

Stewarding Persons Deprived of Liberty: Experiences of City Jail Officers Amidst Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the life experiences of City Jail Officers as stewards of persons deprived of liberty amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, sought to the following specific problems: the experiences of the informants in the performance of their duties during the Covid-19 pandemic, coping with the challenges encountered in the performance of duties, and aspirations of the informants to improve the quality of jail service.

The phenomenological and qualitative approach in this study was utilized through interviews as the key process in the gathering of data. There were ten (10) selected city jail officers. Four (4) of them were individually interviewed while the other six (6) were included in the Focused Group Discussion (FGD). They were selected randomly but met the minimum qualifications. The research location is at Tagbilaran City Jail – Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City. A validated interview guide aided with the voice recorder for the basis of transcribing the responses of the informants. Utilization of Colaizzi's method, a phenomenological analysis procedure in analyzing the responses of the informants during the conduct of the interview.

For the experiences of the informants as Jail Officers amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, the themes generated were: Triumph through Unity, Collegial Harmony Initiative, Scarcity of Supplies, and PDL's Misbehavior. In coping with the challenges encountered in the performance of duties, the following themes were created: Resilience Amidst Scarcity, Synergistic Wellness Renewal, and Virtual Family Reconnection, for the aspirations of the informants, themes created were: Adherence to Protocol and Training for Safety and Security in Innovation.

For the Tagbilaran City Jail Personnel, the implementation of several suggestions is recommended to inspire and encourage jail officers for relevant improvements.

Firstly, the development of specialized training programs tailored to address challenges unique to the pandemic, emphasizing the significance of humane treatment and effective guidance, is crucial. Introducing mental health support services for jail officers can aid in coping with the stresses associated with their roles during the pandemic. Establishing open communication channels within the jail facility is another key recommendation, fostering dialogue among personnel and creating a supportive work environment. The implementation of recognition programs to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of jail officers can significantly boost morale and motivation.

As for the Local Government Unit (LGU), the following suggestions are proposed to make informed decisions based on the comprehensive overview. In addition, the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to effectively address challenges through education and training, the following suggestions are recommended. Organizing workshops and seminars on relevant topics such as crisis management and adapting to new challenges can equip jail officers with the necessary skills.

Keywords: BJMP, City Jail Officers, Jail Personnel, Covid-19 pandemic, Phenomenology, DILG, LGU

INTRODUCTION

One of the five pillars of the criminal justice system is corrections. The Philippine Corrections System comprises the government, civil society, and the private sector, all involved in the detention, correction, and restoration of those charged with and convicted of delinquent conduct or crimes. Correctional facilities for reform and rehabilitation are jails and prisons. It provides a haven for education, socialization, moral healing, and personal growth. The Bureau of Corrections of the Department of Justice oversees correctional establishments. The Department of the Interior and Local Government, especially the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, is responsible for the district, city, and municipal jails.

Bureau of Jail Management and Penology established the City Jail in different cities around the country, including the Tagbilaran City Jail and headed by a City Warden. Furthermore, its clients are the person deprived of liberty, detainees accused before a court who are temporarily confined in such jails while undergoing investigation, waiting for final judgment, and those who are serving a sentence promulgated by the court less than three (3) years/or transfer to the National Penitentiary, and a violent mentally-ill person who endangers himself or others as certified by the proper medical or health officer, pending transfer to a mental institution.

As the global Covid-19 pandemic spreads, the number of cases and deaths in many world regions continues to rise, and living through it has been difficult, especially inside the jail. It's affected every element of people's lives, which implies adjusting to a new daily routine since the Chief, BJMP declared an absolute lockdown of all jails countrywide on March 20, 2020. All jail workers have to sacrifice by serving as the lockdown team. This change was made to avoid exposing the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) and staff to the infection. All lockdown duty officers are dedicated to protecting the health of everyone within the facility. Hence, everyone must observe the protocols of the minimum health standards set by the government and health authorities, like wearing a face mask and washing their hands with soap or applying disinfectants.

Responding to Covid-19 in jail is problematic for various reasons. Primarily, jail facilities and social distance are difficult during the pandemic. According to Kahimbing (2021), the case of the Philippines is particularly challenging. Early reports show several inmates and staff in the Philippines' overcrowded prisons have tested positive. As of June 2020, more than 700 inmates tested positive because social distancing was impossible inside the jail. Additionally, many of the jail officers inside the jail facility are physically, emotionally frustrated, and bored because of the long stay. Because of that, Tagbilaran City jail was divided into three teams: first, the response team; second, the team loob; and third, the team quarantine. Those three teams have 21 days of duty rotation. Until now, they didn't accept visitors and families from PLD to protect everyone inside the jail facilities.

Therefore, the researcher is interested in the study of city jail experiences amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. In dealing with the steward of persons deprived of liberty, adopting the new standard-setting. As a practicing Criminologist, the researcher aims to impart additional knowledge about Tagbilaran City jail officers' challenging time experiences to the Criminology students.

Theoretical Background

This study is primarily anchored on the Stewardship Theory of Donaldson & Davis (1991) supported by the Self-Efficacy Theory by Bandura (1977) and the Protection Motivation Theory of Rogers (1975).

Stewardship theory by Donaldson & Davis (1991) comprises safeguarding an organization for the future. It can also refer to long-term gains for stakeholders and society at large. Stewardship Theory states that stewards act in the best interests of their principals. Therefore, the stewardship theory is based on ensuring that the behaviors of the managers are aligned with the interests of the principals. Stewardship theory is mainly concerned with identifying the situations in which the interests of the principal and the steward are aligned.

