

# LIFE IN PRISON: EXPLORING CHALLENGES AND COPING MECHANISMS DURING IMPRISONMENT

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## ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to explore the challenges faced by prisoners during imprisonment including their coping mechanisms and their realizations. A descriptive-qualitative study was employed involving 42 inmates. Results revealed that the inmates experienced environmental, personal, health, and legal challenges. As an effect, they mechanized a variety of coping strategies to address their current challenges. Finally, the results also showed some realizations and learnings of the inmates such as conversion, closer family ties, and promotion of values of respect and discipline.

**Keywords:** *Imprisonment, Challenges, Coping Mechanisms, Learning and Realization*

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## INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is a developing country confronted with a dire situation in its penal system. Accordingly, some needs are not met, opportunities are restrained, treatments to prisoners are conflicted, and attention is not entirely given. With this at hand, policy makers must not forget the implications of imprisonment in the society, and the issues and challenges surrounding it. Imprisonment is defined as the confinement of offenders in a penal establishment especially as a punishment for a crime. The terms 'prisoner', 'detainee' and 'inmate' are used interchangeably to denominate any person who is deprived of her liberty, such as individuals detained in jails awaiting arrangement, trial, or sentencing; and those who are convicted or serving a prison sentence (Baker, 2013). Women in prison face issues and challenges substantially unique to them such as, pregnancy, motherhood, sexual harrassment, discrimination, healthcare, and mental health (Currie, 2012). While it is also considered that incarceration have negative effects on employment, family life, and civic engagement to imprisoned men (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010; Turney, Wildemann & Schnittker, 2012).

Consequently, what happens is that the life of an offender before imprisonment is more likely to be different during incarceration; thus, the issues of rehabilitation, coping, appreciable facility, and treatment arises. It's argued that there is limited access to personal hygiene products, access to

bathing and shower facilities, which was found to be problematic (Currie, 2012 & Baker, 2013). It also strains the family relationship (Comfort, 2009 as cited by Turney, 2014). The imprisonment of parental figures also is a growing concern because of the fact that childrearing is favored (Freitas, Inacio & Saavedra, 2016). Accordingly, about three million children have an incarcerated parent (Mumola, 2000). The imprisonment of parental figures has also negative consequences to children (Foster & Hagan, 2009). Lastly, re-entry to the society is also a challenge among prisoners, because it can be complicated by past experiences and an unrealistic expectations burdened by the memory of the correctional system (Naser & Visser, 2014).

In the Philippines, the institutional framework involve in the penal and correctional system comprise of three major government departments: the Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The DOJ manages the national penitentiaries through the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor), while the DILG supervises the regional, municipal, district and city jails with the help of the Bureau of Jail Management (BJMP), and the DSWD oversees the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders (Alvor, 2005). Under BuCor, the Correctional Institute for Women (CIW) is instituted in 1931 purposely to confine female national offenders separate from male prisoners (Bravo, 2012). There are many issues and challenges confronting the Philippine penal system such as, overcrowding, resourcing, understaffing, fragmentation, lack of comprehensive and consistent rehabilitative programs, and congestion (Baker, 2013). With the literature and studies presented, it is important that imprisonment should be considered and well catered for, such as the difficulty of adjusting inside the prison, and coping up with the issues and challenges confronting them. Specifically, In Region II, there are 3,368 detainees awaiting trial, undergoing trial, or awaiting final judgement, 1 sentenced for three years and below and 23 sentenced for three years, one day to death, with the grand total of 3,392 (BJMP, 2017). In Cagayan Provincial Jail, there are currently 189 male prisoners compared to 18 female prisoners. In the BJMP Tuguegaro City District Jail, there are 338 males and 34 female offenders being detained (Cagayan Provincial Jail, 2017). Hence, this study is conducted to address the issues and challenges faced by prisoners.

## Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore the issues and challenges faced by prisoners during imprisonment. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the issues and challenges experienced by the informants in prison?
2. What are the coping mechanisms of the informants during imprisonment?

3. What are the learning and realizations of the informants during imprisonment?

## METHODS

This study made use of descriptive - qualitative method of research. The informants of this study were the prisoners of BJMP - Cataggamman Pardo and the prisoners in Cagayan Provincial Jail, Carig Norte. They were purposively selected based on the criteria set for the participating inmates. A total of 42 inmates participated in the study, 36 from BJMP - Cataggamman Pardo and the remaining 6 informants were from Cagayan Provincial Jail, Carig Norte. In general, majority of them are male; and accused for violation of RA 9165 (Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002). Most of the male informants are already serving prison from 4 - 12 years and for females, 5 months to 2 years.

