

Therapeutic Community Modality Program in Bureau of Jail Management and Penology in Relation to Stress and Coping Techniques of Persons Deprived of Liberty

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the efficiency of the Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP) implemented by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) and its relationship with perceived stress and coping techniques among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) in one of the BJMP facility in Negros Occidental in 2025. Using a validated self-made questionnaire, results showed that respondents rated the program as very highly efficient across behavioral, emotional-psychological, intellectual-spiritual, and vocational-survival dimensions. Perceived stress levels were generally low, although stress related to social isolation was high. Coping techniques were rated very highly, particularly cognitive appraisal, social support, problem-solving, religiosity, tolerance, and emotional release. Findings revealed no significant relationship between Therapeutic Community Modality Program efficiency and perceived stress. However, a significant relationship was found between coping techniques and both program efficiency and perceived stress, indicating that coping strategies play an important role in how PDLs manage stress and respond to rehabilitation interventions

Keywords: Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP); Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP); Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs); emotional-psychological dimension; vocational-survival dimension; perceived stress; social isolation; coping techniques; cognitive appraisal; social support; problem-solving; tolerance; emotional release; rehabilitation interventions.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional and mental toil are two familiar experiences to any person. Stress, according to Ghasemi et al. (2024), is a build-up of perceived demand, threat, or challenge occurring to people regardless of their age. Theodoratou and Argyrides (2024) and Springer Nature (2024) agreed to consider stress as a normal reaction of one's body when exposed to an uncertain and challenging physical environment. The projection of such reaction can either be emotional, physical, or psychological which includes shouting, violence, and insomnia among others. Some psychologists like Bosshard & Gomez (2024) and the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (2025), however argued that stress is sometimes healthy, especially when experienced in relatively short periods.

Taking all these into consideration, it can be noted that though stress is a universal experience, the ability of one to process and perceive such varies completely from person to person. A lot of studies for perceived stress levels was done to correlate with some things. Notable examples are the works of Feng et al. (2023) in the relationship of stress to daily dynamic interaction of people and its importance to one's mental health; Cohen et al (2023) who highlighted the need of valid and immediate intervention to stress and; Tong et al. (2021) who most recently grouped and categorized the various coping techniques of individuals in relation to stress.

Although informative, these studies did not mention the community of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). In the Philippine context, there are 171, 247 PDLs across the country as of the June 1, 2024 statistics (Gruyal, 2026).

These PDLs often experience overcrowding, threats, and psychological discomforts which possibly contribute to their perceived stress levels (Beley et al., 2026).

Effective interventions and efforts by the government was also established to ensure that PDLs are treated with dignity, respect, and kindness. Such efforts led to the creation of Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP) which focuses on the learning and relearning of values associated with socialized living (Dausan & Virtudazo, 2021).

The effect of TCMP on the perceived stress level and the coping techniques of the respondents were not explored yet using the Filipino Coping Strategy Scale. This study therefore sought to determine and evaluate the relationship of perceived stress level, and coping techniques of PDLs from one of the BJMP in Negros Occidental. Such results were correlated with their involvement in the TCMP program of the BJMP, and were used as the basis for intervention.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive-correlational research design to determine the perceived efficiency of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) welfare programs, the perceived stress levels, and the coping techniques of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). The descriptive component was used to describe the respondents' demographic profile, perceived efficiency of the Therapeutic Community Modality Program, stress levels, and coping techniques, while the correlational component was used to determine the relationships among the welfare programs, perceived stress, and coping techniques without manipulating the variables. The respondents consisted of the entire population of 226 PDLs confined in a selected BJMP city jail facility in Negros Occidental. The study employed total population sampling or complete enumeration, wherein all eligible PDLs were invited to participate; thus, no sample-size computation was required. Appropriate assistance was provided to respondents who experienced difficulty reading or understanding the questionnaire.

Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire consisting of four parts. Part I obtained the respondents' demographic profile in terms of age, educational attainment, and years in detention. Part II contained 20 items measuring the perceived efficiency of the Therapeutic Community Modality Program in terms of behavioral management, emotional and psychological development, survival and vocational skills, and intellectual and spiritual development. Part III consisted of 21 items measuring perceived stress in terms of loss of freedom, fear of violence, and social isolation, while Part IV contained 30 items assessing coping techniques based on Filipino coping strategies. A four-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 4 (Very High) to 1 (Very Low). Prior to administration, the instrument underwent face and content validation by three experts with master's degrees in Public Administration using the Good and Scates Criteria. The instrument obtained a validity rating of 4.00, interpreted as very good. Its reliability was established through pilot testing among 30 PDLs from BJMP facility in Negros Occidental, resulting in a reliability coefficient of 0.818, indicating acceptable consistency of the instrument.

