifically examining the dimensions of surrender beliefs among New People's Army (NPA) rebel returnees (Garcia & Manlulo, 2024; Quimpo, 2021). The existing literature primarily focuses on external factors such as socioeconomic marginalization, ideological indoctrination, and the institutional efficacy of reintegration frameworks like the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) (Ballaran, 2021; OPAPRU,

2023). However, the internal dimensions of surrender beliefs such as personal transformation, psychosocial drivers, cognitive dissonance, and evolving value systems remain significantly underexplored (Ruiz, 2022; Reyes & Carreon, 2021). To date, no validated tool or psychometric scale exists specifically tailored to contextualize and measure surrender beliefs in the context of Philippine insurgency. This critical gap underscores the need for in-depth, culturally grounded exploration of these beliefs to inform the design of evidence-based and psychologically responsive reintegration programs (De Vera et al., 2023; Tolentino & Ocampo, 2022).

The urgency of this study is underscored by the ongoing presence of insurgent activities in various regions of the Philippines, despite the implementation of programs like E-CLIP. The persistence of armed conflict over five decades has made the Philippines one of the longest-running insurgency landscapes in history. This study, conducted in Region 11, seeks to address this pressing issue by providing insights into the dimensions of surrender beliefs that can inform policy and program enhancements. Gaining insight into these beliefs is essential for enhancing the effectiveness of reintegration initiatives and promoting lasting peace and inclusive development across the nation.

This study aims to explore and identify the dimensions of surrender beliefs among New People's Army (NPA) rebel returnees in Region 11, focusing on the factors influencing their decision to surrender and reintegrate into society. Through an exploratory sequential mixed-methods

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design, the study employs in-depth interviews to uncover themes, which will inform the development and validation of a survey instrument for quantitative assessment.

This study is fundamentally grounded in Rational Choice Theory, which suggests that individuals decide by systematically weighing the potential costs against the anticipated benefits. In the context of surrender, NPA rebel returnees weigh the risks of continued armed resistance against the perceived advantages of reintegration, such as safety, livelihood opportunities, and social acceptance (Scott, 2000). This theory provides the foundational lens through which the decision-making process of surrender is analyzed.

Social Identity Theory is employed as a lens to support this framework further. This theory explains how group affiliation influences behavior, suggesting that returnees' decisions are also shaped by their sense of belonging, peer influence, and the perceived impact of surrender on their identity within the rebel group (Hogg, 2016). Desistance Theory complements the analysis by offering insights into why individuals disengage from unlawful or violent activities. It highlights the internal transformations and external factors—such as life events, social

bonds, or structural opportunities—that lead individuals to abandon insurgent behavior (Hearn, 2010).

This study postulates that exploring the surrender beliefs among the NPA rebel returnees could provide essential information that will help enhance the government's reintegration process. The results of this study may provide dimensions of surrender beliefs, which this study delves into.

This research explores the surrender beliefs of former NPA combatants or individuals who have voluntarily withdrawn from the New People's Army and are undergoing the process of reintegration into civilian life. Surrender beliefs refer to the psychological, social, and contextual perspectives influencing an individual's decision to cease hostilities and embrace a non-combative lifestyle. These beliefs encompass various dimensions, including perceived risks, benefits, personal safety, and the socio-political implications of surrender. In this study, reintegration refers to the structured process of supporting former rebels as they transition back into civilian life, primarily through government initiatives such as the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP), which is designed to foster peace and societal stability.

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Figure 1. Perceived Dimensions of Surrender Beliefs

This study fundamentally focused on a multidimensional conceptual framework to examine the surrender beliefs of NPA rebel returnees, identifying six perceived factors: social, economic, environmental, personal, political, and law enforcement/military. Each variable is grounded in a validated survey instrument derived from qualitative interviews and factor analyses. Besides, these six factors provide a comprehensive, evidence-based framework for understanding the complex interplay of social, economic, environmental, personal, political, and law enforcement/military influences on the surrender beliefs of NPA rebel returnees. This multidimensional approach supports the design of more

nuanced and effective reintegration and peacebuilding interventions.

This study is of critical importance, contributing to the global academic literature and the social development of conflict-affected regions. By exploring the factors that influence the decision of NPA rebel returnees to surrender, this study offers valuable insights into the socio-political, economic, and environmental conditions that contribute to disengagement from armed struggle. These findings have the potential to inform broader reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts worldwide.

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Moreover, the research addresses a significant gap in the literature on rebel reintegration within the Southeast Asian context, shedding light on the complex interplay of individual, societal, and political motivations behind the act of surrender.

The results of this study make a valuable contribution to the global discourse on peacebuilding and conflict resolution by providing empirical insights into the effectiveness of reintegration approaches. Furthermore, the study aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, which emphasizes the importance of fostering peaceful and inclusive societies, ensuring equal access to justice, and building accountable, effective, and inclusive institutions as pillars of sustainable development.

It provides valuable insights into surrenderer's psychological and socio-political dynamics, enriching global literature on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs. Future scholars and policymakers can draw from this study to design culturally sensitive and evidence-based approaches to addressing insurgencies and armed conflicts worldwide. In offering a deeper understanding of the surrender beliefs of former rebels and contributing to the enhancement of reintegration programs, this research supports the overarching objective of mitigating conflict, advancing reconciliation efforts, and reinforcing the pillars of lasting peace and stability in the Philippines.

The study holds profound social value by addressing the humanitarian imperative of conflict resolution and reintegration. It underscores the need for inclusive development programs and initiatives that foster trust between the government and former rebels. The results advocate for reconciliation pathways that prioritize peace, dignity, and economic sustainability, thus contributing to the broader goal of community rebuilding and national unity.

The study provides a basis for the national government to design and implement reconciliation programs targeting rebel groups, particularly the NPA. The government can build trust and reduce suspicions by extending genuine efforts to reach out to active armed rebels. The findings encourage initiatives such as sending trusted delegates to facilitate dialogue and negotiation, establishing that surrender is a pathway to peaceful development.

Moreover, the Philippine National Police Administrators could benefit from the study, which offers actionable insights into engaging with rebel groups through dialogue and confidence-building measures. It emphasizes the importance of creating agreements that respect national sovereignty while ensuring the welfare and safety of surrendering individuals. These findings can inform policies that support the smooth reintegration of surrenderers into society, addressing potential mistrust and minimizing the risk of recidivism.

Furthermore, the study encourages returnees to embrace a new and productive life within their communities. It highlights

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economic empowerment and personal development opportunities through collaboration with government programs. Returnees can play an active role in nation-building and community resilience by integrating the workforce and contributing to regional infrastructure and development projects.

Subsequently, the study provides vital information to active rebels about the lives of returnees, including the benefits and opportunities available to those who surrender. In showcasing the success stories of former combatants and the support systems in place, the research can inspire

confidence among active rebels to consider reintegration as a viable option for a better life.

Overall, the findings of this study lay the groundwork for future research on the lived experiences of former rebels and the efficacy of reintegration initiatives. It invites deeper academic exploration into related themes, such as the long-term effects of surrender on the well-being of returnees and the socio-political complexities of reintegration within conflict-affected communities. By offering a structured analytical framework, this study serves as a catalyst for advancing scholarships in peacebuilding and conflict resolution.