This study made use of an in-depth interview to gather the needed information. Responses of the participants were noted and tape-recorded. The responses were carefully examined and analysed using thematic analysis as the results of the interview were grouped and organized accordingly with those of the same patterns in connection with the research questions.

## RESULTS

This part of the paper presents the results of the interview made with the participants. It comprises two themed sections namely: Issues, challenges with the corresponding coping mechanisms and the learning and realizations of the informants.

### Theme 1: Issues and Challenges and the Coping Mechanism of the Inmates in Prison

**Table 1.** Issues and Challenges and the Coping Mechanism of the Inmates in Prison

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES	MALE			FEMALE			n (N=42)	Rank	COPING MECHANISM
	n(N=25)	%	Rank	n(N=17)	%	Rank			
Environmental	18	72.00	1	15	88.24	2	33	78.57	Acceptance, Self-discipline
Personal	15	60.00	2	16	94.18	1	31	73.81	Mass and Bible Studies, livelihood, Literary Musical Contests, Social Support, Sports, Acceptance, Frequent Visitation, Watch TV and Listening to Radio
Health	11	44.00	3	12	70.59	3	23	54.76	Livelihood, Frequent Visitation
Legal	8	32.00	4	4	23.53	4	12	28.57	Mass and Bible Studies, Educational and academic engagement

*\*multiple responses*

Table 1 presents the findings on the issues and challenges of the inmates in prison along with their corresponding coping mechanisms. Accordingly, the informants reported 4 types of issues they encounter and are currently experiencing in prison, namely, (1) Environmental, (2) Personal, (3) Health and (4) Legal. Majority of the prisoners encountered environmental issues such as congestion, bathroom clogging, drainage or sewage problems. The minor concern of the prisoners pertains to the legal related issues such as the delayed disposition of their cases.

### **Environmental Challenges**

Prevalent in the female dorm rather than the male dorm is the major issue on environmental factors which are clearly elaborated by the informants

in their verbalizations. Most of the problems referring to this factor are congestion, bathroom clogging, and drainage or sewage issue. With this, the inmates cope up by way of acceptance, and self-discipline. Common in the female dorm is the bathroom issues and in the male dorm is congestion.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

MP11: "...*Dati medyo ok ok pa kaya lang masyadong congested na kami, masyado na kaming marami lalo na nung nagkwan ng OPLAN Tokhang marami ng nahuli kaya dumami kami rito bali ang pinaka maraming kwan dito population, drugs, 9165. Mga 70% or almost 70%.*" [...back then is still almost fine but now, we are very congested especially when they implemented the OPLAN Tokhang. Many were caught that's why we increased in number so the majority of the case populating the area is drugs (9165). It's around 70% or almost 70%.]

FP26: "*As of now yun yung problema namin yung banyo, kasi nga lalo na pag-umuulan nagooverflow siya lalo napag tag-ulan yun yung problema namin kasi nga dati may amoebiasis ako yun nga sa pagooverflow ng banyo namin kahit pag gabi...*" [As of now that is our problem...the bathroom, especially when it's raining. It overflows especially during rainy season. When I had amoebiasis, our problem is the overflowing of the bathroom at night.]

### **Personal Challenges**

Another issue for the informants is their personal needs. They experience difficulty in adjusting inside the prison, they have less communication and visitation with the outside world especially with their families, family issues are hinted while they are incarcerated, and loneliness, stress and tension with co-inmates are also experienced by the prisoners. With this, they cope up by attending mass and bible studies, engaging in livelihood programs, playing sports, watching TV and listening to radio, as well as participating in literary and musical contests. While the prisoners attested that advises given by the fellow inmates are also helpful for them, it is also true that some of them do not have visitors, so in order to adjust inside; they tend to accept their situation, and establish rapport with other prisoners.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

MP09: "*Meron rin yung karamihan may 1 year nakapagadjust na pero kami mahirap kami makapagadjust... hmm di kami makapagadjust kasi yung pamilya namin di pa namin nakapiling... buti kasi yung mga karamihan mga bago lang sila eh kami hinde. Di kami sanay sa mga ganitong bagay*" [There are those who, in their first year, had

already adjusted... unlike us we had difficulty adjusting... because we can't be with our families...lucky for those who are new, unlike us, we are not, we are not used to this.]

