

“Beyond Basic Needs: The Perceived Effects of Social Support Programs to Person Deprived of Liberty”

Ramelyn B. Huagon, RCrim

Ifugao State University, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.10100263>

Received: 13 January 2026; Accepted: 19 January 2026; Published: 03 February 2026

ABSTRACT

This study determined the perceived effects of social support programs and their correlates among persons deprived of liberty (PDL) in the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) Cabarroguis, Quirino. A descriptive correlational research design was utilized in this study to determine the perceived effect of social support programs on PDL in the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology Cabarroguis, Quirino. A self structured questionnaire was used to collect the data needed for this research and purposive random sampling was used to recruit the one hundred (100) PDL of the BJMP Cabarroguis, Quirino. Results revealed that the PDL received enough social support from family, friends, the religious sector, and Non-Government Organization (NGO) and the perceived effect of the social support program was generally effective. These findings suggest that the social support programs should be continuous and maintained to help the PDL cope with the challenges and emotional feelings while they are behind the prison.

Keywords: Basic Needs, Perceived Effects, Person Deprived of Liberty, Social Support Program

INTRODUCTION

Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), commonly referred to as incarcerated individuals, represents a highly vulnerable population whose experience extend beyond physical confinement to encompass psychological, social, and economic challenges. The rehabilitation and reintegration of PDLs have shifted from purely punitive measures to holistic frameworks that emphasize psychosocial support. Social support programs are defined as the perceived or actual instrumental and expressive provisions supplied by the community, social networks, and family- serve as a critical buffering mechanism against the “pains of imprisonment” (Kao et al.2014; Reidy & Sorenson,2020). Studies internationally suggest that structured social support interventions significantly influence inmates’ well-being and post-release outcomes, such as reducing aggression, enhancing resilience, and improving social connectedness (Beyond Us & Them program finding).

In South Africa, research on maximum-security offenders indicates that perceived social support from friends and family is a significant predictor of adaptive coping, helping to reduce depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation (Langenhoven et al.,2024; Pratt & Foster,2020). These programs foster coping skills, self-efficacy and social connectedness – key protective factors against reoffending during and after incarceration (Bales & Mears,2008;Travis, 2005)

In the Philippines, the rehabilitation of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) is guided by constitutional mandates and institutional frameworks implemented primarily by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) and the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor).Furthermore, national policies emphasizes the inmate welfare and development through structured programs such as the Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP), livelihood training, educational services, religious activities, and psychological counseling (BJMP,2019). In national, Arquesola and Sabijon (2025) studies suggests that while these programs are generally well-implemented, there remains a critical need to bridge the gap between basic provisions and the psychological needs of PDLs.

At the regional level, studies in areas like Western Visayas and Northern Mindanao (Region 10) have identified that social support acts as a moderator for help-seeking behavior, especially among female PDL (Del Rosario et.al.,2025). Another study in Angeles City found that emotional, instrumental, and informational

support significantly shaped formerly incarcerated individuals' reentry trajectories, particularly in terms of well-being and reduced likelihood of returning to crime. Additionally, the implementation of social programs varies based on provincial resources and community involvement.

Locally, research conducted in municipal and city jails reveals that "inmate-to-inmate support systems – often referred to as pangkat or sub-groups- functions as a surrogate family structure (Aide Interdisciplinary Research, 2025). However, the perceived effect of these programs is often dampened by the local community's "prejudicial attitude", which remains a significant hurdle for PDLs even after they have participated in all available institutional support programs (Monteron & Abellanosa,2025; Del Rosario et al.,2025).

Despite growing scholarship or studies, there remains a limited body of research that explicitly centers on the perceived effects of social support programs among PDLs, much less attention has been devoted to investigating social support in the context of prison visitation, often overlooking the subjective meanings and interpretations of support from the perspective of incarcerated individuals themselves. Addressing this gap, the researcher conceived an idea to conduct an inquiry in their field that could offer / provide insight into the relevance of social support in the correctional setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The paradigm of modern penology has evolved from a purely retributive model to a rehabilitative framework that prioritizes the holistic well-being of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL). Central to this transformation is the role of social support – a multi-dimensional construct involving emotional, instrumental, and informational assistance (Kao et.al.,2024;Reidy & Sorensen,2020). Furthermore, social support is a key determinant of successful integration and psychosocial functioning among formerly incarcerated persons, operating across emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal domains (Matias,K.A.et.al.,2025).