METHODS

Study Participants/Research Subject

Qualitative Phase

To uphold the integrity and relevance of the research findings, participants were thoughtfully chosen in accordance with ethical research standards. In the initial qualitative phase, five former New People's Army (NPA) members participated in the study, offering firsthand insights into their experiences as rebel returnees. These individuals had been captured and were currently engaged in farming activities. Creswell's (2013) recommendations state that most qualitative research should have a sample size of five to twenty-five people, which aligns with using five participants in this phase. The first phase participants were selected through a homogeneous sampling

technique, or choosing participants who share similar characteristics or experiences, which is very useful because the researcher aims to explore a specific phenomenon within a narrowly defined group (Alvi, 2016).

Participants in this study were specific individuals who shared a common characteristic: their status as adult New People's Army (NPA) rebel returnees. In ensuring the relevance and depth of the gathered data, only those who had formally surrendered to the government and had undergone at least one phase of the Enhanced Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) or corresponding

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reintegration interventions were included. These individuals were required to be 18 years old and above at the time of data collection and capable of providing informed consent. They must have participated in post-surrender processes such as livelihood support, psychosocial counseling, or community reintegration efforts administered by local government units, security sectors, or national agencies.

Quantitative Phase

The second phase involved a quantitative approach with two distinct sets of respondents. For the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), 300 NPA rebel returnees participated. For the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), 300 NPA rebel returnees served as respondents. These sample sizes were determined from recommendations for factor analysis, which suggest a minimum sample size of 100–200 for EFA (Fabrigar et al., 2020) and a ratio of at least five to ten respondents per item for CFA (Kline, 2020). This ensures the robustness of the statistical analyses and the validity of the constructs being measured.

All participants for both EFA and CFA in this study were NPA rebel returnees from various provinces in Region XI who were gathered and accommodated at the Freedom Residences in Tagum City, which houses approximately 300 families of former rebels. These individuals had undergone the debriefing process facilitated by the “Halfway Home” or “Balay Panaghiusa and Halfway House” programs for former rebels.

Exclusion criteria included individuals still in the process of surrender, or those with unresolved legal status that could compromise the ethical conduct of the interview. This inclusion strategy ensured that all key informants possessed firsthand, reflective insights on the surrender experience and reintegration trajectory, aligning with the study's objective to explore the internal dimensions of surrender beliefs.

The researcher employed a stratified sampling approach for the study's second phase. This probability-based method involves segmenting the population into defined subgroups or 'strata' based on relevant characteristics such as geographic location, age, or experience. Samples are then randomly drawn from each stratum to ensure proportional representation. This technique enhances both the representativeness and reliability of the results. In this study, stratified sampling enabled the inclusion of NPA rebel returnees from various provinces across Region XI, capturing the diversity within the target population and strengthening the validity of the findings. This sampling technique is particularly useful when researchers aim to capture variations across key subgroups within the population (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

The methodological rigor of this study was upheld by employing sample sizes appropriate for qualitative and quantitative phases, ensuring a balance between depth of understanding and generalizability. The recruitment and retention strategies are

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aligned with ethical research practices, safeguarding the rights and welfare of participants. In maintaining ethical integrity, individuals under 18 were excluded from the study to protect vulnerable populations and ensure informed consent (Resnik, 2020). Participation was voluntary, where the participants were informed of their right to

withdraw from participating in the study at any time without consequence. This aligns with ethical standards in research, emphasizing respect for participants' autonomy and confidentiality (APA, 2020). Participants who chose to withdraw could communicate their decision verbally or in writing, and their data were promptly removed from the study's active dataset.

Materials/Instruments

Qualitative Phase

In the qualitative phase, the researcher formulated an interview guide questionnaire to seek answers about their dimension of surrender beliefs. The interview provided insights into how a group of NPA rebel returnees disclosed their surrender beliefs, such as why they surrendered, the benefits that enticed them to surrender, and the process of assimilation to prepare them to

interact and mingle with the mainstream society. Additionally, five subject matter experts were consulted to assess the content validity of the interview questions, evaluating the appropriateness and relevance of each item in capturing the core dimensions of surrender beliefs. This validation process ensured that the intended participants understood the questionnaire clearly and easily.

Quantitative Phase

The items for the quantitative questionnaire were developed from the data obtained through in-depth interviews, which were analyzed using thematic analysis. This process led to the formulation of the initial Surrender Beliefs Scale. The instrument was then subjected to dimension reduction techniques to identify key domains that emerged from the themes, representing the

underlying structure of how NPA rebel returnees perceive their surrender beliefs. Furthermore, before conducting the quantitative phase, the developed questionnaire underwent a validation process by five experts through validation sheets with an average rating of 4.44, which is consistently strong and is typically categorized as "Very Good".

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Design and Procedure

This study employs an exploratory sequential mixed-method design, beginning with descriptive qualitative data collection and analysis, followed by a quantitative phase (Creswell, 2009). The design is particularly suited to uncover the dimensions of surrender beliefs among NPA rebel returnees, as it systematically integrates

qualitative and quantitative methods. This approach enables the generation of insights crucial for developing a robust questionnaire and provides a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Clark, 2005). The model procedure of the study implemented by the researcher is shown in Figure 2.

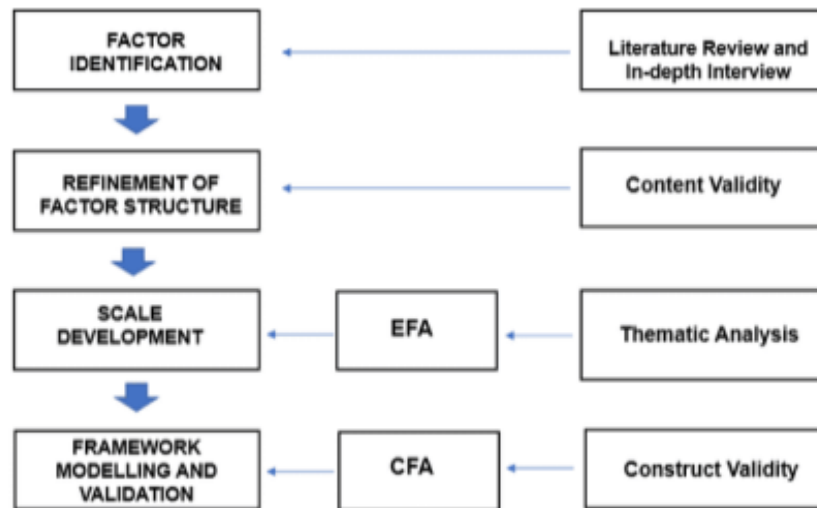


Figure 2. The Scale Development and Validation Process

The exploratory sequential design is well-aligned with the study's objective to explore a complex phenomenon where variables and theoretical frameworks are not yet established. In such cases, qualitative methods offer the flexibility to uncover nuanced perspectives, which are later

quantified through structured instruments (Morrow, 2007). The focus on surrender beliefs of NPA rebel returnees, a subject with limited prior research, underscores the appropriateness of this design for addressing gaps in knowledge and informing reintegration programs.

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The study is conducted in two phases – qualitative and quantitative. Approvals were obtained from the research adviser, panel, and institution head. Additionally, permission

was secured from the Chief of the Regional Task Force to End Local Communist Conflict (NTF-ELCAC), Region XI, to access participants at Freedom Residences, Tagum City.

