"Probation Officers' Challenges and Resource Needs: The Case of Benguet"

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ABSTRACT

The introduction of probation officers in community-based corrections is very crucial as it oversees the probationers and aids them in their rehabilitation. The paper examined how probation officers feel about the challenges they experience, the coping skills that they have, and the resources required to enhance probation in Benguet. A qualitative descriptive study was used to gather the data by conducting structured interviews with three probation officers deployed to the Benguet Provincial Office of the Probation and Parole Administration then thematic analysis was used to analyze the interviews. It has been found that some of the issues that officers commonly face are related to heavy caseloads, communication barrier and, logistical constraint. Some of the strategies employed in dealing with these challenges include case prioritization, collaboration and personal coping strategy. It identifies the necessity to have more staffing, professional training, and increase operational budget to improve the probation supervision and rehabilitation outcomes.

Keywords: Probation Officers, Community Corrections, Workload Problems, Coping Mechanisms, Benguet.

INTRODUCTION

The delivery of criminal justice has undergone gradual transformation from a punitive, prison-based model of criminal justice to a holistic approach that recognizes rehabilitation, reintegration to community, and restorative justice as imperative components of community safety. Under this paradigm transformation, probation has become a very crucial tool that enables criminals to be in the society under controlled circumstances as opposed to being incarcerated. Probation as a non-institutional correctional strategy provides a balance between accountability and rehabilitation in shaping its goals of reducing recidivism and promoting social reintegration. However, the effectiveness of probation programs heavily depends on the capacity, effectiveness and health of the probation officers who operate as line implementers of community-based corrections.

Internationally, Sibisi and Warria (2020) established that the probation officers working in under-resourced settings are facing systemic limitations which hinder the efficient execution of child justice laws. According to Norman and Ricciardelli (2021), community supervision officers experienced considerable operational and organizational stressors that comprised exposure to traumatic events, high paperwork, and staff understaffing. Such stressors are the causes of burnout, diminished job satisfaction and possible decreases in service quality. Systemic pressures have been more and more described in terms of their psychological effects. According to Barrett and Cartwright (2025), there were high rates of psychological illness-related absences among the probation staff as compared to other workers in the justice sector. Dudka (2024) also described the phenomenon of professional deformation, stress and strain exposure in the workplace that causes emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of empathy due to prolonged stress.

Likewise, Nikartas and Paliauka (2024) explained that probation officers are usually affected by internal role conflict because of bureaucratic overload and competing demands of the management and clients. Officers also complained that they felt more like administrators than as rehabilitative practitioners thus defeating the original design of probation systems as being reformative. Puzyrnyi (2024) has also found a shortage of

funding, excessive workload, and professional lack of motivation to be the constant obstacles to successful probation.

The Job Demands- Resources (JD-R) model is one of the theoretical perspectives on these dynamics. Gladfelter and Haggis (2024) have proven that high job demand (volume of caseload and emotional strain) are good predictors of burnout, and job resources (supervisory support, autonomy, and resilience) are predictors of engagement and better health outcomes. A similar study by Wirkus et al. (2021) has also demonstrated that problem-focused coping behaviors and organizational interventions improve professional performance by lowering burnout and enhancing it.

Training and professional development continue to be the key issues of the modern-day probation studies. The study by Brandon (2020) found that probation officers might not have full knowledge of evidence-based practices even when applying a structured intervention, i.e. cognitive-behavioral program. Givens et al. (2022) also discovered that although online-based mental health training decreased stigma in officers, its long-term practical effectiveness was limited to a small degree, thus necessitating long-term professional development programs. Van Deinse et al. (2021, 23) highlighted that the efficiency of mental illness individuals supervision demands fewer caseloads, specialized training, frequent consultation, and interagency collaboration.

In the Philippines, probation is regulated mostly by the Presidential Decree No. 968 also known as the Adult Probation Law of 1976. It was a historic law that formalized probation as an option to incarceration and created the Probation Administration of the Department of Justice. This law was later reinforced by Republic Act No. 10707 that widened its scope and provided clarity on how it was to be done. The stated policy of Adult Probation Law is to encourage the correction and rehabilitation of an offender by offering him a personalized treatment and to give him a chance to be reformed as a penitent offender that would have been less likely to be formed in case he served a prison sentence. The act also stresses on community protection and prevention of recidivism under the supervised structure and rehabilitative program.