MP04: "...*Kasi ma'am nung una, malungkot ako ma'am di ako makakain siguro iniisip ko kaso ko kung pano malulutas kaso ko kasi di ko naman ginawa.*" [...You know ma'am at first, I was lonely that I can't even eat, maybe I was thinking about my case and how it should be resolved, because I didn't really do it.]

FP29: "*Gusto naman naming o hinde, eh andito na kami kung anong namang andito sa amin tatanggapin naming ng maluwag.*" [Whether we like it or not, we are here already, we will gladly accept whatever it is in here.]

MP01: "*Kapag nabanggit mo kasi ang pangalan ng Diyos parang mawawala na yung problema mo eh.*" [Once you speak of His name, it's as if all your problems solved.]

MP02: "*Minsan yung sa panonood namin sa tv tsaka yung pageehersisyo para dun ko nakakalimutan lahat yung mga problema na naiwan ko sa pamilya ko...*" [Sometimes watching television and exercising helps me forget the problems I left with my family]

MP09: "*Nakapagadjust kami dahil sa mga livelihood namin, nagtatrabaho kami para di kami malungkot, kagaya ng ganyan nagtatrabaho kami gusto naming kumita ng pera yun yung libangan namin para di kami malungkot, gumagawa ng mga bulaklak.*" [We are adjusting because of our livelihood, we work for us not to feel lonely, like we work because we like to earn money, that is our pastime for us not be lonely, we are making flowers (bonsai).]

### **Health Challenges**

One of the issues confronting the informants is on health issues such as shortage on food and medicine as well as personal hygiene. The female informants paid attention to this factor very well as they have clearly emphasized in the interview their problems on food and medication. The informants, in general, experienced issues on food shortage due to reduced budget and problems on personal hygiene due to insufficiency of hygienic products such as bath soap, toothpaste, napkins and others especially to those who experience less or no visitation at all. Thus, livelihood programs and frequent visitation helps them in coping with these kinds of problems. Livelihood programs helps them earn profits in order to buy some of their

basic needs and the family who visits them from time to time provides these necessities to them.

Some of the following verbalizations are as follows:

FP31: *“Food ngayon problema namin ang food ngayon. Niraration niyo ho? Oo may ration at tsaka dito sabi naman ng warden parang nag-cut down ng budget para sa inmates, ayaw ni Duterte ewan ko parang si Duterte ang naglessen ng budget so ngayon yung warden namin inopen niya sa mga dalaw namin na magdala ng food, dati kasi nag-strict sa canned goods kasi may coop kami pero ngayon inoopen na dahil nga wala ng budget not enough for, yung mga nandito. [For now food is the problem. Do you ration it? Yes, we ration it, and here, the warden said that there was some kind of cut down with the budget and Duterte is against it. I don't know if Duterte is the one who lessened the budget, so now our warden opened the idea of bringing food inside, because before it was strictly prohibited to bring canned goods because we have a cooperative here but now it was allowed due to lack of budget.]*

MP18: *“Actually ang mga problema lang dito eh yung gamot, yung mga pangangailangan ng mga kasama naming walang ka dalaw-dalaw, kailangan nila ng parang isang room, pang ano nila sa sarili. Hindi namin maiwasan yung magkasakit dito, mag ka skin disease, pigsang ganun. Kasi sa sikip ng facilidad di namin maiwasan yun. [Actually the problem here is the medicine and the needs of others who doesn't get any visits, they really need a room to take care of themselves. We really can't prevent ourselves from getting sick... like skin disease and cyst. Because the facility is tight, we can't help getting those.]*

FP24: *“Yun kailangan namin yung medical assistance kasi hindi lahat ng gamot na kailangan namin nandito. Yung iba sa amin may sakit, sa akin kasi yung asthma ko lang. Hindi kami pwedeng magtago ng gamot sa loob, hinihingi na lang namin sa naka duty na nurse namin. [What we need is medical assistance because we don't have all of the medicine we need here. Some of us here have illnesses, for me I have my asthma. We can't keep our own medicine here; we only ask the on-duty nurse for it.]*

MP11: *“...Kaya lang syempre di mo maiwasan kasi yung amoy ng isang inmates kasi nawawala wala yung tubig namin di deretso yung panliligong namin tapos yung mga iba matatanda di mo naman mapipilit na maligo sila kasi iba yung, mamaya nagkasakit sila, iba yung kwan nila eh iba yung sitwasyon ng matatanda eh dapat kailangan ding alagaan namin sila intindihin namin halimbawang ayaw nilang maligo*

*bahala, pag pinilit mong maligo baka yun pa yung cause ng pagkakasakit nila.” [...you can't really ignore the smell of the other inmates because our water runs out here, bathing here isn't steady and the others who are elderly and you can't force them to take a bath, because their situation is different. We also need take care of them and understand them, for example if they don't like to take a bath and you insist it, it can become their sickness.]*

### **Legal Challenges**

From the female informants, few of them clearly pointed out their experience in delays in the disposition of their case. However, in the male counterpart there are several who experienced the same.