Qualitative Phase

In the qualitative phase, a descriptive qualitative design was utilized to provide a rich, straightforward summary of participants' perspectives and experiences in their natural context (Sandelowski, 2000). In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide to explore participants' insights and perspectives on surrender beliefs. Prior to participation, everyone provided informed consent after being fully briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, confidentiality measures, and their right to participate voluntarily. Interviews were audio and video recorded for accuracy, securely stored, anonymized, and erased post-analysis.

The qualitative data analysis in this study employed thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes from the interview data, following the framework outlined by Boyatzis (1998). Thematic analysis was conducted to systematically establish and interpret the data by grouping themes into invariant horizons or meaning units. This

approach ensured that themes were distinct and non-overlapping, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the participants' perspectives.

In refining the thematic analysis, the study adopted the Modification of Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen Method described by Moustakas (1994). This methodological approach began with horizontalization, which involved identifying all significant statements from the participants' experiences. These statements were then clustered into invariant constituents and organized into meaningful themes. Subsequently, individual and composite textural-structural descriptions were developed, integrating the participants' experiences with imaginative variation to elucidate the essence of the phenomenon. This process culminated in synthesizing the meanings and essences of the participants' experiences, providing a comprehensive understanding of the surrender beliefs among NPA rebel returnees.

Quantitative Phase

For the quantitative phase, the study adopted a survey-based correlational design

that integrated both Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor

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Analysis (CFA) to identify and validate the underlying dimensions of surrender beliefs among NPA rebel returnees. This phase followed the qualitative exploration and utilized a structured instrument developed from thematically analyzed in-depth interviews. The design is consistent with best practices in scale development. EFA is first used to uncover underlying constructs, and CFA is subsequently applied to confirm the factor structure in a separate sample (Fabrigar et al., 2020). This approach allows for rigorous testing of construct validity, measurement reliability, and model fit, ensuring that the resulting surrender belief scale is empirically grounded and psychometrically sound. Besides, data were collected through a self-administered survey utilizing a structured questionnaire developed from the themes identified during the qualitative phase. The instrument was pilot-tested and validated by experts to confirm clarity, reliability, and content relevance.

The variables of the study were measured using a five-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to express their level of agreement with statements related to their surrender beliefs. The scale was structured as follows: a mean range of 1.00 to 1.79 is rated 1 (Very Low Level), indicating strong disagreement. A mean range of 1.80 to 2.59 corresponds to a 2 (Low Level) rating, denoting disagreement with the dimensions. A mean range of 2.60 to 3.39, a 3 (Moderate Level) rating was assigned, reflecting moderate agreement with the dimensions. The mean range of 3.40 to 4.19 is rated as 4 (High Level), signifying agreement with the

dimensions. In contrast, a mean range of 4.20 to 5.00 corresponds to a 5 (Very High Level) rating, indicating that respondents strongly agree with the dimensions of their surrender beliefs. This scaling system ensured a clear and consistent interpretation of the participants' responses, facilitating the analysis and understanding of their perspectives on the dimensions of surrender beliefs.

The study used Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to analyze the quantitative data to examine the underlying structure of surrender beliefs. This approach ensured that the identified factors were consistent with the themes that emerged during the qualitative phase, strengthening the findings' coherence and validity. EFA was conducted to uncover latent constructs, while CFA was employed to confirm the robustness and alignment of these constructs with theoretical expectations. The validity and reliability of the constructs were further supported by assessing key statistical measures, including sampling adequacy and model fit indices such as chi-square (X^2), relative chi-square (X^2/df), Incremental Fit Index (IFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and PCLOSE.

Additionally, Pearson-r correlation and regression analysis were applied to examine the relationships between variables, providing a detailed understanding of their associations. This analysis was interpreted following the guidelines outlined by Akoglu (2018), which emphasize the strength and

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direction of correlations, further contributing to the comprehensive quantitative examination of surrender beliefs. These statistical methods provided a robust framework for validating the study's constructs and exploring their interrelations.

The trustworthiness of this study was ensured by adhering to rigorous qualitative research standards, with emphasis on credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. These criteria were systematically applied to establish the findings' validity and reliability and ensure the study's robustness.

The study employed prolonged engagement and data triangulation to establish credibility comparable to internal validity in quantitative research. Extended interaction with participants enabled the researcher to develop a nuanced understanding of their experiences and viewpoints. Triangulation, through the use of varied data sources and methods, enhanced the accuracy and depth of the findings. Furthermore, member checking was conducted, allowing participants to review and confirm the accuracy of the data and interpretations, thereby reinforcing the authenticity and trustworthiness of the results.

Dependability comparable to reliability in quantitative research was ensured by maintaining a comprehensive audit trail that meticulously documented each stage of the research process, including data collection, analysis, and key decisions made throughout the study. This thorough documentation promotes transparency and allows for the replication of the research. Additionally, peer

debriefing was utilized, wherein fellow researchers critically reviewed the procedures and findings to help uncover potential biases and reinforce the study's methodological rigor.

Confirmability, which corresponds to objectivity in quantitative research, was ensured by firmly grounding the study's findings in the participants' narratives rather than the researcher's perspectives. This was achieved through ongoing reflexivity, wherein the researcher actively reflected on their assumptions and potential influence throughout the research process. Data triangulation and the inclusion of direct participant quotations further strengthened the neutrality of the results by clearly demonstrating that interpretations were closely tied to the evidence gathered.

Transferability comparable to external validity or generalizability in quantitative research was established by offering rich, detailed descriptions of the research setting and participant profiles. These thick descriptions allow readers to determine whether the study's findings may be applicable to other contexts with similar characteristics. Although broad generalization is not the primary aim of qualitative research, the depth and specificity of the contextual information provided enhance the relevance and potential applicability of the insights to comparable settings.

Upholding ethical standards is critical to ensuring the validity and reliability of any research endeavor. Guided by the ethical protocols of the University of Mindanao

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Ethics Review Committee (UMERC), and in adherence to certification no. UMERC-2024-332 (refer to Appendix F), this study was conducted with strict attention to ethical considerations. As a conscientious researcher, it prioritized the protection of participants' privacy, provided a clear explanation of the study's purpose, and ensured that informed consent was obtained without any form of deception or coercion.

In conducting this study, the researcher adhered to core ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, beneficence, voluntariness, and scientific integrity. Informed consent was obtained through clear and accessible communication, with consent forms translated into the vernacular to ensure understanding. Confidentiality was maintained by

anonymizing data, securing digital files, and restricting audio and video recordings. Participation was voluntary, with the right to withdraw at any time without consequence. The researcher exercised beneficence by minimizing risks, providing psychological support, and ensuring that interview questions were non-invasive and trauma-informed.

Additionally, transparency was maintained through proper approvals from relevant authorities, full disclosure of study purposes, and data protection protocols. The ethical principle of mutuality was respected by sharing findings with participants and upholding their dignity throughout the research process. At the same time, scientific integrity was ensured by avoiding data fabrication, misrepresentation, and conflict of interest.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Dimensions of Surrender Beliefs among NPA Rebel Returnees

To assess the suitability of surrender beliefs for factor analysis, a series of statistical procedures were conducted, including the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, Bartlett's test of sphericity, eigenvalue analysis based on the latent root criterion, Cattell's scree plot, and principal component analysis (PCA) reflected in the rotated component matrix. The subsequent section outlines the results of these tests, providing a comprehensive and rigorous evaluation of the factorability of the surrender belief variables.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Index of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. Table 1 presents the results of the

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test, which confirm the data's appropriateness for factor analysis. The KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy yielded a value of 0.75, indicating an acceptable level of shared variance among the variables and supporting the suitability of the dataset for factor extraction. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity also generated a chi-square value of 2031.219 with 276 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.00. Since the significance is well below the 0.05 threshold, it suggests that the correlations among variables are statistically significant and the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. Collectively, these findings meet the key assumptions required for conducting a valid and robust factor analysis.