In this system, probation officers are required to perform pre-sentence investigation, case studies, probationer supervision, court-imposed conditions, community agency coordination, and as well as rehabilitation programs. They also have the responsibilities of conducting home visits, checking employment, carrying out counseling, and follow-ups and making surethat legal and administrative standards are met. These varied functions are indicated by the breadth of their work as probation officers are agents of social control as well as agents of social change.

Although the Adult Probation Law has a progressive orientation, the real application of the probation services has its share of challenges. Such international observations cast serious doubts on local application in the Philippine system of probation. Although the Presidential Decree No. 968 provides the legal basis of the rehabilitation and personalized treatment, there is a dearth of empirical studies investigating the working pressure, the resource constraints, and the sufficiency of training among probation officers in particular Philippine provinces. Probation work might entail context-specific issues that are not widely represented in the national discourse, e.g. in the geographically diverse areas, e.g. Benguet, where topography, transportation and access by the community is an added challenge.

Moreover, the Philippine probation system works in the context of larger socio-economic facts, such as budgetary limitations, insufficient staffing allocation, and the presence of different degrees of community support infrastructure. The Parole and Probation Administration (PPA) is an agency of the department of justice which is mandated with providing probation services around the country. Nevertheless, staffing ratios, distribution of caseload, and accessibility to rehabilitation program can have unequal effects on the quality of supervision at provincial offices. The local perception of probation officers is, therefore, imperative in determining the areas of weaknesses in the operations and enhancing the institutional support.

Recent research also lays stress on the significance of coping strategies of officers. Butler et al. (2025) discovered that probation and parole officers were less likely to experience stress due to flexible work policies in the COVID-19 pandemic. Norman et al. (2021) documented the way the officers use relationship-

building, flexibility, and supervision that is individualized to increase compliance among the supervisees. Muentner et al. (2025) emphasized adaptive decision-making schemes employed by officers in risk assessment and desistance. Such studies indicate that probation officers proactively to learn viable coping and supervision strategies to overcome the systemic constraints. Studies also suggest that job satisfaction is associated with a negative level of stress (Fathoni, 2025), whereas self-efficacy and life satisfaction exhibit unevenness at the career stages (Nowak and Wieczorek, 2025). These results indicate that it is necessary to research not only structural perceptions of officers but also develop a professional development approach.