The Self-efficacy theory, according to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy theory holds that expectations and judgments about behavioral skills and capabilities, as well as the likelihood of successfully navigating

demands and challenges in the environment, are the primary determinants of behavior initiation and persistence. Moreover, self-efficacy theory contends that these same elements are crucial for both psychological functioning and adjustment as well as for successful treatment approaches to emotional and behavioral issues. Additionally, the part that self-efficacy beliefs and other factors play in human adjustment and adaptability. Humans have a variety of difficulties when it comes to adaptability in a wide sense, not restricting the word to issues of conventional concern or to classifications based on traditional pathology.

According to Rogers (1975), the protection motivation theory is a model to explain decision-making and action about health behaviors. People engage in positive health behaviors when they perceive a threat as severe and feel vulnerable. They react by adopting health behaviors to reduce the threat when they believe they have the required capabilities.

Legal Basis

As stated in R.A. 9263, the Bureau shall be headed by a Chief with the rank of Director and appointed by the President upon the DILG Secretary's recommendation from among the qualified officers with the rank of at least Senior Superintendent in the BJMP.

As stated in R.A. 6975, the Jail Bureau takes operational and administrative responsibility for all city, district, and municipal jails. BJMP also oversees significant initiatives such as inmate custody, security, control, welfare and development, decongestion, and good governance. As such, it shall ensure the establishment of secure, clean, adequately equipped sanitary facilities; and ensure the provision of quality services for the custody, safekeeping, rehabilitation, and development of the district, city, and municipal inmates, any fugitive from justice (Sec. 4, BJMP Comprehensive Operations Manual 2015 Edition).

The IATF created by RA 11332 falls under this paradigm. The slow delivery of such responses based on divergent objectives and agendas of the different agencies under IATF can be attributed to this bureaucratic politics paradigm. The National Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), activated under the March 2020 Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, was the coordinating mechanism within the framework of "a national-government-enabled, Local Government Unit (LGU)-led, and people-centered response." Additionally, the IATF collaborated with the Department of Health and other pertinent organizations to guarantee that inmates affected by Covid-19 received healthcare services.

Related Literature and Studies

Relating to the experiences of jail officers amidst the Covid-19 pandemic as stewards to persons deprived of liberty in the study of Pettus-Davis et al. (2021), correctional staff explore strategies to prevent the virus disease from spreading through correctional facilities and among incarcerated individuals to reduce their own risk of contracting Covid-19 during confinement. The following strategies they strictly observed were wearing a face mask, practicing washed hands, and physical distancing when possible. Additionally, facilities suspended visitation and volunteers provided face masks, sanitized, conducted temperature checks, and released the prisoners early.

Health workers like the jail nurse and the health care director inside the jail are also stewards of prisoners. According to Testoni et al. (2021), healthcare workers in prisons need emergency-oriented training because they feel lonely and quasi-abandonment when carrying out their duties during the pandemic. The purpose underscored the need for psychological guidance to better manage altered reactions in prisoners. Thus, according to Giuliani et al. (2021), the challenges of the prison setting require stringent and comprehensive measures and a tailored and multisectoral response involving healthcare prison services and the prison population to fulfill the principle of "prison health is public health."

Additionally, according to Kahambing (2021), the Philippines is particularly challenging and perhaps psychologically precarious since it has the highest jail occupancy in the world. Therefore, prison jails implement contract tracing measures as preventive measures and funding for more computer sets and facilities for e-dalaw (electronic prison visit) to continue the visitation privileges of the person deprived of liberty.

A study conducted among correctional officers emphasized that their sense of responsibility and moral obligation significantly influenced their performance and commitment to their duties, especially during crises (Molleman & Leeuw, 2012).

This research, therefore, delved into the experiences of jail officers in Tagbilaran City Jail amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized the qualitative method of research and the phenomenological approach in this study. In the conduct of my in-depth investigation, I used an interview guide, field notes, and a voice recorder to emphasize the life experiences of Tagbilaran City Jail amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

Phenomenology describes the meaning of lived experiences for individuals experiencing a particular phenomenon or concept. Experience, in a phenomenological sense, includes not only the relatively passive experiences of sensory perception but also imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition, and action. In short, it includes everything that we live through or perform.

The research process for qualitative researchers is emergent. This means that the initial research plan cannot be tightly prescribed and that all phases of the process may change or shift after the researchers enter the field and begin to collect data (Creswell, 2013).

Research Environment

The locale of this study is the Tagbilaran City Jail, located in Tagbilaran City, Bohol. Bohol is a tourist destination with renowned chocolate hills. Tagbilaran City Jail, formerly known as the City of Tagbilaran Rehabilitation Center, was constructed on November 13, 1997, and is located in Cabawan District, Tagbilaran City, about 11 kilometers away from the city proper.

Tagbilaran City jail has a total land area of 1.16 hectares, where a building was constructed consisting of thirteen cells with a total floor area of 230 sq.m. There is a separate female dorm, chapel, kitchen, and admin building enclosed with a 15 ft. high concrete perimeter fence with barbed wire and lighting in half of the land area. The jail is equipped with a basketball court for sunning and recreational purposes located within the jail premises. In front of the prison jail, the building is the admin office and guardhouse. The warden, personnel quarters, and the visiting area were also constructed inside the compound. And lastly, it has forty-three (43) jail officers and a population of three hundred eighty-eight (388) PDLs.

Research Informants

The informants of this study are ten (10) informants from Tagbilaran City Jail. The researcher used the purposive-convenience sampling method to choose the informants: jail officers who are three (3) years or more assigned to the city jail. I selected the research informant based on the pre-specified criteria and proper communication.

Out of the ten (10) informants, four (4) of them will be interviewed individually, and six (6) of them will be included in a Focused Group Discussion (FGD).