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Table 1. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.75
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2031.219
	df	276
	Sig.	0.00

Latent Roots Criterion. The results presented in Table 2 reveal the total variance explained by the six extracted factors in the factor analysis. Factor 1 accounts for 17.573% of the total variance, followed by Factor 2, which explains 16.286%, resulting in a cumulative variance of 33.859%. Factor 3 contributes an additional 11.678%,

bringing the cumulative total to 45.537%. Factor 4 explains 9.387%, increasing the cumulative variance to 54.924%, while Factor 5 adds 8.595%, raising the cumulative total to 63.52%. Finally, Factor 6 accounts for 6.925%, resulting in a cumulative variance of 70.445%.

Table 2. Latent Roots Criterion

	EigenValues	Proportion Variance	Cumulative Variance
Factor 1	4.218	17.573	17.573
Factor 2	3.909	16.286	33.859
Factor 3	2.803	11.678	45.537
Factor 4	2.253	9.387	54.924
Factor 5	2.063	8.595	63.52
Factor 6	1.662	6.925	70.445

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Together, these six factors explain a substantial proportion of the variability in the dataset, capturing 70.445% of the total variance. This indicates that the extracted factors provide an effective and

interpretable structure for understanding the underlying dimensions of the data, with Factor 1 contributing the largest proportion of variance and the subsequent factors contributing progressively smaller but meaningful amounts.

Cattell's Scree Plot. Figure 3 presents the scree plot generated from this study's secondary Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Following the guidelines established by Cattell (1966), the scree plot visualizes eigenvalues derived from the correlation matrix, with eigenvalues displayed on the vertical axis and factors on the horizontal axis. Through examining the plot, one can identify the "elbow," a point where the eigenvalues show a sharp decline, signaling a shift in their magnitude. This "elbow" is critical for determining the number of

meaningful factors to retain, as it marks the threshold where additional factors contribute minimally to explaining the variance. In the scree plot for this study, the noticeable drop after the sixth factor suggests a multidimensional structure in the instrument being analyzed. This indicates that six factors are significant and worth further exploration. As Gorsuch (1997) pointed out, the effectiveness of the scree test relies on factors like an adequate sample size and clearly defined patterns in the data, both of which were addressed in this

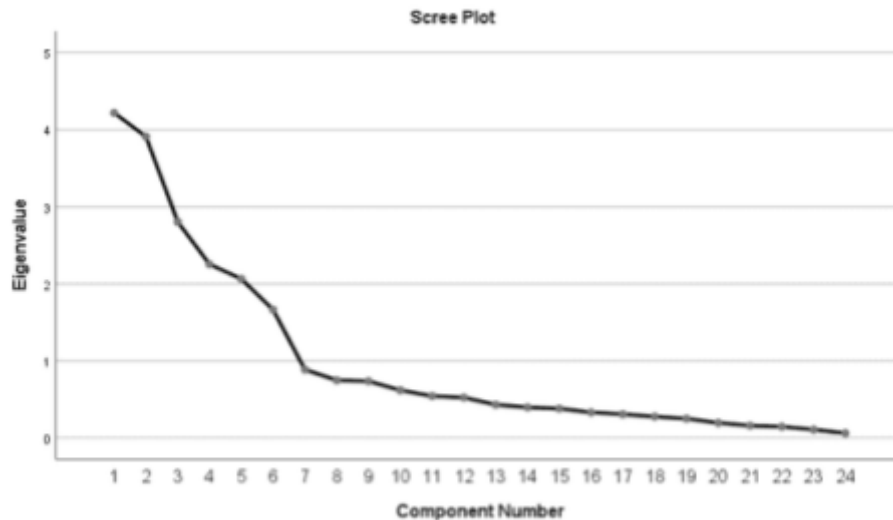


Figure 3. Scree Plot
analysis.

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Rotated Component Matrix. Table 3 highlights the factor loadings of Intention to Surrender in the Context of NPA Rebel Returnees. Through exploratory factor analysis, the researchers initially identified

24 items. To ensure a robust and reliable analysis, items with factor loadings below 0.4 were systematically removed, adhering to the rigorous standards outlined by Costello and Osborne (2005).

Table 3. Rotated Component Matrix^a

Item Number	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	0.882					
18	0.875					
17	0.845					
20	0.786					
16	0.727					
11		0.901				
10		0.886				
12		0.834				
9		0.733				
13		0.634				
44			0.863			
45			0.849			
43			0.844			
46			0.708			
4				0.903		
3				0.815		
5				0.807		
56					0.809	
54					0.766	
53					0.69	
55					0.64	
33						0.845
32						0.785

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34						0.764
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Furthermore, any factors with fewer than three item statements were excluded, as recommended by prior studies (MacCallum et al., 1999; Raubenheimer, 2004; Fuentes & Gono, 2023; Romero & Gono Jr., 2021; Gono

Jr., 2024; Gono Jr. & Pacoy, 2021; Gono & Sales, 2024). Ultimately, the analysis revealed six distinct factors that reflect the surrender beliefs among NPA rebel returnees, providing a structured understanding of their beliefs.

Initial Dimensions of Surrender Beliefs among NPA Rebels using EFA

Table 4 presents the thematic analysis results, highlighting six factors that capture the underlying motivations for surrender among NPA rebel returnees. The analysis identifies factor loadings for each item

statement, indicating the strength of association between the item and its respective factor. Each factor represents a thematic domain influencing the decision to surrender.

Table 4. Initial Dimensions of Surrender Beliefs among NPA Rebel Returnees

Item Number	Item Statements	Factor Loading	New Item Number
<i>Factor 1- Personal Factor</i>			
4	I surrendered to build a stable future for my family.	0.903	1
3	Thinking about being reunited with my children motivated me to leave the NPA.	0.815	2
5	I surrendered because I missed my family and wanted to support them.	0.807	3
<i>Factor 2- Social Factor</i>			
9	Seeing others successfully reintegrate encouraged me to surrender.	0.733	4
10	The acceptance from my community provided an opportunity for me to surrender.	0.886	5
11	The stories of former members who reintegrated inspired me to return to society.	0.901	6
12	Support from my friends and loved ones gave me the confidence to surrender.	0.834	7