For data collection, permission was secured from the Jail Warden of the selected BJMP facility. The researchers explained the purpose and procedures of the study and assured the respondents that their participation was voluntary and that all information would be treated confidentially and used solely for research purposes. The questionnaire was translated into Hiligaynon to facilitate comprehension, and assistance was provided to respondents who had difficulty reading or writing. The completed questionnaires were collected, checked, coded, and encoded for statistical analysis. Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' demographic profile. Mean scores were used to determine the perceived efficiency of the welfare programs, perceived stress levels, and coping techniques, with mean scores interpreted as Very High (3.26–4.00), High (2.51–3.25), Low (1.76–2.50), and Very Low (1.00–1.75). Finally, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (Pearson's r) was employed to determine the significant relationships between welfare programs and perceived stress, welfare programs and coping techniques, and perceived stress and coping techniques. The correlation results were interpreted in terms of the direction and strength of the relationships and were not considered evidence of causal relationships.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Profile

Profile	Category	f	%
Age	20 Years & below	5	2.21
	21-30 years old	53	23.45
	31-40 years old	70	30.97
	41-50 years old	79	34.96
	51 years old and above	19	8.41
	Total	226	100.00
Educational Attainment	Elementary level	34	15.04
	Elementary graduate	9	3.98
	High School level	59	26.11
	High School graduate	85	37.61
	College level	22	9.73
	College graduate	17	7.52
	Total	226	100.00
Years In Detention	3 years & below	165	73.01
	4-6 years	33	14.60
	7-9 years	11	4.87
	10 years & above	17	7.52
	Total	226	100.00

Following the results of the given data, out of 226 respondents, 5 of them are 20 years and below, 53 are between 21 – 30 years old, 70 are between 31 – 40 years old, 79 are 41 – 50 years old, and 19 are above 50 years old. These constitutes to an equivalent of 2.21%, 23.45%, 30.97%, 34.96%, and 8.41% respectively.

For the educational attainment of the respondents, 34 of them were able to enroll in elementary which is equivalent to 15.04% of the total respondents, 9 or 3.98% of the respondents were able to graduate in elementary, 59 or 26.11% were able to attend high school, 85 or 37.61% were able to graduate in high school, 22 or 9.73% have reached college, and finally 17 or 7.52% were able to graduate in college.

For years in detention, majority of the population were detained for 3 years and below, having a number of 165 which covers 73.01% of the entire population. This was followed by 33 individuals who were detained for 4-6 years, covering 14.60% of the entire population. Next, is a set of 11 respondents who spent 7 – 9 years in detention, which number constitutes to 4.87%. Lastly, a set of 17 respondents, who spent 10 years and above inside detention, which is equivalent to 7.52% of the entire population.

In the Philippines, the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility (MACR) is currently set at 15, in accordance to the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act (JJWA) of 2016. The MACR aims to faithfully adhere to its responsibilities as one of the members of the United Nations, emphasizing that “children in conflict with the law are first and foremost children” Respicio & Co. Law Firm (2025).

In a national scale, Guadamor (2020), examined 487 PDLs from three district jails in Cagayan and found that high school was the predominant educational attainment, comprising 51.13% of the respondents, compared with 26.28% who had reached or completed elementary education. Specifically, the proportion of PDLs who had reached or finished high school was 61.68% in Aparri District Jail, 43.75% in Tuao District Jail, and 49.05% in Tuguegarao City District Jail. The similarity between these findings and those of the present study suggests that

PDL populations in Philippine jail settings may have a greater concentration of individuals with high-school-level educational attainment than those with only elementary-level education.

Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program

Table 2. Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program of the BJMP for the PDLs as a Whole and in Terms of Behavioral Management, Emotional and Psychological, Intellectual and Spiritual, and Vocational and Survival Skills.