Globally, the "pains of imprisonment" are recognized as significant barriers' to rehabilitation. International research highlights that social support acts as a critical buffer against the stressors of incarceration, such as isolation and loss of freedom. In various Western contexts, studies have demonstrated that high levels of perceived support from family and friends are inversely correlated with suicidal ideation and depressive symptoms (Pratt & Foster,2020). Furthermore, in the studies by (Kuehn & Vosgerau,2025;Choi & Ryan,2021) emphasize that without robust social networks, PDLs often succumb to "internalized stigma", which significantly increases the likelihood of recidivism.

The Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) implements the Integrated Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP) to provide psychosocial support. National studies (Arquesola & Sabijon,2025) suggest that while basic provisions like food and healthcare are mandated, "expressive" provisions – such as family visitation and religious support – carry more weight in a PDL's self-perception.

Objectives Of the Study

1. To determine the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1. Age;
 - 1.2. Sex;
 - 1.3. Civil Status
 - 1.4. Crime Committed
 - 1.5. Years in Jail
2. To determine the effects of social support program as perceived by the respondent in terms of:
 - a. Support from family and friends
 - b. Support from the religious sector; and

c. Support from NGOs

3. To determine the significant difference in the effects of the social support programs to persons deprived of liberty when they are grouped according to their profile.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the quantitative descriptive-comparative research design to determine the effects of social support programs received by the PDL in the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Cabarroiguis, Quirino. Additionally, the researcher used questionnaires to collect the data needed for this research. Furthermore, the descriptive comparative study is used to describe the differences among groups in a population without manipulating the independent variable (Cantrell, 2011).

The study was conducted at the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) Quirino Province, Philippines specifically at Zamora, Cabarroiguis, Quirino in front of the LGU gymnasium. The participants of the study were 92 Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) in the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) Cabarroiguis, Quirino who were selected through proportional random sampling to ensure fair representation of subgroups within the population.

Proportional random sampling was employed and divided a finite population into subpopulations and then applied random sampling techniques to each population, where it draw more precise conclusions by ensuring that every subgroup is properly represented in the sample (McCombes, 2019).

The study used a semi-structured questionnaire adapted from previous research as the main tool for data gathering. It was designed to address the research questions on the impact of social support programs on the PDL. The first part of the questionnaire is a tool to determine the profile pf the participants. The second part contained questions to determine the social support program received by the PDL. The third part is a tool to determine the impact of the social support program received by the PDL.

As a process, validation involved collecting and analyzing data to assess the accuracy of an instrument. There were numerous statistical test measures to assess the validity of quantitative instruments, which generally involve pilot testing. To validate the self-structured questionnaire and determine its language sustainability and comprehensibility, pre-testing to 30 individuals who resembled the characteristics of the intended respondents of the study was scored and subjected to a test of reliability to assure the degree of consistency using Cronbach's Alpha. The reliability value of the questionnaire is 0.992 which is above 0.70. Thus, the relationship between the independent variable and dependent variable is reliable for further research.

Data Gathering Procedure

After the approval and validation of the self-structured questionnaire by the researcher, the necessary communication letter was prepared. The researcher secured approval from the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology Cabarroiguis, Quirino. The researcher sought assistance from the personnel thereof for the identification of respondents. Upon successful identification, the survey questionnaire was administered. Contents thereof and thoroughly explained in the language/dialect the PDL can fully understand. Thereafter, the questionnaire was personally retrieved by the researcher. Data were organized, tabulated, and interpreted.

Ethical Protocol of the Study

The researcher considered the ethical protocol as stated in a university research manual in conducting the research. Therefore, in the interview with the key informant, it stated the condition in gathering data for them. It was also stated that the confidentiality of the data gathered from the participants was assured. The data-gathering procedure was given and instructed personally by the researcher in order to get the necessary data from the participants.

Statistical Treatment of Data

To interpret the data gathered, the researcher used the following statistical treatment:

1. Frequency Count and Percentage

This is used to determine the frequency counts and percentage distribution of personal related variables of the respondents.

2. Weighted Mean

This is used to determine the assessment of the respondents with regards to their personal profiles. It served as guide for the interpretation of data to determine the corresponding means/ equivalent. remarks and the weighted

3. Median

It is the value separating the higher half from the lower half of a data sample, a population, or a probability distribution.

Table 1. Median Description on Level of Preparedness

Median	Description
1.00	Strongly Disagree
2.00	Disagree
3.00	Somewhat Agree
4.00	Agree
5.00	Strongly Agree

4. Mann-Whitney U Test / T-test for Independent Sample

It was used to determine the significant difference on the effect of social support along family and peer, religious sector and NGOs on persons deprived of liberty when they were grouped according to sex.