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13	Influence from former rebel comrades encouraged me to leave the NPA.	0.634	8
<i>Factor 3- Economic Factor</i>			
16	The lack of financial resources while in the NPA pushed me to surrender.	0.727	9
17	The promise of government benefits strengthened my decision to reintegrate.	0.845	10
18	I surrendered to receive livelihood assistance.	0.875	11
19	Financial instability influenced my decision to leave the group.	0.882	12
20	The financial hardships I experienced as a rebel affected my decision.	0.786	13
<i>Factor 4- Environmental Factor</i>			
33	The lack of supplies pushed me to return to society.	0.845	14
32	The difficulties of living in the mountains encouraged me to surrender.	0.785	15
34	The dangers in the environment influenced my decision to reintegrate into society.	0.764	16
<i>Factor 5- Political Factor</i>			
43	The government's amnesty program motivated me to surrender.	0.844	17
44	I surrendered after learning about the government's peace talks.	0.863	18
45	My belief in government reforms influenced my decision to leave the group.	0.849	19
46	The promise of fair treatment encouraged me to return to society.	0.708	20
<i>Factor 6- Law Enforcement and Military</i>			
53	The threat of military action strengthened my decision to reintegrate into society.	0.69	21
54	Promises of safety from law enforcement motivated me to surrender.	0.766	22
55	I surrendered to avoid retaliation from the authorities.	0.64	23
56	The continuous pressure from military campaigns pushed me to leave the group.	0.809	24

Factor 1: Personal Factors. Personal factors play a pivotal role in surrender decisions, with high factor loadings (0.903, 0.815, and 0.807) and items 3, 4, and 5, emphasizing the influence of familial motivations. Concerns such as building a stable future, reuniting with children, and maintaining family connections strongly drive decision-making processes. Recent research supports the

critical role of family in shaping decisions across various contexts. For instance, family influence and support networks have been identified as essential motivators in challenging professional environments, highlighting their role in fostering stability and resilience (Heffernan, 2021). Emotional drivers, such as guilt, stress, and longing for familial connection, further underline the

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significance of family. These emotions mediate critical decisions, as shown in research exploring the impact of work-family conflicts on family-related choices (Ruan et al., 2020).

Additionally, cultural norms and societal expectations reinforce the centrality of family, as observed in studies on older entrepreneurs who prioritize family well-being over professional demands (Stirzaker et al., 2022). Similarly, health and end-of-life care decisions often revolve around reducing family burdens and ensuring dignity, further demonstrating the pervasive role of familial motivations (Staats et al., 2025). Collectively, these findings emphasize that familial considerations are strong motivators and deeply intertwined with personal and societal values, making them a cornerstone in understanding surrender decisions.

Factor 2: Social Factors. Social influences serve as critical motivators in decision-making, especially concerning community reintegration. Items 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 measure social factors. High factor loadings on items such as community acceptance (0.886), stories of successfully reintegrated members (0.901), and support from loved ones (0.834) underline the significance of social networks in facilitating these processes. Research corroborates the pivotal role of community and social dynamics in reintegration efforts.

For instance, Kilroy and Basini (2018) found that social capital, encompassing norms, networks, and trust, is vital in shaping reintegration outcomes. Their study on ex-combatants in Liberia emphasized how reintegration processes promote social capital, which in turn enhances peacebuilding and community relationships. Similarly, Fahmy and Wallace (2019) demonstrated

that familial social support significantly impacts returning citizens' physical health and reintegration success, while negative familial interactions can hinder progress.

Moreover, family support—both material and emotional—is a significant predictor of successful reintegration for adolescent offenders, underscoring the importance of social frameworks in reducing stigma and facilitating adjustment (Lokenga et al., 2023). In the context of parolees, Sathoo et al. (2021) found that support from parole officers, peers, family, and employers plays a decisive role in the reintegration process, emphasizing the layered nature of social support systems. These findings collectively highlight the indispensable role of social networks and support systems in ensuring successful reintegration and decision-making processes. Social acceptance, shared success stories, and robust familial and community support emerge as cornerstones of effective reintegration strategies.

Factor 3: Economic Factors. Economic factors are pivotal in decision-making processes, particularly when financial hardships drive critical actions such as surrender. Items 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20 measure economic factors. High factor loadings (ranging from 0.727 to 0.882) underscore the influence of financial instability, lack of resources, and the promise of government benefits and livelihood assistance in shaping these decisions. Recent research further illuminates the broad impact of economic challenges and support systems on behavior and well-being.

Financial hardship significantly influences decision-making by increasing vulnerability and reducing options. Kim (2020) highlights that financial distress leads to heightened anxiety, depression, and basic insecurities such as food and housing instability, even when social assistance is available. Similarly,

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Marjanović et al. (2018) found that acute financial hardships spur individuals to adopt constructive financial behaviors like expense-cutting, which can alleviate immediate pressures.

Economic safety nets play a critical role in mitigating hardships. Cai and Wimer (2021) emphasized that cash transfers and in-kind benefits reduce the adverse financial effects of unstable employment, improving household material stability. Programs like these highlight the importance of government intervention in offering financial relief.

Factor 4: Environmental Factors. Environmental factors significantly influence the decision-making processes of rebel returnees, as they confront harsh physical and environmental pressures in their circumstances—items 32, 33, and 34 measure environmental factors. High factor loadings related to the lack of supplies (0.845), difficulties of living in the mountains (0.785), and environmental dangers (0.764) highlight the critical role of these challenges in compelling individuals to reintegrate into civilian life.

Adverse environmental conditions create untenable living situations for many rebel returnees. Parker et al. (2021) highlighted the long-term consequences of environmental neglect for former child combatants of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, noting how limited access to resources and harsh living environments hinder reintegration efforts and exacerbate vulnerability (Parker et al., 2021). Similarly, Annan et al. (2020) reported that for rebel returnees in Uganda, environmental dangers and resource scarcity were key stressors that necessitated finding safer living conditions and sustainable livelihoods.

In rural Ethiopia, Tizazu et al. (2020) emphasized the role of challenging environments in shaping reintegration dynamics, where the lack of basic infrastructure and resources posed significant barriers to successful transitions for returnees (Tizazu et al., 2020). Additionally, Meernik et al. (2021) demonstrated that environmental instability in post-conflict Colombia increased the likelihood of recidivism among former non-state armed actors, as they struggled to adapt to the lack of basic amenities and threats posed by unsafe conditions (Meernik et al., 2021).

Factor 5: Political Factors. Political factors are crucial in motivating rebel returnees to surrender and reintegrate, as demonstrated by high factor loadings (0.844 to 0.863) and items 43, 44, 45, and 46, associated with amnesty programs, governmental reforms, and promises of fair treatment. These initiatives build trust, reduce uncertainty, and provide incentives for individuals to transition back to civilian life.

Amnesty programs and political reforms often act as a cornerstone for reintegration processes. Meernik et al. (2021) examined reintegration programs in Colombia, finding that comprehensive political strategies—such as disarmament and peace agreements—were instrumental in encouraging the participation of former armed actors in civilian life. Trust in government reforms was a significant determinant of successful reintegration outcomes (Meernik et al., 2021).

Similarly, Ngachra and Onkware (2023) highlighted Kenya's use of non-custodial reintegration programs for returnee fighters, emphasizing the role of political and legal guarantees in fostering trust among returnees. The assurance of fair treatment

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through government and community-led initiatives significantly reduced the risks of recidivism (Ngachra & Onkware, 2023). Peace talks and dialogues between governments and armed groups also play a pivotal role. Sharif (2022) explored the political attitudes of ex-combatants in Colombia, showing that well-structured peace talks foster trust and optimism among participants, encouraging long-term commitment to non-violent solutions (Sharif, 2022).