Some of the verbalizations are as follows:

MP14: *“Speed ng trial? yun yung matagal, oo kasi minsan gaya nung last year sa halos one and a half year isang hearing ko lang ang natuloy. Mas marami ang postponed. Pero ngayon sabi nila may speedy trial na. eh wala rin” [Speed of trial? That's the slowest, yes, sometime, just like last year for almost one and a half year, only one of my hearings happened. My hearings always get postponed. However, they said that there is speedy trial now, but it's still the same.]*

MP04: *“Yung particular na problema namin kaya kami nagtagal dito ay yung delay ng justice namin, yung kaso namin. Yung mga delay po hearing? Oo delay pero sa ngayon kasi may pina... ang supreme court ngayon, may rundown hearing na kaya mas mabilis na, maswerte yung mga bagong pasok ngayon kasi mabilis na, eh ako biro mo umabot ako ng 5years 3 months di pa natatapos.” [That is one of the particular problem we have here, that's why we have been here for a long time, is the delay on our justice, our case. The delay on your hearing? Yes, there's delay but there is... from the supreme court, there is a rundown hearing that's why it's fast now, lucky are those who just got in because its already quick, but me it took 5 years and 3 months and it's still not over.]*

MP03: *“Ang pangangailangan ko lang na di naano ay yung pag nahihearing kami yung pag may hearing ako mostly di mo rin maiwasan yung ganun.. yung postpone ganun” [What I really need that doesn't get attended to is... every time I'm have a hearing, it always gets postponed]*

FP31: *“...Kasi dito sa jail lahat ng religious activities na sasalihan mo may GCTA so kung meron kang naearn na points or pag may sinasalihan ka for example wag naman sanang matamaan ka or masintensiyahan ka magagamit mo yung GCTA dun sa sintensiya*

mo na for example nag-attend ka ng Mass fifteen days iyon na ikakaltas sa ano parang ine-earn mo fifteen days so bali kapag nakadalawa ka na one month ng nakalatas sa iyo ganon...per attendance meron kang points sa GCTA yung Good Conduct and Time Allowance...” [Because in this jail every religious activities you participate in has GCTA so if you have earned points or you have participation for example, hopefully not if you will be sentenced you can use your GCTA in the number of sentence for example you attended Mass for fifteen days that will be deducted in your earned points of fifteen days, so if you have earned two so you will deducted one month...per attendance you have points in GCTA that is Good Conduct and Time Allowance.]

## Theme 2: Learning and Realization of the Informants in Prison

**Table 2.** Learning and Realization of the Informants in Prison

Learning and Realization	Male			Female			n (N=42)	Rank
	n (N=25)	%	Rank	n (N=17)	%	Rank		
Conversion	8	32	2	6	35	2	14	1
Realized the Value of Respect and Discipline	6	24	3	7	41	1	13	2
Closer Family Ties	9	36	1	3	18	3	12	3

\*multiple responses

Table 3 represents the learning and realization of the informants. Accordingly, it echoes 3 major learning and realization namely: (1) Conversion, (2) Realized the value of respect and discipline, (3) Closer Family Ties. Majority of them answered that they learned and realized that conversion is helpful to them.

### Conversion

The informants expressed their intention and commitment to renew their ways, and the will to change for the better. They also make manifest that they have re-establish their faith.

Some of the verbalizations of the informants are as follows:

MP42: “Gusto ko ng baguhin yung nangyari sa buhay ko, gusto kong ibalik yung respeto ng mga tao na nawala. At saka hindi na ako hihiwalay sa Diyos, kasi kung malayo ka sa Diyos kukunin ka ng kasamaan.”

[I want to change what happened in my life, I want to gain back the respect from people that was lost. And I will never be apart from God anymore, because if you distance yourself from God, you will be doomed.]