5. Kruskal Wallis / ANOVA

It was used to determine the significant difference on the effect of social support along family and peer, religious sector and NGOs on persons deprived of liberty when they were grouped according to age, civil status, crime committed and years in jail.

Conceptual Framework

The study was anchored in the Input, Process and Output Model as a guide toward the realization of its purpose.

As shown in figure 1, the Input contains the profile of the participants which includes their age, sex, civil status, crimes committed and years in jail, while the process includes floating of questionnaires to determine the effects of social support programs to the person deprived of liberty at Bureau of Jail Management and Penology at Cabarroguis, Quirino, moreover, the Output is the perceived effect of social support programs for the respondents.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Part I. Profile of the Respondent

Table 2 below shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex and civil status.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondent

Profile	Frequency	Percent
Age	20-30	32
	31-40	30

	41-50	18	19.6
	51-60	9	9.8
	61 and above	3	3.3
	Total	92	100
Sex	Male	86	93.5%
	Female	6	6.5%
	Total	92	100%
Civil Status	Single	45	48.9%
	Married	41	44.6%
	Widowed	6	6.5%
	Total	92	100
Crime Committed	Drugs	22	23.9%
	Rape	25	27.2%
	Murder	19	20.7%
	Carnapping	6	6.5%
	Robbery	3	3.3%
	Estafa	3	3.3%
	VAWC	4	4.3%
	Human Trafficking	2	2.2%
	Reckless Imprudence	1	1.1%
	Illegal Logging	6	6.5%
	Violation of Anti-Cuttle	1	1.1%
	Total	92	100
Years in Jail	5 years and below	78	84.8%
	6-10	10	10.9%
	11-15	3	3.3%
	16-20	1	1.1%
	Total	92	100

Table above shows that as to age, there were 34.8 percent (32) who's at the age range of 20 - 30 years old, 32.6 percent (30) were at 31-40 years of age and 19.6 percent (18) were at 41 - 50 years old, 9.8 percent (9) were 51 - 60 years old and 3.3 percent (3) were 61 years old and above. As to sex, there were 93.5 percent (86) male and 6.5 percent (6) female respondents. Single respondents have a percentage of 48.9 (45), married were 44.6 percent (41) and there were 6.5 percent (6) who are widowed. As to the crimes committed by the PDLs, there were 27.2 percent (25) who committed rape, 23.9 percent (22) related to drugs, (20.7 percent 19) committed murder, with both percent of 6.5 (6) were committed carnapping and illegal logging. 3.3 percent (3) committed Estaffa and robbery, 2.2 percent (2) on human trafficking and reckless imprudence and violation of anti-cuttle with a percent of 1.1 (1). As to years in jail, majority were in jail for 5 years and below with 84.8 percent (78), followed by those who were at jail for 6 - 10 years with a percent of 10.9 (10), 3.3 percent (3) 11-15 years and 1.1 percent (1) who was in jail for 16-20 years already.

Part 2. Effect of Social Support to Persons Deprived of Liberty Table 3 shows the effect of social support to persons deprived of liberty along family and peer support.

Table 3. Effect of Social Support to Persons Deprived of Liberty along Family and Peer Support

	Median	Description
1. Friends and family serve as support for the social hardships I face	4.00	Agree
2. Being surrounded by my family and friends greatly benefits my mental health.	5.00	Strongly Agree
3. My physical and mental health are directly impacted by the support I receive from my family and friends.	5.00	Strongly Agree
4. The time spent with my family was found to be worthwhile quality time.	5.00	Strongly Agree
5. It reduces the feeling of homelessness and maintains my physical as well as mental well-being.	4.00	Agree
6. A visit from my family help me to lessen the feeling of being alone.	5.00	Strongly Agree
7. Prison visits help me and my family cope with separation anxiety.	5.00	Strongly Agree
8. After interacting with my family I become more hopeful.	5.00	Strongly Agree
9. Being able to interact with my family while incarcerated improved my behavior and participation in workshop activities.	5.00	Strongly Agree
10. Support from peers/friends is critical during my stay in the prison to ease the transition and avoid recidivism.	5.00	Strongly Agree

From table above, it shows that the respondents strongly agreed that being surrounded by family and friends greatly benefits their mental health, helps them to cope with separation anxiety, lessen feelings of being alone and improved their behavior and participation in workshop activities. They also strongly agreed that support from friends and family is critical during incarceration as it helps ease the transition to prison life and reduces the risk of recidivism.

Meanwhile, the respondents agreed that family and friends serve as support in addressing social hardships and that such support reduces feeling of homelessness while maintaining their physical and mental well-being. Totally, the findings indicate that both family and peer support play a vital role in enhancing the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of PDLs.