Factor 6: Law Enforcement and Military. This factor emphasizes the critical role of security forces and their strategies in influencing decisions to reintegrate into society. The findings indicate a balance between external pressures and assurances, with factor loadings ranging from 0.64 to 0.809 and item statements 53, 54, 55, and 56. Promises of safety from law enforcement showed the highest influence, with a factor loading of 0.766, underscoring the importance of trust-building measures in alleviating fears of harm or retribution and encouraging individuals to surrender. Similar findings from research on reintegration processes highlight the necessity of ensuring safety

guarantees to foster trust and reduce resistance to reintegration (Parry & Aymerich, 2022; Geraci et al., 2020).

The threat of military action emerged as another notable motivator, with a factor loading of 0.69. This suggests that fear of confrontation creates uncertainty, compelling individuals to reintegrate to avoid conflict. Research on military-led reintegration programs shows that sustained operations often disrupt group dynamics and force individuals to abandon armed activities (Heineken & Wilén, 2019). Similarly, continuous military pressure had the greatest impact in this study, with a factor loading of 0.809, reflecting the disruptive effect of such campaigns on insurgent activities.

The fear of retaliation, indicated by a factor loading of 0.64, also influenced reintegrating decisions, demonstrating that punitive actions such as arrests or violent confrontations create additional pressure. Findings from studies on reintegration in conflict zones emphasize that military strategies combining coercion with safety guarantees effectively foster surrender and prevent recidivism (Sayer et al., 2021).

Validation of Measurement Model using Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In analyzing the intention to surrender among NPA rebels, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used as a critical tool to confirm the measurement model established in the earlier Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). CFA is employed in a hypothesis-driven manner to test the underlying constructs influencing the intention to surrender. Specifically, it examines whether the latent variables hypothesized in EFA—such as personal,

social, environmental, and political factors—adequately explain the observed relationships in the data.

In CFA, the number of factors and the pattern of their loadings are specified before analysis, and certain constraints are applied to test the theoretical model (Hoyle, 2000). For instance, factors like the promise of government amnesty or adverse environmental conditions could load strongly

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on their respective constructs. If the imposed constraints are misaligned with the sample data, CFA will reveal a poor model fit, suggesting that the hypothesized relationships or structure need to be revised. This iterative process ensures that the model used to understand the rebels' surrender intentions is statistically robust and theoretically sound.

Before performing Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA), researchers must address various key assumptions to ensure the validity and reliability of the results. First, sample size is crucial, with a minimum of 300 participants often recommended. Larger sample sizes enhance the precision of parameter estimates and improve the stability of the model (Goretzko et al., 2023). Second, CFA typically assumes multivariate

normality. However, when this assumption is violated, robust estimation methods, such as diagonally weighted least squares (DWLS), are effective for handling ordinal data and mild deviations from normality (Cheng-Hsien Li, 2016).

Third, the measurement scale matters: while maximum likelihood estimators work best with continuous data, DWLS is more appropriate for ordinal or Likert-scale data (Goretzko et al., 2023). Lastly, CFA assumes that observed indicators reflect underlying latent factors, with their relationships derived from covariance patterns. Modern best practices emphasize assessing model fit through indices such as RMSEA, CFI, and TLI to confirm that the assumptions align with the data (Pristianti, 2022).

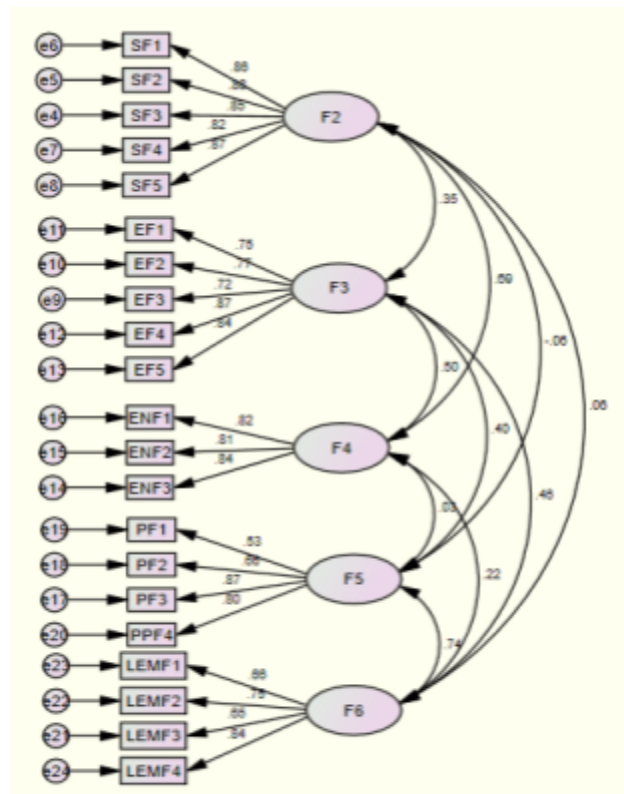


Figure 4. Baseline Model

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Note:

Factor 1- Personal Factor

Factor 2- Social Factor

Factor 3- Economic Factor

Factor 4- Environmental Factor

Factor 5- Political Factor

Factor 6- Law Enforcement and Military Factor

Factor 1 (personal factor) is deleted due to negative correlation with other factors

Figure 4 shows the Model Fit Indices of the intention to surrender among NPA rebels (Six Factor Rotation). Factor 1 was deleted since it negatively correlates with the other factors. Using AMOS 20 software, the

obtained values were $\chi^2/df = 5.563$, CFI = 0.808, CFI=0.846, TLI = 0.785, and RMSEA 0.127. Since some of the measures of good fit do not satisfy the requirement, the researcher checks different requirements for the measurement model.

Table 5. Summary of Model Fit Indices

	X2	X2/df	IFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	PCLOSE
Baseline Model	995.805	5.563	0.810	0.808	0.785	0.127	0.00
1. Modification 1 Delete items with standardized weights <0.7 and Factor < 3 items statement	365.885	5.901	0.891	0.891	0.863	0.132	0.00
2. Modification 2 Correlate Error	136.667	2.789	0.95	0.968	0.969	0.08	0.001
3. Modification 3 Delete items with standardized weights <0.8	64.617	2.393	0.968	0.981	0.968	0.07	0.063
Acceptable Values	-	<3.00	0.90	0.90	0.90	<0.08	>0.05
Good Fit Values	p<0.05		0.95	0.95	0.95	<0.08	>0.05

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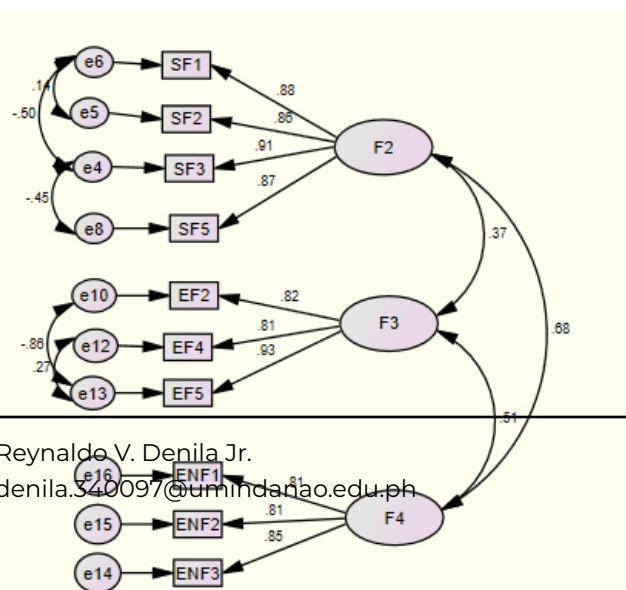
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Table 5 shows the model fit indices of the measurement model of intention to surrender among NPA rebels. The baseline model provides an initial framework for understanding the intention to surrender among NPA rebels. However, the fit indices indicate poor performance. The χ^2/df ratio is 5.563, exceeding the acceptable threshold 3.00 (Goretzko et al., 2023). The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) are 0.808 and 0.785, respectively, both below the acceptable standard of 0.90 (Pristianti, 2022). Additionally, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0.127, far above the recommended limit of 0.08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1983), and PCLOSE is 0.00, indicating poor fit. These results highlight the need for substantial modifications to reflect better the intention to surrender.