FP24: “Ayoko ng balikan yung dati kong buhay kasi ito na eh naranasan ko na, sabi ko nga eh kung alam ko lang din na ganito magiging kahihinatnan ng lahat hindi na lang sana ako nakipagsabayan sa pakikipag-ano ng drugs.”

[I don’t want to go back with what my life before, because I have experienced it, I said to myself if I only knew this would be the consequences of all, I should have not let myself into taking drugs.]

### Closer Family Ties

The informants also have regained the affection and closeness of their family when they have been committed.

One of the verbalization of the informants is as follows:

MP11: “Sa akin ah in my situation saka lang kami mas naging close ng mga kapatid ko tapos sa parents ko nung na kwan ako dito, kasi nung nasa labas ako wala although close naman pero kumbaga yung relationship namin ok kaya lang hindi... kung ikukumpara mo dun sa closeness namin ngayon, mas naging close kami ngayon kasi ngayon naiparamdam nila sa akin yung talagang hindi nila ako iniwan.”

[In my situation, the only time that my brothers and I got closer together and my parents is when I was committed here, because when I was outside there was none although we are still close but our relationship is like very normal... If you would compare the closeness we have now, we got even closer now because they have shown to me that they will never leave me.]

### Realized the Value of Respect and Discipline

The informants also learn how important it is to appreciate and hold the respect to others, and observe discipline in their life.

Some of the verbalizations of the informants are as follows:

MP09: “Mas different dito kasi sa loob mas nakakatulong ka sa kapwa mo, yung mas marunong ka rumespeto sa mga tao, sa labas di ka marunong magrespeto sa tao... mas natuto akong rumespeto dito kesa sa labas, kasi sa labas di ka marunong rumespeto sa kapwa mo

*tao, natutunan ko rin ang pagrespeto sa sarili ko, yan yung mga natutunan ko rito."*

[It is different here inside because you can help your brethren, it's like you know how to respect people, in the outside you don't know how to respect people...I have learned more to respect others here than outside, because in the outside you don't know how to respect your brethren, I also learned how to respect myself, these are all my learnings here.]

FP28: *"Oo, nasusunod yung mga rules and regulation namin dito kasi dito sa BJMP, salamat nga nakulong kami dahil alam na namin yung disiplina na sinasabi, kasi di ba pag nasalabas, kami walang discipline, ngayon naano na naming yung mga discipline."*

[Yes, the rules and regulations are all followed here in BJMP, because we are thankful enough that we imprisoned because we now know discipline that they always say, because if we are outside, we have no discipline, now we are now disciplined.]

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Issues and Challenges of Prisoners with their Corresponding Coping Mechanism**

The research study grasps the informants' perspective and observations about the issues and challenges with the corresponding coping mechanism faced by them during imprisonment and revealed four themes: (1) environmental, (2) personal, (3) health, and (4) Legal.

#### **Environmental Challenges**

In the results of the study, the informants revealed two particular issues in this factor namely: congestion and bathroom clogging. The informants expressed their concerns about the unmet problems of dividing prison dormitories, sleeping bare on the floor, lack of personal space, and the misclassification of offenders-that prisoners are being group together according to the space available rather than their offenses. Accordingly, the Philippines lacks implementing programs that deals with reducing congestion, fragmentation, and overcrowding (Baker, 2013). The findings of the current study show that the informants are swarmed and overcrowded due to the current administration's large scale schema against illegal drugs. They also posited that they are not very comfortable inside the prison cell, and surmised that they cannot really complain about the prison establishment, and it will cause them future problems if the congestion will not be controlled. The

findings are similar to a previous study about the effects of increasing prison congestion if it's not mitigated, that it would unsettle the prison environment resulting to prisoners' uncertainty and discontent (Jones, 2014). Also, it should be noted that lack of personal space would threaten health conditions of prisoners (Garcia-Guerrero & Marco, 2012).

It is noted that the rise in prison population is the result of increasing arrests and captures made but slow processing of trials and hearings (Gaillard, Casing-Baring, Sacayan, Balay-As, & Santos, 2016). Several of the informants assert positively this claim. According to them, their cases are sometimes postponed emphasizing their dissatisfaction with the delay and clog of court cases. It is evident then that the large population of inmates are those who are awaiting trial and promulgation of judgement, one reason for this is the fact that those released from prison are quickly replaced by new convicts (Ogwezzy, Adebayo & Kekere, 2016). Truly, the informants represent the majority of detainees awaiting trial or promulgation of judgement, and asserted that few are released every year or even none, but there are many who enter the prison every year. The informants attested that the administration's policy about illegal drugs worsens their condition.