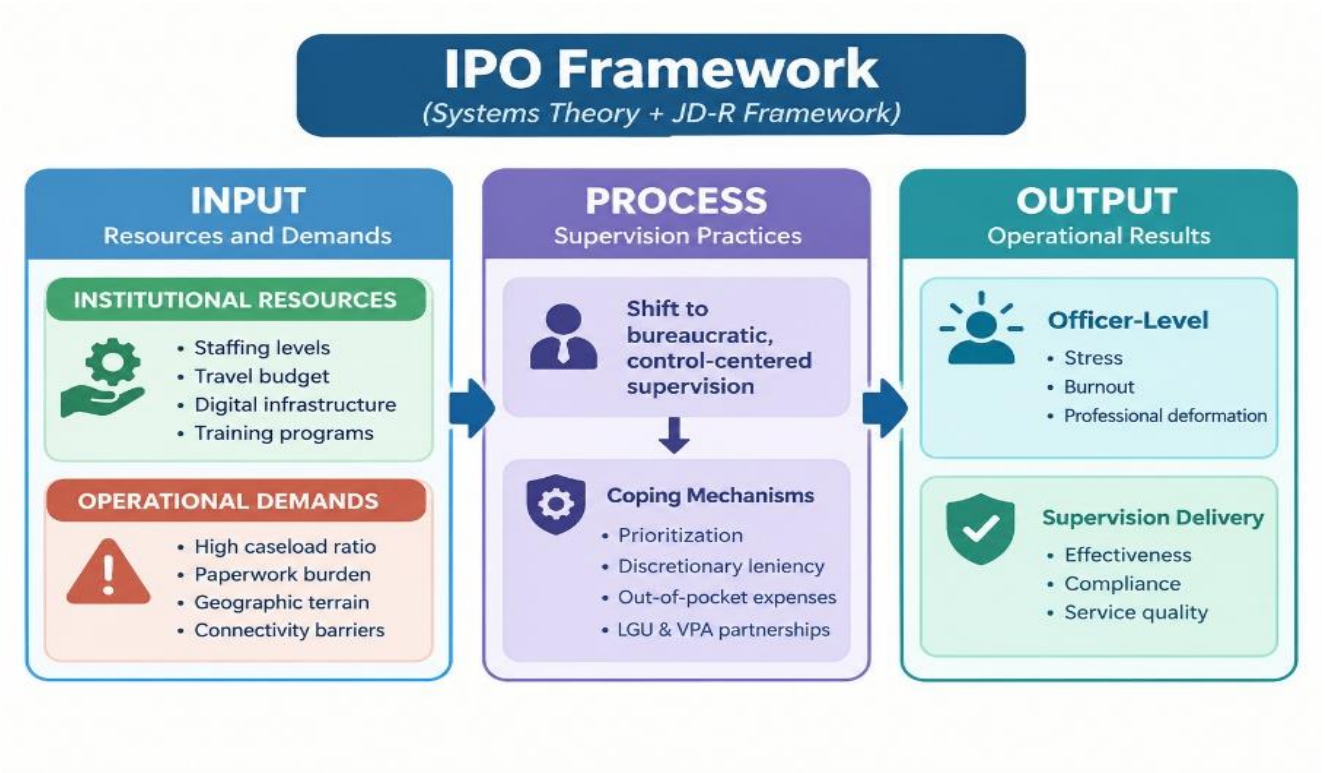
AIM

Thus this study aims to explore the perceptions of probation officers locally specifically in Benguet that concerns the challenges and resource needs which may help correct policies, specific training, and reforms in institutions. It particularly seek to answer the following questions:

1. What professional challenges do probation officers in Benguet face?

2. What strategies do probation officers describe using to cope with workload and resource limitations in their daily practice?

3. What resources or training do officers identify as necessary to improve probation outcomes?



THEORETICAL/CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study was conducted using the Input–Process–Output (IPO) framework and the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) theory. The IPO framework can be attributed to McGrath (1964) who emphasized the sequential nature of organizational activities. According to this theory, processes that take place in an organization are influenced by the inputs that determine the nature of activities taking place. Similar to the systems view of von Bertalanffy (1968), an organization is viewed as an interconnected and interdependent entity where the available resources and environmental conditions interact to influence the processes and outcomes. In this study, the IPO framework will be used to explain the experiences of probation officers in Benguet. The process component will highlight the supervision and coping strategies applied by these officers while the outcome component will focus on their general supervision outcomes.

The JD-R theory of work engagement and burnout can be associated with the work of Demerouti et al. (2001) and Bakker and Demerouti (2007, 2017). This perspective seeks to explain the relationship that exists between organizational environments and individual experiences. It views a person's work environment as consisting of job demands and job resources. The former refers to work aspects that require effort and may lead to negative outcomes if one is unable to cope with them. On the other hand, job resources are aspects of a job that mitigate the impact of job demands. In this research, job demands may be manifested in the form of high caseloads, administrative tasks, deadlines, geographical and transit constraints, and limited connectivity. On the other hand, job resources in the context of probation supervision may include adequate personnel and funding, access to technology, supervisory support, and partnerships.

The process component in the IPO framework will be highlighted by the coping strategies and supervision approaches of probation officers. For instance, in dealing with a large number of probationers, staff may decide to prioritize some of them in terms of supervision. This framework will also capture other coping mechanisms that these officers may choose to use. For example, they can use their personal resources, change the time of supervision, and rely on relationships with local government to get help in achieving supervision goals. This component will therefore illustrate how the environmental conditions that probation officers operate under are related to their experiences.

Finally, the last component of the IPO model will focus on the outcomes of these officers' experiences. They can either have negative or positive supervision outcomes. In relation to these officers' experiences in the context of probation work, the negative outcomes may include stress, and burnout. On the other hand, positive outcomes may be manifested by high levels of job satisfaction, and supervision quality. However, it is important to note that not all probation officers will necessarily have similar experiences. This is because resources at one's disposal or even coping strategies can counteract the impact of job demands. This is a key argument that is advanced by the JD-R theory. In various studies, it has been noted that there is a greater likelihood for burnout and engagement as a result of one's job resources and demands.