The first modification involves removing items with standardized weights below 0.7 and factors with fewer than three items. This adjustment slightly improves the model's fit. The CFI and TLI increase to 0.891 and 0.863, respectively, nearing but not meeting the acceptable threshold of 0.90. However, the RMSEA rises slightly to 0.132, which is still indicative of a poor fit, and PCLOSE remains at 0.00. While this modification marks progress, the model still requires further refinement to represent the data on surrender intentions adequately.

In the second modification, error terms are correlated to address potential misspecifications in the model. This step yields significant improvements in the fit indices. The χ^2/df ratio drops to 2.789, now within the acceptable range of less than 3.00 (Goretzko et al., 2023). The CFI and TLI exceed the good-fit threshold, with values of 0.968 and 0.969, respectively (Pristianti, 2022). The RMSEA improves to 0.08, indicating marginal fit, and PCLOSE increases to 0.001, signaling progress toward an acceptable model. These results demonstrate that correlating errors significantly enhances the model's ability to represent the factors influencing NPA rebels' surrender intentions.

The final modification involves deleting items with standardized weights below 0.8 to refine the model further. This leads to the best fit among all iterations. The χ^2/df ratio decreases to 2.393, comfortably within the acceptable threshold. The CFI and TLI improve to 0.981 and 0.968, respectively, surpassing the good-fit standard of 0.95 (Pristianti, 2022). The RMSEA drops to 0.07, reflecting a good fit, and PCLOSE rises to 0.063, meeting the criteria for a well-fitting model (Browne & Cudeck, 1983). This iteration achieves a reliable and valid representation of the factors driving NPA rebels' intention to surrender.



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Legend: Factor 2- Social Factor, Factor 3- Economic Factor, and Factor 4- Environmental Factor

Figure 5. Three Factor Measurement Model of Surrender Beliefs among NPA Rebels

The deletion of the political and law enforcement factors from the final model of surrender beliefs among NPA rebel returnees was grounded in both empirical evidence and theoretical considerations. Though initially salient, these factors failed to meet rigorous criteria for statistical validity and conceptual distinctiveness in the final measurement framework. Their exclusion enabled the development of a robust, parsimonious, and actionable model that more accurately reflects the core drivers of surrender within this population, namely, the social, economic, and environmental realities that shape former rebels' lived

experiences and critical decision-making processes.

The results from Table 6 demonstrate the measurement model's strong composite reliability and convergent validity across three factors (F2, F3, and F4). Composite reliability is indicated by the high standardized loadings of observed variables on their respective latent constructs, with all loadings close to or exceeding 0.70. For Factor F2, items such as SF3, SF2, SF1, and SF5 have loadings ranging from 0.935 to 1.002, with critical ratios (C.R.) ranging from 14.851 to 17.081 and highly significant p-values ($p < 0.001$), confirming that these items reliably represent F2.

Table 6. Results of convergent validity testing

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SF3	<---	F2	1.000			
SF2	<---	F2	.964	.061	15.872	***
SF1	<---	F2	.935	.063	14.851	***
SF5	<---	F2	1.002	.059	17.081	***
EF2	<---	F3	1.000			
EF4	<---	F3	1.009	.123	8.208	***
EF5	<---	F3	1.062	.136	7.826	***
ENF3	<---	F4	1.000			
ENF2	<---	F4	.922	.060	15.375	***
ENF1	<---	F4	1.020	.067	15.296	***

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Similarly, Factor F3, represented by EF2, EF4, and EF5, shows loadings from 1.000 to 1.062, with significant C.R. values (7.826–8.208), indicating strong but slightly weaker relationships compared to F2. Factor F4, measured by ENF3, ENF2, and ENF1, demonstrates loadings ranging from 0.922 to 1.020, with C.R. values between 15.296 and 15.375, all highly significant ($p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that all observed variables strongly and significantly measure their respective factors.

The results also provide robust evidence for convergent validity, as the observed variables effectively represent their intended constructs through statistically significant and high loadings (Hair et al., 2019). Convergent validity is essential for ensuring that each item measures the construct it is intended to assess (Brown, 2015). The high reliability across factors

supports internal consistency, a fundamental requirement for a valid measurement model.

The results of Table 7 provide insights into the relationships between the latent factors (F2, F3, and F4), supporting both convergent and discriminant validity. The correlation between F2 and F3 is moderate (0.368) and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that these factors share some commonalities while maintaining sufficient distinction to support discriminant validity. The correlation between F4 and F2 is relatively strong (0.679), with a highly significant p-value ($p < 0.001$), suggesting a closer relationship between these two factors. This supports convergent validity, as they are more related yet distinct enough to preserve discriminant validity. Lastly, the correlation between F4 and F3 is moderate to strong (0.513), with $p < 0.001$, indicating a meaningful connection between these factors while also reflecting their uniqueness.

Table 7. Convergent/Discriminant Validity

			Estimate	P
F2	<-->	F3	0.368	***
F4	<-->	F2	0.679	***
F4	<-->	F3	0.513	***

Overall, the results highlight that the latent factors are statistically correlated, with relationships ranging from moderate to relatively strong. These findings suggest that the model balances convergent validity, where factors are meaningfully related, and discriminant validity, where factors remain distinct enough to represent separate constructs. The significant correlations align with guidelines for assessing validity in structural equation modeling, emphasizing meaningful relationships between constructs while maintaining their uniqueness to support theoretical clarity (Hair et al., 2019;

Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This reinforces the theoretical soundness and reliability of the measurement framework.

Table 8 presents the reliability analysis for the sub-scales and the overall measurement model using Cronbach's alpha, a metric that evaluates internal consistency. All values exceed the generally accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating strong reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). For the sub-scales, the social factor (Factor 2) has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.902, demonstrating excellent reliability and suggesting that the items within this

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sub-scale are highly consistent in measuring the construct. Similarly, the economic factor (Factor 3) achieves a Cronbach's alpha of 0.871, reflecting strong internal consistency

among the items. The environmental factor (Factor 4) also exhibits good reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.862, indicating that the items effectively capture the underlying construct.

Table 8. Reliability of the Final Model

Sub-scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
<i>Factor 2- Social Factor</i>	4	0.902
<i>Factor 3- Economic Factor</i>	3	0.871
<i>Factor 4- Environmental Factor</i>	3	0.862
Overall	10	0.862

The overall reliability of the model, calculated across all 10 items, is 0.862, further confirming the high internal consistency of the measurement framework. These results suggest that the model is robust and dependable in measuring the

intended constructs across the social, economic, and environmental dimensions (Hair et al., 2019). The consistently high reliability across all factors and the overall scale underscores the effectiveness of the items in accurately reflecting their respective latent variables.

