

## **An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis on the Concept of Friends of Children in Conflict with the Law**

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**Abstract :** This research employed an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to explore the experiences of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) which gave light to their concept of 'friends'. Derived from this context are the following objectives of the study: 1) determining the differentiation of the forms of friends of the CICL; 2) presenting the process of attachment towards detachment in the formation of friendship; and 3) discussing the experiences, and reflections of the CICL on the 'self' out of their encounter with friendship. Using the data gathered from the individual drawings of the CICL of their representations of the self, family, friends, community, and Bahay Kalinga as subjects in the meaning-making process utilizing Filipino Psychology methods of pagtatanong-tanong (interview), and pakikipagkwentuhan (conversation), data analysis produced a synthesis of seventeen individual cases. Overall results generated three superordinate themes on the differentiation of the forms of friends which include friends with good influences, friends with bad influences, and friends within the family. While two superordinate themes were produced on the process of attachment towards detachment, namely social, emotional, and psychological experiences on the process of attachment, and emotional and psychological experiences on the process of detachment. Lastly, two superordinate themes were created on the experiences, and reflections of the CICL on the 'self' out of their encounter with friendship. This consists of the recognition of the 'self' as a responsible agent in developing healthy relationships between the self and others, and reconstruction of the self from the collective experiences of healing, forgiveness, and acceptance. These findings, together with supporting theories discussed the impact of friendship on the emergence of criminal behavior and other dispositions; springing from the child's dissociation from the family that led to finding belongingness from an external group called friends.

**Keywords :** children in conflict with the law, criminal behavior, friends, interpretative phenomenological analysis

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