Overall, the use of these theoretical frameworks will enable this research to understand the experiences of probation officers in Benguet. At the same time, it will highlight their coping mechanisms and the factors that may influence their experiences. While the IPO framework will be the overarching theoretical component, the JD-R theory will explain how the variables in this study may be related. It can be argued that this study will benefit from using the JD-R theory to explain the experiences of these probation officers. There has been mixed evidence in relation to the impact of the environment in which probation officers work. Some of the studies have found that certain aspects of the environment can cause some of the negative outcomes that these officers may experience. However, it is not always the case that all probation officers will experience these adverse conditions to the same extent. This is due to the fact that some officers may be better at coping compared to others.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods such as instrument , locale and population, treatment and ethical procedure employed in the study.

Research Design

This study has adopted a qualitative descriptive research design based on a phenomenological-interpretive approach to understand the lived experiences of probation officers in the supervision of probationers in the community-based correctional facility. This research design is suitable since this study seeks to comprehend the personal experiences of probation officers to the professional challenges they face in the line of duty supervision.

A qualitative descriptive phenomenological study allows the researcher to observe the participants in their natural workplace setting and record their workload circumstances, institutional demands, and coping mechanisms. This style fits well in correctional facilities where probation officers have supervision duties that are onerous, institutional resources are scarce, and they have pressures of their roles. The qualitative

inquiry is justified by recent international studies that have been carried out to analyse the occupational stress of probation officers, their practices as supervisors and the decision-making processes. As an example, Butler et al. (2025) investigated the burnout experiences of probation officers and Norman et al. (2021) investigated the use of supervision strategies that could aid in compliance among community-based clients. These two studies prove the appropriateness of the qualitative phenomenological research method in describing the lived professional experiences of probation officers. The main data-gathering technique was semi-structured interviews, which are flexible yet make sure that the research objectives are met.

Locale And Population

The research took place in the Probation and Parole Administration Benguet Provincial Office, Justice Hall, Poblacion, La Trinidad, Benguet, Philippines. The office oversees the probationers and parolees in community based correctional programs aimed to aid in rehabilitation and reintegration as well as ensuring their safety. The site was chosen due to its direct access to probation officers dealing with a variety of caseloads in urban and rural populations in Benguet. The geographical features of the province lead to operational and logistical issues that make the site especially suitable to study the workload experiences of probation officers and issues related to resources.

The researcher initially targeted five (5) participants, this target was not achieved because there were only three (3) probation officers actively assigned to the Benguet Provincial Office during the period of data collection. Consequently, the study utilized total population sampling within the locale, involving all available and qualified officers who met the inclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria: Be presently working probation officers at Benguet Provincial Office. Be at least two (2) years of continuous service experience. Be personally engaged in the supervising of the probationers and/or the parolees.

Exclusion Criteria: Past probation officers who were posted to Benguet Provincial Office. Novice probation officers that have less than two (2) years experience. Individuals engaged in administrative roles only without any supervisory roles.

Data Gathering Instrument

The main research instrument in the paper was a researcher-prepared semi-structured interview guide that was utilized to obtain detailed data about the experiences of probation officers in the context of supervision issues, workload pressures, support provided by institutions, and coping behaviors.

To guarantee the content validity, the interview guide was formed in accordance with the thematic constructs and question format based on the latest studies held in different countries to investigate the professional experience of probation officers, their supervision practices, occupational stress, and burnout. In particular, the interview questions were developed based on frameworks applied in other studies, like Butler et al. (2025), Norman et al. (2021), and Gladfelter and Haggis (2024). The correspondence between the interview questions and the variables and domains identified in these international studies was a means to ensure that the instrument provided sufficient coverage on the aspects of probation officers lived experiences and gave it a solid conceptual basis.

The interview guide was also checked with the subject-matter experts in the area of community corrections and research methodology to provide even greater clarity, relevance, and alignment to the aims of the study. Their suggestions were integrated before the actual interviews were carried out. To create a more focused and suitably sequenced and clear interview questions, a pilot interview with a probation officer in a local office that was not part of the actual study participants was carried out.