Scale and Item Statements for the Final Model

Following the reliability analysis presented in Table 8, the validated instrument for measuring the surrender beliefs among NPA rebel returnees is hereby described. The finalized instrument comprises three subscales—Social Factor, Economic Factor, and Environmental Factor—each rigorously refined through the sequential application of Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Only those items that demonstrated high factor loadings and internal consistency, as indicated by

Cronbach's alpha coefficients above the accepted threshold of 0.70, were retained in the final measurement model.

The final instrument consists of 10 items, each mapped to a specific dimension of surrender beliefs. Respondents are instructed to reflect on their personal experiences and indicate the degree to which each statement influenced their decision to surrender and reintegrate into mainstream society.

Social Factor (4 items, Cronbach's α = 0.902)	
Statement	
1.	The acceptance from my community provided an opportunity for me to surrender.
2.	Support from my friends and loved ones gave me the confidence to surrender.

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3. The stories of former members who reintegrated inspired me to return to society.
4. Influence from former rebel comrades encouraged me to leave the NPA.
Economic Factor (3 items, Cronbach's α = 0.871)
Statement
1. The lack of financial resources while in the NPA pushed me to surrender.
2. Financial instability influenced my decision to leave the group.
3. The financial hardships I experienced as a rebel affected my decision.
Environmental Factor (3 items, Cronbach's α = 0.862)
Statement
1. The lack of supplies pushed me to return to society.
2. The difficulties of living in the mountains encouraged me to surrender.
3. The dangers in the environment influenced my decision to reintegrate into society.

This multidimensional scale ensures a robust and context-sensitive measurement of the psychological and situational drivers underpinning surrender decisions. The presentation of the validated instrument and its constituent items strengthens the empirical rigor of the study by ensuring that only theoretically grounded, statistically

reliable, and contextually relevant statements form the basis of measurement. This instrument provides a nuanced and actionable tool for stakeholders involved in peacebuilding and reintegration initiatives to assess and address the key social, economic, and environmental factors influencing the surrender beliefs of NPA rebel returnees.

CONCLUSION/IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study highlighted the multidimensional structure of the factors influencing surrender decisions among NPA rebel returnees. Six distinct factors were identified, reflecting personal, social, economic, environmental, political, and law enforcement influences. To build on the findings from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to refine and strengthen the results, ensuring that the model accurately represented the data. This step went beyond simply validating numbers—it was about making sure the model truly captured the underlying patterns and realities of surrender decisions. The CFA tested whether

the structure identified in the EFA made sense when applied to real-world observations, refining it until it fit both statistically and conceptually.

The model became more reliable and meaningful through thoughtful adjustments, such as linking related errors, removing items that did not strongly contribute to the factors, and fine-tuning how the factors were structured. With these improvements, the key model fit indicators—like RMSEA, CFI, and TLI—met the required benchmarks, confirming that the model was robust and trustworthy. The final result was a well-defined three-factor model, capturing

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the social, economic, and environmental elements that drive surrender decisions.

Social factors, such as community acceptance and support from family and friends, were pivotal in motivating individuals to reintegrate. Economic constraints, including financial instability and the allure of government livelihood assistance, were significant drivers. At the same time, environmental challenges, such as living in precarious conditions, further compelled individuals to leave the rebel group.

A clear picture emerged: surrender is not a simple, one-dimensional choice. Instead, it reflects a complex web of pressures and motivations shaped by the realities people face. Social connections, economic hardships, and environmental circumstances intersect, creating a nuanced and deeply human story behind the decision to surrender. By refining this model, we achieved a more accurate representation of the data and gained deeper insight into the lived experiences that shape these critical decisions.

The results align with the theoretical underpinnings of the study, particularly those rooted in social exchange theory and resource dependence theory. These theories posit that individuals make decisions based on perceived benefits and resource access, which is evident in the findings' significant roles of community support and economic assistance. Furthermore, the study reinforces the ecological systems theory by demonstrating how environmental contexts and systemic structures influence personal decisions. Overall, the findings support the

theoretical framework while extending its applicability to armed conflict and reintegration, offering a comprehensive lens for future studies and interventions.

Based on the findings and results of the study, several recommendations are proposed to address the key factors influencing the surrender and reintegration of NPA rebel returnees. These recommendations are directed toward national government administrators, the Philippine National Police (PNP), NPA rebel returnees, active rebels, and future researchers. For national government administrators, it is essential to enhance livelihood and financial support programs to address the economic hardships experienced by rebel returnees. Expanding access to livelihood initiatives, financial assistance, and vocational training, particularly in areas with high levels of financial instability, can ensure equitable access to resources. Additionally, the government should establish reintegration monitoring units to track the progress of reintegration programs consistently. These units can help identify gaps in implementing amnesty and livelihood initiatives and ensure continued support for returnees. Deploying culturally sensitive mediators, who possess deep knowledge of local customs, to engage in peace talks can also help build trust with active rebels and encourage open dialogue.

For the Philippine National Police, strengthening community engagement programs is recommended. Regular community dialogues and forums involving returnees, community members, and law enforcement can foster acceptance and

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reduce stigma. Initiatives such as peace caravans and open houses can demonstrate the government's commitment to reintegration. Training officers in conflict mediation, focusing on non-combative methods to engage with active rebels, is also crucial for ensuring that surrender processes are conducted respectfully and effectively. Furthermore, the development of safety and protection protocols for surrendered individuals and their families is essential. Establishing secure reintegration zones where returnees can live without fear of retaliation or reprisal can significantly enhance reintegration.

For NPA rebel returnees, promoting community participation through programs like infrastructure projects and agricultural development can provide a sense of purpose and foster community acceptance. It is equally important to establish accessible counseling and mental health services to address the psychological impacts of reintegration. These services can help returnees manage trauma and adapt to civilian life. Organizing capacity-building workshops focused on entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and governance participation can empower returnees to lead productive lives and contribute positively to their communities. For active NPA rebels, developing targeted information campaigns that highlight the positive outcomes of successful reintegration is recommended. Testimonials, videos, and social media platforms can inspire confidence in the reintegration process. Establishing clear and secure protocols for surrender, such as dedicated hotlines and safe passage

agreements, can also encourage active rebels to return to the fold of the law. Widely disseminating information about government amnesty and livelihood programs ensures that active rebels are aware of the tangible benefits of reintegration.

Lastly, for future researchers, it is recommended to explore the longitudinal outcomes of reintegration programs, examining their long-term impacts on returnees' quality of life and community development. Future studies could also investigate the role of community dynamics, such as the influence of community leaders, societal norms, and collective attitudes, in successful reintegration. Comparative analyses on surrender motivations and reintegration strategies across different regions or insurgent groups could provide valuable insights into universal and context-specific approaches to conflict resolution.

In addition, comparative analyses exploring surrender motivations and reintegration strategies across various regions or among different insurgent groups are encouraged, as these could elucidate universal and context-specific mechanisms in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Importantly, in light of limitations regarding the factor loadings in the present study, it is also recommended that future research endeavors consider the development and validation of an expanded instrument with additional items. This approach would enable more comprehensive factor analytic reviews and greater generalizability of findings,

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thereby strengthening the psychometric robustness of the surrender beliefs framework. Together, these recommendations aim to provide a

comprehensive framework for addressing the complex factors influencing the surrender and reintegration of NPA rebel returnees while fostering sustainable peace and development.

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