Research Instrument

The researcher created an interview guide for the qualified informants. This consisted of open-ended questions aimed to determine the following aspects: part I, preliminary questions, where the informants will respond to some questions such as their personal circumstances, years of service as jail officers, years have been assigned in the Tagbilaran City Jail, current designation and overall situation in the line of work; part II, experiences of the informants, most of the questions propounded are the overall functions and experiences (both positive and

negative) of a jail officer; part III, coping with the challenges encountered, informants will express their strategies and coping mechanisms in dealing with the challenges. Part IV, on the other hand, is the aspirations of the informants. The informants will make suggestions and recommendations for various programs that will aid and improve their competence in order to deliver quality service. The interview guide (IG) was validated and duly approved by the panel members. The interview was conducted and supplemented with field notes and a voice recorder for the documentation of the responses of the informants.

Research Procedures

After the panel approved my research proposal, the researcher submitted the Interview Guide (IG) for validation by the panel. The researcher conducted the preliminary interviews and explained to the informants (individual and focused group discussion) the study's purpose, nature, and observance of research confidentiality. When informants agree to become part of the study, they are asked to sign an informed consent form containing the terms and conditions of the whole interview process before the in-depth interview in a place where they are most comfortable.

Data Collection. The ten (10) jail officers who were the informants were given a particular consent form to ensure their approval and willingness to participate in the interview before starting one in-depth discussion. The researcher also informed the informant of the conditionalities and assurance of the whole interview process, including their right to stop and discontinue the interview if they become uninterested in continuing.

The researcher documented the conduct of the interviews and transcribed the recordings as part of my preparation for a better analysis of the responses.

Data Analysis. The information gathered from the informants' interview was in the local dialect, thus, it was translated into English for general understanding. I utilized the method of Colaizzi, which was a phenomenological and established procedure for analyzing the transcript information that was gathered from the respondents during the interview.

Ethical Consideration. The researcher solicited the cooperation of significant individuals to meet the purpose of exploring the life experiences of the Jail Officers. After the informants accepted the invitation, they signed the informed consent and were informed that they understood the rules and their limitations, including the need to record the proceedings.

Confidentiality and privacy were the prime ethical considerations in the conduct of this study. The documented information was treated in accordance with the provisions of the Data Privacy Act, 2012.

Beneficence. Beneficence in this context involves promoting the well-being of the officers by ensuring that their participation in the research contributes positively to their professional development or enhances the understanding of the jail officers. Researchers should strive to create an environment where officers feel valued and respected for their expertise and experiences, thereby fostering a sense of personal fulfillment and professional growth.

Non-maleficence. The researcher must be mindful of potential maleficence, avoiding any harm or negative consequences that could arise from their research activities. This includes protecting officers from potential risks such as psychological distress or breaches of confidentiality. Researchers should implement robust ethical protocols to safeguard the mental and emotional well-being of participants and ensure that their rights and privacy are fully respected throughout the research process.

Justice. Justice entails fairness and equity in the treatment of participants, ensuring that all officers have an equal opportunity to participate in the research and that their contributions are valued and acknowledged appropriately. Researchers should strive to represent the diverse perspectives and experiences of the City jail officers amidst the pandemic. Accurately, avoiding any biases or prejudices that could compromise the integrity of the research findings.

Autonomy. Autonomy refers to the right of officers to make informed decisions about their participation in the research freely. Researchers should obtain voluntary and informed consent from all participants, clearly explaining the purpose, risks, and benefits of the study, and providing assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. Jail officers should feel empowered to withdraw from the research at any time without fear of reprisal or consequences, ensuring that their autonomy and agency are respected throughout the research process. By upholding these ethical principles, researchers can conduct qualitative research with the City jail officers in a manner that is both respectful and responsible, ultimately contributing to the advancement of knowledge in the field of maritime security.

Trustworthiness of the Research. Trustworthiness consists of four different components: credibility (the validity of the findings), transferability (the applicability of the findings in other contexts), dependability (reliability of the findings at another time), and confirmability (the objectivity of the researcher while carrying out his/her research). The combination of these four terms constitutes the trustworthiness criteria, thus forming conventional pillars for qualitative methodology (Guba, 1981).

Credibility. It is the first aspect or criterion that must be established. It is seen as the most important aspect or measure in establishing trustworthiness because credibility essentially asks the researcher to link the research study's findings with reality to demonstrate the truth of the research findings.

Transferability. The researcher will also establish transferability by providing a robust and detailed account of his experiences during data collection. The researcher will make explicit connections to the cultural and social contexts that surround data collection.

Dependability. Dependability, on the other hand, is also important to trustworthiness because it establishes the research study's findings as consistent and repeatable. The researcher will aim to verify that the findings are consistent with the raw data they collected, making sure that if some other researchers were to look over the data, they would arrive at similar findings, interpretations, and conclusions about the data.

Confirmability. Guba (1981) posited that confirmability is the last criterion of trustworthiness the researcher needs to establish in this study. This criterion has to do with the level of confidence that the research study's findings will be based on the participants' narratives and words rather than potential researcher biases.

Bracketing and Reflexivity. Undertaking qualitative research and my lack of extensive experience in this field may influence the depth of analysis due to my background. This research, centered on City jail officers experiences amidst Covid-19 pandemic, requires a careful acknowledgment of potential personal predispositions. This adds an additional level of intricacy, calling for continuous self-awareness and reflection throughout the research journey. Recognizing and mitigating the potential influence of personal biases on data collection, analysis, and interpretation is crucial to uphold the research's credibility and thoroughness.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Consistent with the methodology of this study, I transcribed and translated the responses, and the significant statements were extracted. I formulated core meanings out of the significant statement and classified them into cluster themes, from which formulated by researcher the emergent themes.