According to Gato et al. (2022) visits, phone calls and letters from the family of PDLs are strategies that helps protect the physical health and emotional health of persons deprived of liberty. While other strategies were identified as important, family ties also give men in prison hope. These relationships allowed men to envision a future beyond prison and to move beyond the identity of 'offender'. This aspect of hope was also seen as crucial to maintaining men's emotional wellbeing and safety (The importance of family and relationships, 2017). Additionally, the HM Inspectorate of Prisons (2016) highlighted that peer supporters can play an important role as a source of information, reassurance and support for prisoners, to assist them in adapting to prison life.

Indeed, support from family and peers are very important to the well-being of PDLs. According to Estrin (n.d), prisoners who receive visitors, maintain family ties, and are released to a stable home environment are more likely to succeed in leading productive, crime-free lives.

Table 4 shows the effect of social support to persons deprived of liberty along religious sector.

Table 4. Effect of Social Support to Persons Deprived of Liberty along Religious Sector

	Median	Description
1. Religious practices promote personal virtues, such as selfcontrol, forgiveness, responsibility, and gratitude	5.00	Strongly Agree
2. Support from religious sectors help me develop a sense of meaning and purpose in life.	5.00	Strongly Agree
3. Religious activities reduce my negative emotions.	5.00	Strongly Agree
4. Spiritual programs are very important because they focus on positive change.	5.00	Strongly Agree
5. Spiritual care programs focus on moral development.	5.00	Strongly Agree
6. Counseling from priests, pastors and other disciples of God helps to enlighten the mind and heart	5.00	Strongly Agree
7. The support from the religious sector helps me cope with the stress and negative emotions caused by imprisonment	5.00	Strongly Agree

From table above, it shows that persons deprived of liberty strongly agreed that social support to persons deprived of liberty along religious sector like religious practices promote personal virtues, such as self-control, forgiveness, responsibility, and gratitude; religious activities reduce their negative emotions; spiritual care programs focus on moral development; and counseling from priests, pastors and other disciples of God helps to enlighten the mind and heart.

These findings are supported by the point of view of Jang et al. (2019). They reiterated that religious traditions promote personal virtues, like self-control, forgiveness, accountability, and gratitude, and these help prisoners overcome addictive or harmful behaviors, seek reconciliation rather than vengeance, and help them cope with the stress and negative emotions engendered by incarceration. They learn to be virtuous, and this has been labelled the "virtuous effect" of religion. Secondly, religion can help prisoners develop a sense of meaning and purpose in life, with what is called the "existential effect" it bestows.

In the study conducted by Sung Joon Jang (2023), he found out that increased religiosity contributed to the prisoner's identity transformation (cognitive and emotional transformations and motivation for self-change), existential belief (perceived presence of meaning and purpose in life), and character by fostering virtues (self-control, compassion, gratitude, accountability, and forgiveness). Also, religion-based moral rehabilitation was found to reduce the prisoner's negative emotions (state depression and anxiety) and the risk of engaging in aggression toward other prisoners.

Table 5 shows the effect of social support to persons deprived of liberty along NGOs.

Table 5. Effect of Social Support to Persons Deprived of Liberty along NGO

	Median	Description
1. NGOs do literacy which helps me develop my skills	4.00	Agree
2. NGOs conduct livelihood programs that help expand my knowledge.	5.00	Strongly Agree
3. NGOs conduct programs that expand my skills and knowledge.	5.00	Strongly Agree
4. NGOs are increasingly involved in providing social services	5.00	Strongly Agree

5. NGOs provide assistance such as food and other basic social needs which have greatly helped me and other inmates in the jail.	5.00	Strongly Agree
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Legend: 1 - Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 - Somewhat Agree; 4 -Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree

From table above, it shows that persons deprived of liberty strongly agreed that NGOs conducted livelihood programs that help expand their knowledge, skills, increasingly involved in providing social services, and provide assistance such as food and other basic social needs which have greatly helped them in the jail. While agree on the statement that NGOs do literacy which helps me develop my skills.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2022) article Enhancing NGO and government cooperation in the Iraq prison system articulates the findings stated above. Accordingly, the positive and vital role played by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is well recognized in areas including health, human rights, and social services. The work of NGOs in prisons includes the development of new skills for prisoners by improving access to education and training, providing livelihood; and enhancing health services. NGOs also support the management of prisoners by targeting and reducing gaps that occur due to limited human and financial resources in the prison system.

Also, according to Maximo (2010), as cited in Estillore and Aoas (2020), livelihood program helps inmates become more responsible and productive individuals. They are able to help their families who are outside the jail. Their income also gives them source for financial needs for their personal supplies like soap, shampoo and the like.