In order to create reliability, consistency of data collection was achieved via: Use of a uniform semi-structured interview guide, similar interview processes among participants. Audio recording of interviews

with participants' consent, Thematic analysis and systematic transcription processes. This set of measures enhanced the believability and reliability of obtained data.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher wrote a letter to the Dean of the department and secured ethical clearance from the University of the Cordilleras and obtained approval from the Chief Probation and Parole Officer of the Benguet provincial office before collecting the data. Three qualified probation officers were invited to take part in the study using purposive sampling. Semi-structured interviews lasting about 5-15 minutes were conducted after voluntary informed consent. Due to the probation officers' extremely hectic work schedules, heavy administrative burdens, and ongoing client supervision duties at the time of data gathering, extended session times could not be accommodated. Furthermore, conducting secondary follow-up interviews or administering additional probes for expanded data collection was not possible. Despite these operational time constraints, data saturation was achieved within the primary interview sessions, yielding substantive qualitative insights regarding the officers' operational realities. Interviews were tape recorded with the consent of the participants and augmented by taking notes to provide precision and completeness of answers.

Treatment Of Data

The qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, adhering to Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework to systematically identify, organize, and interpret patterns of meaning across the dataset. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. The researcher engaged in repeated readings of the transcripts to achieve familiarization with the data. Initial data coding was executed through line-by-line open coding, wherein descriptive labels and tags were assigned to meaningful textual units. These initial codes were subsequently grouped and organized into conceptual sub-categories through axial coding based on shared properties and patterns.

Candidate themes were generated by clustering interrelated codes and sub-categories around the study's specific research problems (SOPs). These themes were iteratively reviewed, refined, and tested against the raw interview excerpts to ensure thematic coherence and validity. Final themes were defined, named, and organized into three primary qualitative domains: (a) Professional Challenges Faced by Probation Officers, (b) Coping Strategies and Workload Management, and (c) Identified Resources and Training Needs.

To ensure qualitative rigor and establish trustworthiness based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) evaluative criteria: specifically credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability; the following protocols were implemented: (1) Summaries of transcribed responses and preliminary interpretations were shared with participants to confirm that the findings accurately reflected their lived experiences and perspectives; (2) Peer Debriefing: Emergent codes and thematic structures were subjected to critical review by academic research advisors to reduce individual researcher bias and ensure interpretive accuracy. (3) Audit Trail and Thick Description: A comprehensive audit trail documenting all raw data, codebooks, and analytical decision-making was maintained, accompanied by context-rich descriptions of participant narratives to support qualitative transferability.

Ethical Consideration

Participation in the study was entirely voluntary. Before the commencement of data collection, ethical clearance was secured from the appropriate ethics review committee to ensure adherence to ethical principles governing research involving human participants. All participants were provided with an informed consent form outlining the study's objectives, data collection procedures, confidentiality protocols, and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences. Regarding participant recruitment, while the study initially targeted five (5) participants, this target was not achieved because there were only three (3) probation officers actively assigned to the Benguet Provincial Office during the data collection period; consequently, all available and qualified officers who met the inclusion criteria were

included. To protect participants' identities, pseudonyms and coded identifiers were utilized throughout the research process. Audio recordings and interview transcripts were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the researchers and were used exclusively for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discussed the results of the study based on the data collected.

SOP1 : The Problems the Probation and Parole officers (PPOs) of Benguet are facing.

The findings of the study are based on the responses of probation officers from the Probation and Parole Administration Benguet Provincial Office regarding the professional challenges they encounter in community-based supervision. Three major themes emerged from the analysis: communication barriers, logistical and resource constraints, and workload issues. These themes reflect the participants' perceptions of institutional conditions influencing probation service delivery effectiveness.

Communication Barrier

Probation officers experience communication barriers due to weak network connectivity and limited access to communication devices among clients and partner agencies.

Respondents emphasized that communication difficulties arise because some supervision areas have unstable signal coverage and clients lack access to communication tools.

Respondent 2 stated, *"There is no signal or internet in some parts of Benguet so we have difficulty contacting stakeholders and partner agencies."*

Respondent 1 added, *"Communication devices are not common to all clients."*

These findings support the study's conceptual framework which assumes that resource availability and institutional support influence supervision effectiveness. Limited communication infrastructure restricts officers' ability to monitor compliance, coordinate with partner agencies, and maintain regular supervision contact, thereby affecting the quality of community-based corrections service delivery. According to Taxman and Belenko (2012) and Chris Trotter (2015), effective probation practice depends on structured communication systems that support monitoring and rehabilitation functions.