For a clear context of this study, each life experience of the informant was taken mostly in a dialect known to them, so that they may express their thoughts liberally.

Experiences of the Informants in the Performance of their Duties during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Positive Experiences

1. Triumph through Unity
2. Collegial Harmony Initiative

Negative Experiences

1. Scarcity of Supplies
2. PDLs Misbehavior

Coping with the Challenges Encountered by the Informants in the Performance of their Duties during the Covid-19 Pandemic

1. Resilience Amidst Scarcity
2. Synergistic Wellness Renewal
3. Virtual Family Reconnection

Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of Jail Services

1. Adherence to Protocol and Training for Safety
2. Security in Innovation

I ardently aim to outline and explicate the emergent themes in every sub-problem. Each item reflects both positive and negative experiences and the upholding of duties and responsibilities of the informants in the performance of their functions as Jail Officers during the pandemic, which affect their lives as individuals and as stewards of persons deprived of liberty.

Experiences of the Informants in the Performance of their Duties during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The show must go on for the City Jail Officers despite the continued threat brought forth by the Covid-19 pandemic. Their positive experiences helped in triumph through unity, while those experiences that made them sad became their basis for how to improve their services, thus, being resilient during the pandemic is still a success. Formulated emergent themes related to their experience are as follows:

Positive Experiences

Triumph through Unity. It signifies a collective journey of overcoming adversities in the new normal. It underscores the strength found in camaraderie, as individuals join forces to overcome challenges. Additionally, the theme recognizes the role of spiritual resilience, emphasizing the power of prayer as a unifying force contributing to overall triumph and resilience.

During the interview, Informant 1 said that during the pandemic they followed the memorandum from the national headquarters per IAFT guidelines on health protocols, she uttered:

Maka-assure gyud ko na wala gyud me na positive kay ni sunod me sa memorandum from national head quarter down to region-wide, down to the unit: district, city and municipal unit (IDI1:SS5). (We ensured that no one got positive because we followed the memorandum from the national headquarters down to region-wide, down to the unit: district, city, and municipal unit).

Further in group discussion, Informant 8 shared that during the pandemic when lockdowns were being implemented, he said:

Among ipang-hambog kay bisag isa wala gyud me positive sa covid. Malipayon me kay walay na-igo namo sa personnel ug PDL kay gibuhat gyud namo ang total lockdown ug walay dalaw (FGD4:SS4). (We are proud that no one got positive for covid because we implemented the total lockdown and no visitation).

In a similar group discussion, Informant 9 expressed how their team can take immediate action during the pandemic, he said:

Strict pagdawat ug pasulod/gawas, sa mga gamit ug pagkaon nga masulod sa jail para iwas sa contamination sa virus mao ng walay gyud na positive namo diri (FGD5:SS3). (No one gets positive the virus because we are strict about everything to avoid contamination inside the jail).

Collegial Harmony Initiative. Signifies a concerted effort to foster professional satisfaction, harmony among colleagues, and strengthened relationships between personnel and Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). Additionally, the theme emphasizes the strategic augmentation of manpower to enhance overall jail services. It encapsulates a holistic initiative focused on promoting positive relationships, teamwork, and service improvement within the jail setting.

In a group discussion, Informant 8 stated that despite the threat of the pandemic, the lockdown made their colleague's relationship stronger, he explained:

Tungod kay lockdown man lage nagka bonding gyud me sa among kauban ug naling-on gyud among relasyon sa among isig kauban (FGD4:SS1). (Because of the lockdown we have a lot of time to bonding with our colleagues and our relationship gets stronger).

Also in group discussion, Informant 6 shared that during the pandemic they provide activities for the PDLs, and their team also cooperates the reason they build a healthy relationship with PDLs, she stated:

Naghatag ug activities para malingaw sila ug kami pod mo cooperate together nila which is good kay naka create me ug connection nila. Nalingaw sila ug nalingaw pod me sa activities like volleyball ug mag tennis nga good for mental health. For me, good experiences na healthy among lawas ug healthy relationship sa PDL (FGD2:SS3). (We provide activities for them to have fun and we cooperate with them which is good because we created a relationship with the PDL. We enjoy activities also like volleyball and tennis which are good for our mental health. For me, good experience because we build a healthy relationship with PDL).

In addition to the group discussion, Informant 5 expressed that the relationship with their fellow personnel became closer because they were united inside the jail, she shared:

Na close ang bonding sa among mga kauban na personnel kay na closer gyud among relationship kay nagkahiusa raman me diri sa jail (FGD1:SS1). (The bonding and relationship with our fellow personnel get closer because we are united here in the jail).

Negative Experiences

Scarcity of Supplies. This theme denotes the critical challenges faced by jail officers when grappling with inadequate resources. It encompasses various aspects that impact the daily operations, safety, and overall effectiveness of prison personnel. In the realm of correctional facilities, the insufficiency of supplies can manifest as shortages in essential items such as facemasks, alcohol, medicine, and even their daily consumption of food.

Informant 9 in a group discussion also stated the dilemma that during the pandemic there was a shortage of supplies, he said:

About sa supplies and logistical support na short gyud ta kay tibuok kalibotan ang gakinahanglan adtong facemask (FGD5:SS7). (Shortage of supplies and logistics especially the facemasks because the whole world needs it).

Moreover, Informant 6 in a group discussion expressed the difficulties of medicine due to being out of stock, she said:

Katong time na ga shortage of stocks, especially sa facemask ug medicine kay diba pang hilantanon, so mahutdan na ug biogesic ug sa mga pharmacy mag lisod na ug palit (FGD2:SS8). (There is a shortage of stocks, especially for facemasks and medicine especially biogesic that run out of stocks and are difficult to find in any pharmacies).