Therapeutic Modality Program	N	Mean	Interpretation
Behavior Management	226	3.66	Very High
Emotional and Psychological		3.59	Very High
Intellectual and Spiritual		3.59	Very High
Vocational and Survival Skills		3.60	Very High
As a Whole		3.61	Very High

As seen in Table 2, the level of efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program of the BJMP for the PDLs was measured. There were four areas of focus in this variable namely, behavioral management, emotional and psychological, intellectual and spiritual, and vocational and survival skills. The interpretation of these based on the gathered data are 3.66, 3.59, 3.59, and 3.60 respectively. Such data resulted to a very high interpretation. When grouped together as a whole, the efficiency of the Therapeutic Modality Program of the BJMP for the PDLs is 3.61, and can still be interpreted as very high.

In this study, the Therapeutic Modality Program is very highly effective as perceived by the PDLs. The very high perceived efficiency of the Therapeutic Community Modality Program suggests that the program was viewed by PDLs as responsive to behavioral, psychosocial, and rehabilitative needs. This finding is supported by Weinrath et al. (2021), who found that prison-based therapeutic communities demonstrated identifiable therapeutic-community practices and were associated with lower general and violent recidivism among participants. Studies suggest that PDLs who undergone livelihood and rehabilitations programs are less likely to reoffend and return to prison and reoffend. These programs not only improve PDLs' chances of successful reintegration but also benefit society as a whole by reducing crime rates and associated costs (Suman et al., 2023).

Behavioral Management is a strategic plan implemented by the officers through the Therapeutic Modality Program, actively promote good conduct and discourage demeaning acts (Dela Cruz et al., 2023). Moreover, Top noted that through engaging in routines and positive reinforcements, people are expected to continue displaying ideal behavior. The very highly positive emotional and psychological impact of the program to PDLs also connects to the enhancement of their intellectual and vocational skills. This includes better mental and physical health, resilience, and healthy relationships toward other people (Granados et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2020). Thus, this helps PDLs better cope with stress, leading to overall greater satisfaction and improved judgement.

Perceived Stress Level of the PDLs

Table 3. Perceived Stress Level of The PDLs as a Whole and in Terms of Loss of Freedom, Social Isolation, and Fear of Violence.

Perceived Stress Level	N	Mean	Interpretation
Loss of Freedom	226	2.47	Low
Social Isolation		2.68	High
Fear of Violence		2.26	Low
As a Whole		2.47	Low

As shown in Table 3, the Perceived Stress Level of the PDLs are measured with three areas of focus which are loss of freedom, social isolation, and fear of violence. The mean scores of which are 2.47, 2.68, and 2.26 respectively. In terms of implications, the interpretations for the loss of freedom and fear of violence are low,

while social isolation is interpreted as high. The overall score of the three is 2.47 which falls under low. PDLs in this context have low stress level. This might be attributed to the effectivity of the programs implemented by the BJMP. In fact, this is consistent with a survey as of 2025, in where the Department of Justice of the Philippines have observed successful attempts in lowering the perceived stress level of PDLs across the country. The perceived stress for Loss of Freedom and Fear of Violence is notably low because PDLs are under routine. Kusumastuti (2026) had documented similar case, claiming that structured environment with regular meals and daily routines can actually lower the stress and anxiety of individuals inside prison. However, the stress from Social Isolation remains high. The relatively high level of stress associated with social isolation may be attributed to the restrictive and socially disruptive nature of incarceration. Previous research has shown that stressful events experienced during incarceration are associated with loneliness and other adverse psychological outcomes, particularly when perceived social support is limited (Maschi et al., 2021).

Level of Coping Techniques of the PDLs

Table 4. Level of Coping Techniques of the Person Deprived of Liberty as a Whole and in terms of Cognitive Reappraisal, Social Support, Problem-Solving, Religiosity, Tolerance and Emotional Release.

Coping Techniques	N	Mean	Interpretation
Cognitive Appraisal	226	3.49	Very High
Social Support		3.49	Very High
Problem-Solving		3.53	Very High
Religiosity		3.55	Very High
Tolerance		3.52	Very High
Emotional Release		3.51	Very High
As a Whole		3.51	Very High

Table 4 reflects the Level of Coping Techniques for the PDLs. Coping Techniques were classified into six different classifications, the cognitive appraisal, social support, problem-solving, religiosity, tolerance, and emotional release. The mean score for each were 3.49 for both cognitive appraisal and social support, 3.53 for problem-solving, 3.55 for religiosity, 3.52 for tolerance, and 3.51 for emotional release. All are interpreted as very high, including the mean as a whole which is 3.51.