Similarly, international studies confirm that communication barriers weaken coordination between probation officers and service providers. For example, Sichel and Elkington (2023) found that poor communication reduces treatment engagement among probation clients, while Wilson et al. (2024) reported that coordination challenges delay compliance monitoring and supervision outcomes. These findings suggest that communication limitations directly affect supervision efficiency and rehabilitation support mechanisms.

Logistical And Resource Constraint

Probation officers encounter logistical and resource constraints related to transportation access, travel allowance limitations, and lack of program venues. Participants reported that supervision in geographically distant areas creates transportation difficulties and financial burden during fieldwork.

Respondent 2 stated, *"Public transportation is not available in some far-flung areas where clients reside."* The same respondent further explained, *"The travel allowance of Php 350 per case is not enough for distant supervision areas like Buguias and Mankayan."*

Participants also identified limited availability of venues for rehabilitation activities as another operational constraint. Respondent 2 shared, *"There is no budget for the rent of venues when free facilities are unavailable."*

Consistent with international literature, Van Deinse et al. (2021) reported that insufficient logistical support reduces the effectiveness of community corrections supervision by limiting officers' field mobility and access to rehabilitation services. These results indicate that organizational resource limitations directly affect the implementation of supervision responsibilities in geographically challenging areas such as Benguet.

Workload Issues

Probation officers experience workload pressure due to high caseload ratios, administrative reporting demands, and multiple supervision responsibilities. Participants described that supervision duties include investigations, court-related responsibilities, and documentation requirements that compete with direct client interaction time.

Respondent 2 stated, *"The supervision ratio is about 1:138 active clients so individual monitoring becomes difficult."* Respondents also emphasized that increasing referrals and documentation requirements contribute to workload pressure.

The findings are consistent with international studies reporting that excessive caseloads negatively affect probation supervision quality. Norman et al. (2021) and Butler et al. (2025) identified workload pressure as a major contributor to reduced supervision effectiveness and occupational stress among probation officers. Furthermore, Nikartas and Paliauka (2024) observed that extensive documentation requirements increase role strain by limiting time spent on field supervision activities.

Additionally, probation officers perform dual roles involving supervision and rehabilitation support, which may create professional role tension. As noted by Gladfelter and Haggis (2024), balancing enforcement responsibilities with supportive intervention functions contributes to occupational stress in probation practice. This condition highlights the importance of institutional staffing support and workload redistribution in strengthening supervision effectiveness.

SOP 2: Coping Strategy that PPO adopted in dealing with the Challenges.

The coping strategies embraced by the probation officers as a way of coping with the workload pressure and resource constraints, especially prioritization, collaboration, and personal adaptive strategies, were used to cope with the pressure at the workplace despite institutional constraints.

Prioritization

Probation officers deal with high caseloads by prioritizing their tasks according to urgency, deadlines, and level of supervision risk.

Respondent 1, elaborated, "*I check submission dates: we handle a lot of cases, time management and prioritization helps us to handle the heavy workload and time pressure."* Respondent 2 followed up with, *" We make overtime in the workplace when necessary."*

These answers show that prioritization is a feasible strategy that enables officers to retain the supervision effectiveness amid the pressure of workloads. In the conceptual framework of the study, the workload and administrative needs directly affect the capacity of the officers to provide services; hence, the risk-based prioritization facilitates officers to devote scarce time and attention to high-priority cases and maintain the responsibilities of compliance monitoring. This confirms the claims by Faye S. Taxman and John M. Belenko (2012) and Chris Trotter (2015) that the effectiveness of case management is enhanced by structured supervision practices in spite of operational limitations.

On the same note, global research demonstrates that discretionary judgment and structured prioritization are prevalent among probation officers who want to cope with high caseloads effectively (Norman et al., 2021; Van Deinse et al., 2023; Jackson et al., 2024).

Collaboration

The lack of institutional resources and the barrier of communication makes probation officers depend on the cooperation with local government, clients, and Volunteer Probation Assistants (VPAs) to cover the shortage.