Informant 10 in a group discussion shared that there was also a shortage of food during the pandemic, he said:

Sama sa ilang gi ingon nagka short ta sa tambal, alcohol, ug facemask. Aside pod ana nagka short pod ta sa pagkaon (FGD6:SS7). (As they say, there was shortage on medicine, alcohol, and facemask. Aside from that, also shortage on food).

PDLs Misbehavior. The theme explores the challenges faced by jail officers when dealing with disruptive or unruly behavior exhibited by inmates within the correctional facility. This theme encompasses various dimensions that impact the safety, order, and rehabilitative efforts within the correctional environment. By delving into the responses of the informants, a comprehensive understanding can be gained of the complexities involved in managing and mitigating disruptive behaviors within correctional settings.

Informant 4 expressed her difficulties in handling the PDLs due to their behavior during the pandemic, she said:

Considering the behavior of the PDL, so we cannot easily maka control sa PDL kay they were just insist kung unsa gyud gusto nila so mao gyud na mahitabo when we limit the e-dalaw and e-tawag so masuko gyud sila. It is affect us a jail officer kay we have to be buotan man sa ilaha ug mosabot sa ilang mga needs but we can have the dialogue with the PDL on dealing with those need or gikinahanglan sa ilaha na gusto mahitabo (IDI4:SS18). (Considering the behavior of the PDL, we cannot easily control them because they were just insisting on what they really wanted so that's exactly what happens when we limit the e-dalaw and e-tawag so they get really angry. It affects us as a jail officer because we have to be kind to them and understand their needs, but we can have a soft conversation with the PDL on dealing with those needs).

Informant 6 also shared that female PDLs were hard to handle because they were already bored, she said:

My difficulties are to deal with the rant sa mga PDL, especially sa female kay boryong na sila bisag unsa nalang gusto buhaton unya gahi ug ulo na sila (FGD2:SS7). (My difficulties are dealing with the rant of the PDL, especially the females because they are already bored, and they are stubborn).

In a group discussion, Informant 7 shared his difficulties in managing the PDLs, he said:

Pinaka challenges na encountered kanang mag-away na ang PDL tungod sa ka boryong nila. Galisod ko insaon pag manage nila na ma-control nako sila nga mabugnaw ilang huna-huna kay sa ilang pamilya problemado pod sila unya inag abot diri na ipit sila. Challenges gyud ang pag control nila labi nan ga daghan na ang na apektohan mutag nag kani-kanit na ang problema sa sulod diri sa jail (FGD3:SS8). (The biggest challenge encountered is that the PDL is going to fight because they are bored. It's difficult for me how to manage and control them so that they will be calm because they are also problematic in their family. Controlling them is really a challenge, especially many people are affected every time there is a problem inside the jail).

Coping with the Challenges Encountered by the Informants in the Performance of their Duties during the Covid-19 Pandemic

In this segment, three (3) themes were developed, identifying the challenges encountered and how they cope with challenging situations during the pandemic. These will highlight the informant's initiative and what other means are being employed to continue performing their functions and duties as jail officers.

Resilience Amidst Scarcity. This encapsulates the collective response to the insufficiency of basic needs. It highlights the community's resourcefulness in the face of inadequate supplies, emphasizing collaboration as a key strategy to address essential needs during challenging times.

Informant 1 stated her ideas to solve the shortage of facemasks, she said:

During this time, na trained or gi trained nako sa akong chief nurse before kung asa ko padulong if I'm in need of supplies. So, I was orient from him ug asa ko padungon. At this time, gitagaan ko niya ug mga ideas nga pwedi ko mudong sa PHO, DOH, city health. As well as here in barangay cabawan. Didto me nakapangayo ug

mask kay mask man gyd ang pinaka importante. (IDI1:SS6). (During this time, I was trained by my chief nurse before where I'm going if we need supplies. So, I was oriented from him what I'm going to do. At this time, he gave me ideas that I could go to PHO, DOH, and city health. As well here in barangay cabawan where I can ask for a mask because a facemask is the most important thing).

Moreover, Informant 3 stated the medical alternative ways, he said:

Sa logistical shortage, naa me gi gamit nga alternative pina-agi sa tuob kay naa man ni ingon na makatabang kuno ang tuob (IDI3:SS13). (In logistical shortage, we apply the alternative way like steam inhalation).

In addition, Informant 7 in a group discussion, he said: Mao gihapon nagbuhat ug alternative like tuob ug mga herbal nga silbing tambal nila (FGD3:SS11). (We apply the alternative way like steam inhalation and herbal as their medicine).

Synergistic Wellness Renewal. It highlights the importance of holistic cooperation, focusing on the physical engagement and proactive health wellness of both Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) and personnel. This theme suggests a unified effort to renew and enhance overall wellness through collaboration and a proactive stance on health initiatives.

Informant 2 elaborates on his strategies during the pandemic, he uttered:

Nindot akong coping strategies during the pandemic kay kuan ko, style nako para pang patay sa boredom, naghimo ko ug target nga physical exercises nga mo lose akong timbang (IDI2:SS15) (My coping strategy during the pandemic just to kill the boredom is I do physical exercises that can lose weight).

Informant 3 expressed that there were games also for the personnel, he stated:

Unya sa personnel naay mga dula nga gipahigayon, sama sa basketball, tennis ug volleyball para dili ma focus among huna-huna sa pandemic kay mabali namo sa sports. (IDI3:SS12). (There are games for personnel, such as basketball, tennis, and volleyball so that our minds don't focus on the pandemic because we enjoyed sports).

Informant 10 in the group discussion also shared his coping strategies, he said:

For me, disiplina sa kaugalingon. Dili mag sige ug bilar kada gabie, mag exercise ug mag inom ug vitamins aron kanunay healthy ang lawas (FGD6:SS10). (For me, self-discipline. Sleep early, exercise and drink vitamins to keep the body healthy).