Filipinos are often comforted by the idea of having a Supreme Being guiding them (Gusilar et al., 2025). Faith and spirituality are both an important part in the Filipino culture, therefore attributing to the highest form of PDLs' coping mechanism. Problem solving is directly linked to resiliency (Borromeo and Lim, 2021). According to Borromeo and Lim (2021), problem-solving is a frequently used strategy by Filipinos when dealing with stressful situations to mirror a resilient Filipino spirit. It is commonly used with cognitive appraisal and social support, indicating that a mixture of different coping mechanisms is possible.

In addition, PDLs also have a very high tolerance. This might be an attribute from Filipino's ability of dealing with their struggles on their own (Zaldarriaga, 202). This results to being self – sufficient and endurance, oftentimes displaying high levels of tolerance in various circumstances.

Relationship Between the Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program and Perceived Stress Level

Table 5. Relationship Between the Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program of the BJMP and the Perceived Stress Level of the PDLs.

Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program	Perceived Stress Level				
	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Total
Very High	37	39	75	35	186
High	3	20	11	2	36
Low	0	0	2	0	2

Very Low	0	0	2	0	2
Total	40	59	90	37	226

Computed (G) value : -0.166

P-Value : 0.133

Decision : Accept Ho

Interpretation : Not Significant at 0.05 level of significance

As seen in Table 5, there are 40 PDLs who have a very high perceived stress level. Out of 40, 37 of them have a very high level of efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program, while 3 of them revealed a high level. There are also 59 PDLs who have a high perceived stress level in which 39 have a very high level of efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program, and 20 revealed high. There were 90 PDLs with low perceived stress level, having 75, 11, 2, and 2 of them revealing very high, high, low, and very low level of efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program respectively. Lastly, 37 PDLs have very low perceived stress level. Out of these 37 PDLs, 35 reported to have very high level of efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program while 2 reported to have high.

Based on the data reflected above, the computed (G) value gave off a value of -0.166. The p-value gave off 0.133, indicating that the null hypothesis is accepted. This further indicates that there is no relationship between the Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program of the BJMP and the perceived stress level of the PDLs at 95% confidence level. Previous research in correctional rehabilitation also supports these findings. Many studies note that therapeutic programs tend to show stronger impacts on behavioral outcomes rather than on immediate psychological states like stress (Kołodziej et al., 2022; Granados et al., 2022). For instance, Kołodziej et al. (2022) found that interventions in prisons commonly that perceived stress levels often remain influenced by institutional pressures and living conditions.

Relationship Between the Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program and Coping Techniques

Table 6. Relationship Between the Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program of the BJMP and the Level of Coping Techniques of the PDLs.

Level of Efficiency of Therapeutic Modality Program	Level of Coping Techniques				
	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Total
Very High	153	28	5	0	186
High	12	22	2	0	36
Low	1	0	1	0	2
Very Low	0	0	2	0	2
Total	166	50	10	0	226

Computed (G) value : 0.772

P-Value : <0.001

Decision : Reject Ho

Interpretation : Significant at 0.05 level of significance

As presented in Table 6, there are 166 PDLs who have a very high level of coping techniques. Out of these 166, there are 153, 12, 1, and 0 respondents who revealed a very high, high, low, and very low efficiency of the therapeutic modality program respectively. There are also 50 PDLs who have a high level of coping technique in which 28 have reported very high, and 22 reported high level of efficiency of therapeutic modality program. The remaining 10 respondents all revealed a low level of coping techniques, scoring 5 for very high, 2 for high, 1 for low, and 2 for very low levels of efficiency of therapeutic modality program. The computed p – value of

Table 6, is less than 0.001, which shows that there is a significant relationship between the level of coping techniques and the level of efficiency of therapeutic modality program of PDLs at 0.05 level of significance. Cloud et al. (2023) research in correctional psychology emphasizes that coping skills are central to successful adaptation within detention settings. Moreover, Cloud et al. (2023) noted that PDLs who engage in structured therapeutic modalities tend to exhibit better emotional regulation, reduced behavioral issues, and improved resilience.

Thus, significant relationship found in the study indicates that the BJMP's therapeutic modality program may be functioning effectively in fostering coping skills among PDLs. This implies that PDLs are more likely to develop constructive coping techniques, when the program is delivered efficiently through regular sessions, trained facilitators, and relevant therapeutic content.