According to Respondent 1, "*to overcome the problem of resource limitation, we normally liaise with clients and LGU e.g. the venues we use to carry out the activities, we would liaise with the provincial LGU on the budget to rent the available space to make the program feasible*." Respondent 2 described the use of volunteers, "*as of the moment there are 28 active volunteers, the ratio is 1:3 to supervise the clients, normally kasi kabaranggay nila ang clients. and on weak signal or internet, the VPAs will be the one to contact the clients on our behalf.*"

These results indicate that partnership enhances the supervision capacity through expansion of institutional support via community partnerships. In line with the results of other international studies, the engagement of community stakeholders and volunteer assistants increases the effectiveness of monitoring and decreases the workload overload of probation officers (Gladfelter and Haggis, 2024; Van Deinse et al., 2023).

Personal Coping Strategies

Personal adaptability, work-life balance techniques, and professional commitment enable probation officers to supervise and overcome transportation and logistical limitations to maintain supervision effectiveness.

According to Respondent 3*, "we work with available resources."* Respondent 2 also added, *"we deal with work stress by work-life balance but on the issue of transport difficulties, we sometimes use our own pocket money to pay the fare."*

These reactions demonstrate that personal resilience and adaptive coping styles are useful in enabling probation officers to remain supervision duties despite the absence of institutional support. According to the study conceptual framework, the self-conceptualization of resource availability and workload conditions by police officers directly influence the reaction of the latter to challenges of supervision, thus, adaptive coping mechanisms contribute to the continuity of the services in agrarian conditions. This confirms the results of Faye S. Taxman and John M. Belenko (2012) and Chris Trotter (2015) that professional support system and coping capacity impact supervision effectiveness. On the same note, global studies show that resilience and adaptive coping mechanisms lessen the impact of occupational stress and help maintain the correctional performance among probation officers (Wirkus et al., 2021).

In general, the coping mechanisms described in this paper indicate that probation officers address workload and limited resources by prioritizing their work and resources in a structured way, engaging in collaborative supervision practice and using personal adaptive processes. These results confirm the conceptual framework of the study which presupposes that the perceptions of workload, institutional support, and resources available to probation officers have a direct impact on the supervision effectiveness in community-based corrections. Within the framework of Benguet, where geographical factors and logistical constraints influence the delivery of the services in accordance with the Presidential Decree No. 968, the partnership with the community partners and adaptive coping mechanisms can be viewed as viable mechanisms that can maintain positive outcomes of supervision despite the operational constraints. Increasing the institutional support systems and resource allocation can thus increase the efficiency of supervision and the delivery of probation services at provincial level.

SOP 3: Resources and Trainings Needed by the PPO to Improve Probation Outcomes

Four resource needs that were identified by probation officers as priorities to better supervision include: IT improvement, higher operational budget, more staffing, and ongoing professional training. These needs are examples of institutional capacity gaps that impact documentation efficiency, mobility of field supervision, caseload management, and service delivery based on rehabilitation orientation.

IT Enhancement

The participants also highlighted the necessity of better technological tools to aid in monitoring, documentation, and coordination between the levels of supervision.

Respondents highlighted the importance of strengthening digital supervision capacity:

It was stated by respondent 1 and 3 that " *both probationers and probation officers need additional training on new advancement particularly in Information Technology".* It was further explained by respondent 2, saying. "*may mga iniintroduce kasi ang agency na monitoring platforms tapno mabibiit ken nalalaka ti consolidation ng data from field offices to region to central office kaya kailangan ng IT updates".* (There were platforms introduced by the agency which will make the monitoring and consolidation of data much easier, from the field offices to regional up to central office , that's why we need IT updates)

Their responds suggest that digital systems are already implemented in the agency but still need additional technical assistance and training of the users to achieve optimal use of these systems in supervision practice. Under community supervision, the technological capacity enhances the accuracy of case monitoring, the efficiency of reporting, and geographically scattered regions like Benguet through the inter-office coordination. This result confirms the results of other studies around the world that digital supervision tools enhance documentation and enhance probation monitoring systems, especially in rural jurisdictions where the lack of transportation and distance reduces the possibilities of face-to-face supervision (Russo et al., 2021; National Institute of Justice, 2021; Van Deinse et al., 2023).

Increase Operational Budget

Participants cited operational funding constraints as one of the key barriers that impact mobility, investigation operations and supervision delivery.