Virtual Family Reconnection. Captures the essence of addressing strained family connections during lockdown through diverse electronic communication strategies. It emphasizes the use of technology as a bridge to strengthen family bonds despite physical distancing. This theme underscores the importance of leveraging digital platforms to facilitate meaningful connections and maintain family ties during challenging times.

Informant 3 expressed his initiative to reach family, he said:

Sa akong kaugalingon, panahon nga mangumusta ko sa akong pamilya pina-agi sa virtual na makita nako sila ug mag videocall me (IDI3:SS14). (I do video call to my family if I missed them).

Informant 5 in a focus group discussion shared the taking action for PDLs to connect with their families, she said:

Nag conduct me ug e-dalaw sa PDL para makita sa videocall ilang pamilya aron mawala ilang kamingaw (FGD1:SS14). (Conducted an e-dalaw to PDL to see their family in a video call to get rid of their loneliness).

Moreover, Informant 9 in a focus group discussion shared, he said:

Among gihimo kay nagpa e-dalaw ug e-tawag kay aron mabawasbawasan ilang kamingaw sa pamilya (FGD5:SS10). (We made e-dalaw and e-call to alleviate their loneliness in the family).

Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of Jail Services

Two (2) themes were created to describe the aspirations of the informants that will improve the quality of jail services offered by the Tagbilaran City Jail in times of crisis.

Adherence to Protocol and Training for Safety. Reflects a focus on prioritizing safety measures, particularly through strict adherence to IATF Covid-19 protocols. It also emphasizes the need for intensified training to enhance skills and preparedness, ensuring a comprehensive approach to maintaining a safe environment.

Informant 2 expounded his wish to have more funds for the programs and training for personnel. He explained in his statement:

Pag maintain ug paghatag ug dako nga pundo para kani nga programs mapalambo pa ug ang mga personnel naay training dapat naay assessment every quarter or monthly para matag jail officer mahimong responsible (IDI2:SS27). (To maintain and provide more funds for the programs to be developed and for the personnel to have proper training, and there should be an assessment every quarter or monthly so that every jail officer will be responsible).

Additionally, Informant 1 stated that they need more seminars, she said:

Hopefully makahatag pa ug more seminar para ma disseminate namo sa among kauban ug PDL (IDI1:SS20). (Hopefully, they will give more seminars to us so that we can disseminate it to our colleagues and PDL).

Furthermore, Informant 10 in a focus group discussion expressed the same desires, he said:

Para mas mo nindot ug hapsay pa among panerbisyo as personnel tagaan unta me additional seminars aron madugangan among skills, same anang nurse nga wala sa amoa kay aron ug naa emergency matabangan namo dayon (FGD6:SS14). (For us to make our service even more fast and smooth as personnel, we should have given additional seminars to improve our skills).

Security in Innovation. This embodies a strategic approach to facility development. It underscores the dual goals of rebuilding and refurbishing for security purposes, alongside innovative solutions such as sustainable water reservoirs. The theme emphasizes a comprehensive approach to facility development, ensuring both the safety of officers and visitors and the incorporation of innovative practices to enhance security measures.

Informant 3 expressed his wish that the government would give more budget for the region to improve the jail facilities. He exclaimed:

Budgetan sa governo ang region 7 ug dugang nga facilities and logistical support nga kanunay naa (IDI3:SS21). (The government will give more budget to Region 7 for additional facilities and logistical support).

Informant 7 in a focused group discussion expressed his desire for improvement, he stated:

Akong pangandoy alang sa kalamboan kay rehabilitation area tungod sa kadugayon sa building dili na kaayo safe atong PDL. Nindot unta e-upgrade atong building especially sa male dorm kay karaan na (FGD3:SS16). (My wish for improvement is to have a rehabilitation area and it would be nice to upgrade our building, especially the male dorm because it is old).

Moreover, Informant 6 in a focused group discussion stated her wish to have own clinic inside the jail facility, she said:

Need ug clinic kay wala pa me clinic, gihimo raman namo ang admin ug clinic so nindot gyd ug naay own clinic para if ever naay masakit adto ibutang (FGD2:SS17). (We need a clinic because we don't have a clinic yet, we just used the admin office as a clinic so it's nice to have our own clinic so if anyone gets sick there, they can be taken care of).

Data Analysis

Experiences of the Informants in the Performance of their Duties during the Covid-19 Pandemic. I formulated the following themes reflecting the experiences of the informants.

Positive Experiences

Triumph through Unity. This theme signifies the overall success and resilience of the jail officers who continuously performed their duties and responsibilities during the pandemic. During the pandemic, they adhered to the national headquarters letter and IAFT health procedure requirements. Moreover, the team strictly enforces rules of total lockdown and no visitation to prevent infection inside the jail facilities.

This theme is supported by Stewardship Theory which promotes the idea that individuals act as stewards with a shared responsibility for the common good. In the theme, the collective journey of overcoming adversities aligns with the notion of stewardship, where individuals come together to navigate challenges collectively, emphasizing their joint commitment to triumph over difficulties. The theory aligns with the idea that individuals, acting as stewards, can contribute to the overall triumph and resilience of the community by working together to overcome challenges and recognizing the strength found in unity.

According to Mufarreh et al. (2021), with the increasing number of offenders populating the criminal justice system and the imposed responsibilities placed on correctional and community supervision agencies, effectively identifying and training leaders for success is now more critical than ever. The backbone of corrections is its workforce, the corrections sector relies on qualified, trained, and dedicated staff for effective, professional operations (Saddam & Mansor, 2019). A dedicated officer is strongly involved in his or her work and experiences a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge (Kuntsi, 2014).