Relationship Between the Perceived Stress Level and Coping Techniques of the PDLs

Table 7. Relationship Between the Perceived Stress Level and Coping Techniques of the PDLs.

Perceived Stress Level	Level of Coping Techniques				
	Very High	High	Low	Very Low	Total
Very High	34	6	0	0	40
High	22	33	4	0	59
Low	74	10	6	0	90
Very Low	36	1	0	0	37
Total	166	50	10	0	226

Computed (G) value : -0.367

P-Value : <0.001

Decision : Reject Ho

Interpretation : Significant at 0.05 level of significance

As shown in Table 7, there are 166 PDLs who have a very high level of coping techniques. Out of these 166, there are 34, 22, 74, and 36 respondents who revealed a very high, high, low, and very low perceived stress level respectively. There are also 50 PDLs who have a high coping techniques level in which 6 have reported very high, 33 reported high, 10 reported low, and 1 reported very low perceived stress level. The remaining 10 respondents all revealed a low level of coping techniques, scoring 4 for high, and 6 for low levels of perceived stress. Using Pearson's correlation, the computed p – value of Table 7, is less than 0.001, which shows that there is a significant relationship between the level of coping techniques and the level of perceived stress among PDLs at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

Adaptive coping techniques such as problem-solving, cognitive reframing, and seeking social support can help individuals reduce the intensity of stressors or manage their emotional responses more effectively. Individuals who possess stronger coping skills tend to report lower levels of perceived stress. In addition, it was also noted in the context of detention, where stressors such as loss of freedom, social isolation, and fear of violence are observed, effective coping becomes crucial for psychological well-being. PDLs who have developed constructive coping mechanisms experience fewer negative emotional symptoms, better adjustment, and reduced psychological distress (Zhang et al., 2020; Kołodziej et al., 2022).

The results of the study indicate two key findings regarding the psychological wellbeing of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). First, the relationship between the level of efficiency of the therapeutic modality program and the perceived stress level was found to be not significant, as evidenced by a p-value of 0.133, which exceeds the 0.05 significance. This leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis and suggests that the efficiency of the therapeutic program, in its current form, does not directly predict or influence the stress levels experienced by PDLs. This aligns with correctional literature noting that stress in detention is often shaped by systemic and environmental factors that may overshadow the immediate effects of therapeutic interventions.

In contrast, the study revealed a highly significant relationship between the level of coping techniques and both the efficiency of the therapeutic modality program and the level of perceived stress, as shown by a p-value of less than 0.001. The rejection of the null hypothesis in these analyses indicates that stronger coping techniques are closely associated with more efficient therapeutic programming and with lower perceived stress among PDLs. These findings are consistent with Zhang et al. (2020) and Granados et al. (2022), which emphasized that coping strategies fundamentally shape how stressors are assessed and managed. Studies like theirs similarly highlight that therapeutic programs grounded in cognitive-behavioral and psychosocial approaches tend to enhance PDLs' coping abilities, contributing to improved adjustment and emotional stability.

Overall, the results showed the crucial role of coping mechanisms in influencing PDLs' stress levels, suggesting that while therapeutic program efficiency alone may not directly reduce stress, it likely contributes indirectly by strengthening adaptive coping. This highlights the need for correctional institutions to further enhance therapeutic components that build coping skills for better rehabilitation outcomes and a healthier correctional environment.

CONCLUSIONS

The Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) from one of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) facilities in Negros Occidental were predominantly male, aged 41–50 years old, high school graduates, and had been detained for less than three years.

The Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP) was perceived to have a very high level of efficiency among the PDLs, suggesting that the program was effectively implemented and responsive to their rehabilitative needs.

The PDLs exhibited a low level of perceived stress, indicating that they were able to maintain relatively stable emotional well-being despite the challenges associated with incarceration.

The PDLs demonstrated a very high level of coping techniques, suggesting that they frequently utilized adaptive strategies to manage stress and adjust to the correctional environment.

The Therapeutic Community Modality Program had no significant relationship with the perceived stress experienced by the PDLs, this indicates that other personal, social, or environmental factors may have influenced their stress levels.

The Therapeutic Community Modality Program had a significant positive relationship with the coping techniques of the PDLs, indicating that greater program efficiency was associated with the use of more effective coping strategies.

A significant positive relationship existed between perceived stress and coping techniques among the PDLs, indicating that as the PDLs experienced higher levels of stress, they also tended to employ coping strategies more frequently to manage the demands of incarceration.

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