One of the respondents described why the field supervision requires funding:

Respondent 1 said "*we need additional Travel expenses for investigation & supervision to perform our duties more effectively*". This was seconded by respondent 2 saying, "*Financial assistance from different municipalities for travelling expenses for investigation and supervision*". Respondent 3 also mentioned the need for office supplies and transportation.

Operational budget support is a critical requirement for effective probation supervision because community corrections agencies often manage increasing caseloads with limited institutional resources. Studies indicate that budget constraints reduce access to supervision technologies, training opportunities, and monitoring tools necessary for improving probation outcomes (National Institute of Justice, 2021). Additionally, research of Lin & Petersilia (2022) shows that community supervision systems historically receive a smaller portion of criminal justice funding despite supervising a large offender population, which limits their service delivery capacity.

These findings suggest that strengthening operational funding is essential to enhance supervision effectiveness, particularly in geographically dispersed supervision areas such as Benguet where transportation, field monitoring, and inter-agency coordination require additional logistical support.

Additional Staff

One request from the participants is the additional staff. Since it was discussed earlier by the respondents that workload cases is one of the challenges, it is then needed addition human resource. The additional staffing support as one of the needs to decrease the pressure in the caseload. Probation officers have a chance to offer closer supervision and more attention to the individual probationer with more staff.

One of the Respondents said " *we need additional plantilla item … provision of additional plantilla items for field offices in need"*

According to previous studies, sufficient staffing and workload ratio are essential variables that determine the probation officer and the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs (Butler et al., 2025). Research indicates that rural probation offices often lack specialized supervision structures and intervention strategies compared with urban jurisdictions, reflecting limitations in staffing resources and service delivery systems (Van Deinse et al., 2023). Similarly, Matz et al., (2018) state that probation officer workloads in rural areas reveal that officers frequently manage caseloads exceeding recommended supervision standards, which may reduce the effectiveness of monitoring and rehabilitation efforts. These findings indicate that increasing personnel support is essential to strengthen probation supervision, particularly in geographically dispersed provinces such as Benguet where officers must cover wide service areas.

Professional Training Program

The respondents also highlight the significance of professional training programs that will boost their competence in dealing with complicated cases. The training pertaining to the rehabilitation programs, counseling methods, mental health issues awareness, and conflict resolution can assist the officers in dealing with probationers with different needs.

When asked on how to strengthen the probation outcome, respondents answered "*I believe we need continuous seminar or training about behavioral sciences, investigation and supervision related workshops & seminars*". In addition, she said "*we needed continuous professional development activities and collaboration with stakeholders*".

These reactions show that probation officers are aware of the significance of special training in behavioral sciences, supervision strategies, and coordination among stakeholders to effectively handle complex probation cases. In the rehabilitation-based supervision model, professional development enhances intervention capacity of officers and promotes evidence-based supervision practices.

Its result aligns with the findings of other countries that stress that specialized supervision training enhances the ability of officers to work with behaviorally and psychosocially risky clients and enhances the cooperation between probation agencies and community stakeholders (Van Deinse et al., 2021; Norman et al., 2021).

Such results mean that the institutional resources and professional development opportunities could be strengthened in order to significantly improve the probation services. Officer training, technological assistance, and proper staffing would be beneficial to the performance of officers and the rehabilitation results of probationers. In addition, closer collaboration with community organizations would be beneficial in the formation of a more holistic support network of probationers, which would eventually lead to a lower rate of recidivism and enhanced community safety.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussion above, the researcher concluded the following:

The study highlights that probation officers face severe institutional and environmental challenges—including excessive client caseload ratios (up to 1:138), inadequate operational budgets, and persistent communication and logistical barriers—which they manage through self-reported adaptive coping strategies such as task prioritization, personal financial sacrifices, and informal community partnerships. However, while officers perceive that these structural stressors constrain their capacity to deliver individualized, rehabilitative care, conclusions regarding actual client rehabilitation outcomes and recidivism reduction cannot be directly established from officer narratives alone. Assessing objective rehabilitation success requires longitudinal evaluation of client behavioral compliance, desistance metrics, and post-supervision outcomes.

Consequently, while the findings demonstrate how systemic resource deficits and heavy administrative burdens compromise the quality of the supervision environment, future empirical research incorporating client-level tracking is necessary to measure the direct causal impact of these operational constraints on offender rehabilitation.

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