Collegial Harmony Initiative. This theme illustrated the positive experiences that despite the continued threat of the pandemic and with all the restrictions on lockdowns, the jail officers were still able to promote positive relationships, teamwork, and enhance jail services. In this case, the jail officers' relationship gets stronger, and build a healthy relationship with PDLs.

This theme is connected to Stewardship Theory which underscores the importance of shared responsibility for the common good. In the context of the "Collegial Harmony Initiative," jail officers are exemplifying stewardship by promoting positive relationships, teamwork, and enhancing jail services despite the challenges of the pandemic. Their actions demonstrate a commitment to the common good of both the staff and persons deprived of liberty (PDLs).

Atkin-Plunk & Armstrong (2013), provide that prison officers' administrative and correctional obligations are extensive. In addition to carrying out the goal of the prison wardens of the state, federal or corporate entities also oversee the order, security, and prevention of escapes and riots in a facility. The priorities may include administering security and security activities, managing human resources, handling critical events, managing the budget, promoting an excellent organizational climate, presiding over a physical facility, administering public relations, retaining professional expertise, implementing strategic planning, and other duties for the promotion of positive relationships to improve jail services.

Negative Experiences

Scarcity of Supplies. This theme emphasized the negative experiences of the informants. Indicates the scarcity or lack and challenges encountered by the jail officer within the new normal. When it comes to the world of

correctional facilities, a lack of supplies can lead to shortages of facemasks, alcohol, medication, and even the daily meals that inmates and personnel need.

This theme is supported by the Strain Theory proposed by Robert Merton. This suggests that individuals engage in criminal behavior when they experience a disjunction between societal goals and the means available to achieve them. In the context of correctional facilities facing shortages of essential supplies, the scarcity could create strain among both inmates and personnel. The disjunction between the societal expectation of maintaining order and the limited means available due to shortages of facemasks, alcohol, medication, and daily meals can potentially contribute to heightened tensions and negative experiences within the correctional environment.

According to Narag & Jones (2017), prison wardens in Philippine Penitentiaries often face problems such as food supplies, and equipment that are inadequate for ordinary human demands daily. Moreover, according to De Guzman et al. (2020), the lack of appropriate sanitation, particularly for toilet/water supply, insufficient medical facilities, and poorly equipped facilities are present in most jails. These problems are real in jails in the provinces due to the insufficiency of the budget and inadequate facilities (Jones & Narag 2021).

PDLs Misbehavior. This theme emphasized the challenges faced by the informants when dealing with disruptive or unruly behavior by the inmates during the pandemic. Since total lockdown was implemented the PDLs are already bored and hot-tempered because of the new normal set-up inside the jail facility.

This theme correlates with Bandura's Social Learning Theory in criminology, which posits that individuals, including inmates, acquire behavior patterns through observation. In the context of the pandemic-induced total lockdown and the altered conditions for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), feelings of boredom and frustration might lead to increased instances of irritable and disruptive conduct. Inmates could mimic behaviors they view as gratifying or attention-seeking. The misbehavior witnessed by jail officers underscores how the social environment plays a significant role in shaping the actions of PDLs amidst challenging circumstances.

According to Shammass (2017), PDL's misbehavior lie in the frustrations or deprivations which led to the withdrawal of freedom, such as the lack of heterosexual relationships, isolation from the free community, the withholding of goods and services, deprivations in the immediate terms thwarted goals, discomfort, boredom, and loneliness, they carry more pain like a set of threats that are against the foundations of the prisoner's being. There is also the fear of deterioration within the prison environment which may affect PDLs (Tomar, 2013). According to Narag & Jones (2016), the PDLs had been used to manage other inmates, which translated into challenging prison authorities and creating power dynamics that contradicted the goals of reformation. Relative to this, the prison environment has been described as a barely controlled jungle where the aggressive and the strong will exploit the weak, and the weak are dreadfully aware of it.

Coping with the Challenges Encountered by the Informants in the Performance of their Duties during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Resilience Amidst Scarcity. This theme describes how jail officers cope with the challenges encountered by the insufficiency of basic needs, inadequate supplies, and essential needs during challenging times. They used medical alternative ways and were resourceful during shortages.

This theme aligns with aspects of Self-efficacy Theory as it highlights the adaptive and resourceful strategies employed by individuals, in this case, jail officers, in the face of scarcity and challenges. This highlights adaptive strategies, resource management, innovation, and a focus on maintaining essential services and psychosocial well-being during challenging times. Both concepts underscore the importance of being able to respond effectively to the unique challenges presented during a pandemic.

According to Winwood (2013), resilience involves a process of negotiating, managing, and adapting to significant sources of stress or resources inherent within the individual facilitates their capacity to bounce back in the face of adversity. Resilience helps avoid emotional exhaustion particularly during high-stress situations. Many prison systems struggled to even cater for the basic needs of prisoners and ensure prison health.

Sufficient space, nutrition and drinking water, access to sanitary items and decent sanitary facilities as well as proper ventilation in accommodation and working areas, are not a given in many prisons around the world. And access to personal protective equipment (PPE), infrared thermometers or testing capacities specific to Covid-19 is challenging. As it is certainly a new and high-stress experience for personnel to navigate a pandemic, improved resilience can be influential in preventing burnout. It is important to also consider the role of resources in the work lives of prison officers (Klinoff et al., 2018).

Synergistic Wellness Renewal. This theme describes how the jail officers employed strategies during lockdown inside the jail. They engaged in physical activities on health initiatives. Sometimes the informant plays basketball with the PDLs as his strategy to avert boredom.