Part 3. Test of Significant Difference on the Effect of Social Support to Persons Deprived of Liberty When They were Grouped According to their Profile Variables.

Table 6 below shows the test of significant difference on the effect of social support to persons deprived of liberty when they were grouped according to their demographic profile such as age, sex and civil status.

Table 6. Test of Significant Difference on the Effect of Social Support to Persons Deprived of Liberty When They were Grouped According to their Demographic Profile Variables.

Categories	Age		Sex		Civil Status	
	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision
Family and Peer Support	0.133	Failed to reject Ho	0.036	Reject Ho	0.247	Failed to reject Ho
Religious Sector	0.692	Failed to reject Ho	0.741	Failed to reject Ho	0.345	Failed to reject Ho
NGOs	0.444	Failed to reject Ho	0.365	Failed to reject Ho	0.190	Failed to reject Ho

P-value of 0.05 and below is significant and above 0.05 is not significant

Results revealed that the p values for the effect of social support to persons deprived of liberty when grouped according to their profile were greater than 0.05 which leads to the failure of rejecting null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference on the effect of social support when grouped according to age, sex and civil status.

However, specifically on family and peer support, the p value is seen to be lower than 0.05, which leads to the rejection of null hypothesis. This means that there is a significant difference on the social support along family and peer support when respondents were grouped according to their sex. This then implies that effect of social support specifically on family and peer support has greater effect on the female.

This is in support with the study of Hurdle (2012) that social support appears to be particularly important with women. Additionally, from the study of Trask-tate (2010) it was also found out that this is true to American girls that social support especially from family is very much important.

Table 7. Test of Significant Difference on the Effect of Social Support to Persons Deprived of Liberty When They were Grouped According Crime Committed and Years in Jail

Categories	Crime Committed		Years in Jail	
	p-value	Decision	p-value	Decision
Family and Peer Support	0.451	Failed to reject Ho	0.118	Failed to reject Ho
Religious Sector	0.912	Failed to reject Ho	0.723	Failed to reject Ho
NGOs	0.451	Failed to reject Ho	0.438	Failed to reject Ho

P-value of 0.05 and below is significant and above 0.05 is not significant

Results revealed that there is no significant difference on the effect of social support to persons deprived of liberty when they were grouped according to crime committed and years in jail since all p-values were greater than 0.05. This then implies that social support has the same effect on persons deprived of liberty whatever their crime committed and years in jail.

The result of this study is in contrast with that of study of Prat and Godsey (2012), social support is inversely and significantly related to the rates of violent crime committed. While, on the other hand, from the study of Lobos, et.al (2011), social support was found to be more on high-violent offenders than that of low-violent offenders.

SUMMARY

This study determines the effect of social support to persons deprived of liberty. As to the profile of the respondents, most of them were at the age range of 20-30 years old, as to sex, majority were male and most of them were still single. Rape and Drug related were the common crime and committed and as to years in jail, majority were in jail for 5 years and below.

Persons deprived of liberty strongly agreed with the effect of social support along family and peer, religious sector and NGOs.

As to significant difference, there is found a significant difference on the social support along family and peer support when respondents were grouped according to their sex. This then implies that effect of social support specifically on family and peer support has greater effect on the female.

CONCLUSION

Relative to the summary and results, the following conclusions are made:

1. The study concludes that majority of persons deprived of liberty involved were still young at age and young when it comes to their years in jail. Predominantly male, single, and incarcerated for five years or less, with rape and drug- related offenses being the most common crimes committed.
2. Social support has a strong effect to the persons deprived of liberty, as evidence by the respondents' strong agreement on the positive effects of support from family and peers, religious institutions, and no-government organizations (NGOs).

3. Family and peer support varies significantly when respondents are grouped according to sex.
4. Religious sectors and NGOs were also found to be effective providers of moral guidance, spiritual growth, and reintegration preparation, reinforcing the importance of multi-sectoral involvement in correctional rehabilitation programs.
5. A significant difference was identified in the effects of family and peer support when respondents were grouped according to sex, indicating that female PDL experience a stronger impact from family and peer support compared to their male counterparts.
6. The findings imply that social support interventions are not uniformly experienced by all PDL and that gender-responsive approaches are necessary to maximize the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts.

RECOMMENDATION

1. For the PNP and other agencies such as DSWD, LGU and educational institutions to have information campaign related to crimes especially to young ones.
2. For the BJMP officers to create social integration program involving families and peer of the persons deprived of liberty.
3. For the future researchers to look for other variables aside from social support that affects persons deprived of liberty.

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