The Protection Motivation Theory often focuses on ensuring the well-being and safety of individuals in various settings, including workplaces like correctional facilities. The theme of Synergistic Wellness Renewal suggests that jail officers are actively taking measures to enhance their well-being, both physically and mentally, during the lockdown. This aligns with the core principles of protection management, which involve safeguarding the health and safety of individuals.

The integrated wellness approach has emerged during the pandemic. Hence, according to Chauhan & Maheshwari (2021), the synergistic confluence will act as complementary/supportive knowledge in humanity's struggle against the pandemic. Therefore, there was a gradual increase in positive self-perception and motivation to overcome their dependence on gym and fitness equipment and to continue fitness exercises at home. The regular fitness workouts at home during the lockdown greatly helped them overcome psychological issues and fitness concerns (Kaur et al., 2020).

Virtual Family Reconnection. This theme describes how the jail officers applied the strategies to strained family connections amidst the pandemic. Despite physical distancing, they used the technology as a bridge to strengthen family bonds. Most of the informants reached their families through video calls to get rid of loneliness.

This theme is aligned with Stewardship Theory often involves a long-term orientation, focusing on sustaining and enhancing resources over time. In the context of the theme, relationships with family members are significant personal resources for jail officers. The use of technology to facilitate virtual family connections reflects a form of stewardship, as the officers are actively managing and nurturing their family relationships despite physical distancing challenges.

During the lockdown, virtual family and social peer support were employed as self-care practices for anxiety self-management. The social isolation required during the pandemic compounded patient and family stressors and diminished the patient's access to clinicians and usual support network and coping strategies. Technology and tele-palliative care were utilized to reconnect the family care that enhanced coping skills and support (Mackey et al., 2022).

Aspirations of the Informants to Improve the Quality of Jail Services

Adherence to Protocol and Training for Safety. This theme depicts the desires of the informants to enhance skills and preparedness to ensure maintaining a safe environment. Informants aspired more funds for the programs and training for personnel to improve their skills and knowledge.

This aligns with the core principle of Protection Motivation Theory, which involves implementing measures to mitigate risks and ensure a secure environment. This theme is centered around ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals within an organization or environment. The theme also emphasizes the informants' desire to adhere to protocols and undergo safety training.

According to Kock & Van der Merwe (2009), providing quality service could enhance an organization's competitive advantage with beneficial financial implications. Service delivery requires the full cooperation and commitment of all the employees in the organization, including management and training.

Security in Innovation. This theme was created to describe facility development to ensure the safety of jail officers, PDLs, and visitors to deliver quality service. This innovation underlines the dual goals of rebuilding and refurbishing for safety in delivering the proper performance of duties and responsibilities of the jail officers.

The theme of Security in Innovation aligns with the theory itself, the Stewardship Theory by emphasizing responsible resource management, long-term orientation, quality service delivery, ethical considerations, balancing stakeholder interests, and adaptive management. The focus on innovation in facility development reflects a commitment to stewardship principles, ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals while delivering quality services in the jail setting.

Moreover, innovation that would be beneficial in the future is a challenge in all fields, not just corrections. Practice changes might best prepare organizations for it will always be similarly uncertain (Jackson, 2015).

Implications for Practice

For the Tagbilaran City Jail Personnel the implementation of several suggestions is recommended to inspire and encourage jail officers for relevant improvements. Firstly, the development of specialized training programs tailored to address challenges unique to the pandemic, emphasizing the significance of humane treatment and effective guidance, is crucial. Introducing mental health support services for jail officers can aid in coping with the stresses associated with their roles during the pandemic. Establishing open communication channels within the jail facility is another key recommendation, fostering dialogue among personnel and creating a supportive work environment. The implementation of recognition programs to acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of jail officers can significantly boost morale and motivation.

As for the Local Government Unit (LGU), the following suggestions are proposed to make informed decisions based on the comprehensive overview. First, allocating resources based on identified needs within the City Jail Officers' domain, including infrastructure, equipment, and personnel, is vital. Facilitating collaborations between the LGU and City Jail Officers to promote joint initiatives that enhance overall efficiency and well-being is another key recommendation. Additionally, engaging the local community in understanding the challenges faced by City Jail Officers can foster empathy and support for their initiatives.

The following suggestions are proposed to the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to effectively address challenges through education and training, the following suggestions are recommended. Organizing workshops and seminars on relevant topics such as crisis management and adapting to new challenges can equip jail officers with necessary skills. Conducting regular assessments to identify emerging issues and adjusting training programs accordingly ensures ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

These should be put forth by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) to encourage and enhance organizational initiatives, developing data-driven policies based on the study's information ensures that organizational initiatives are well-informed and aligned with identified needs. Establishing a platform for sharing best practices among different BJMP facilities fosters a collaborative approach to addressing challenges.

Collaborating with the courts to implement legal awareness programs for City Jail Officers ensures a comprehensive understanding of legal aspects related to their roles. These suggestions aim to translate the study's insights into actionable steps that benefit Tagbilaran City Jail Personnel, the Local Government Unit, the Department of Interior and Local Government, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and the Courts.

Implications for Future Studies

Building Resilience: Assessing the Efficacy of Training Programs for City Jail Officers in Handling Crisis Situations Beyond the Pandemic. This would focus on the resilience of City Jail Officers; this study evaluates the effectiveness of training programs designed to enhance their ability to handle crisis situations. It explores

the impact of such training on their resilience and adaptability, considering its relevance beyond the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic.

Crisis Management Protocols: Evaluating and Refining Strategies Implemented by City Jail Officers in the Post-Covid-19 Context:

This research evaluates and refines crisis management protocols implemented by City Jail Officers post-Covid-19. It investigates the lessons learned from the pandemic, assesses the effectiveness of crisis response strategies, and proposes refinements for future crisis management.

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