Moreover, the informants laid down that the lavatory facility found to be problematic, especially during wet season. While the male prisoners suggest that the cleanliness is maintained for there are scheduled cleaners every day, and also if there are new detainees whom they are task to clean the bathroom. But true to the results for the female prisoners, their issue in their bathroom is always clogging, because their sewage is connected to the male dorm, and the water is only occasionally strong. Apparently, they also attested that they clean the bathroom manually, with the help of the Bureau providing those cleaning liquids and materials. Similar to previous study, one of the prevailing problems of the Philippine prison system is the problems arising from lavatory facility, sanitary installations, lack of water supply among other things (Currie, 2012; Baker, 2013;), and it perpetuates that simple misgivings are seen in the prison establishment, such as the need for maintenance and renovation. It is thus maintained that the prisons' toilet facility is poor and the general environment is unkempt (Adegbami & Uche, 2015).

However, in general, coping with congestion and bathing difficulties is not directly pointed out by the inmates. Thus, they speak of self-discipline, and acceptance as their main tool in adjusting to these kinds of problems.

#### **Personal Challenges**

More than half of the informants also experienced having a hard time adjusting in the prison facility. They have reported that it is hard because of the new environment that they need to face. The informants submitted that

the prison itself impose a different feeling for them as it gives them the realization of a harsh reality, coupled with the difficulty in managing and conversing with other prisoners. They also asserted that it is hard for them to be apart from their family; they would be misled and find it hard to adjust inside without their guidance and support. Similar to previous study, the findings show and assert that the difficulty of adjustment of prisoners is the result of environmental conditions and their individual perceptions towards environmental provisions (Wright, 2006). Also the findings also buttressed that problems for the prisoners would arise because of the lack of support, absence of home and family, and lack of outside social life (Vuolo & Kruttschnitt, 2008).

However, the prisoners also admit the proposition that the length of time of incarceration significantly transform them, and make it easy for them to adjust overtime. They accepted the fact that they gradually become used to prison contingencies insofar as it happen every day that it's like natural already. This confirms the idea of gradual change typically occurs in stages and, all other things being equal, the longer someone is incarcerated the more significant the nature of the institutional transformation; and that they gradually become more accustomed to the restrictions that institutional life imposes (Haney, 2002). Significantly, not all informants adjust easily or may never adjust to it. They imply that they only acquiesced to their situation, or accepted in their selves that this is the consequence of their actions. Pertinently, this conflict arises because of individual personality towards their imprisonment (Wright, 2006).

Also, the informants attested that imprisonment has negative effect on their communication with the outside world. They expressed that they are secluded from the start of their conviction and the lapse between the prison and outside seems distant. They also elaborated their incarceration is one of the cause of family separation or may even augment the already constrained relationship. They are saddened because of the fact that they are facing a whole new world, while intimating that they miss the outside world badly, as if they are being isolated from the rest. It is noted that while they are imprisoned, they do not have the necessary means to communicate outside. Similar to a previous study, it is argued that imprisonment disrupts family relationships because of the fact that prisoners are not free as they are severely incarcerated (La Vigne, Naser, Brooks & Castro, 2005). They declared that you can't use phone inside, and when you do have to talk with the outside world, it should be first mentioned to the jail management, or course through letter, by suggesting to the fellow inmates who have visitors to send it to their family and friends. This confirms the findings of a previous study that incarceration really lessens communication from the outside, having frequent contact or visits is an important factor for adjustment and shows that their family and friends have not forgotten them (Calgar, Onay & Ozel, 2005).

With this, they often cope up by making themselves busy with livelihood programs- to ease their longing and meager subsistence. Such profit on their livelihood helps them in providing their basic needs such as bath soap and coffee. Similar to previous literatures which revealed that engaging in livelihood activities is necessary for prison survival. It is one way to relieve depression and boredom; it also affects the inmates' inner consciousness for self-responsibility; and stands as source for their financial needs to aid in providing personal supplies such as soap, shampoo and the like (Gamo, 2013, Escabel, Abliter, Asi, Dimaano, Villavicencio, Seco, 2015 & Looc, 2015).. It can also be noted from the findings that more female prisoners engage in livelihood activities than their male counterparts. It is because women by nature continue to be the type of home-based worker as proven in a previous study (Hay, Sudarshan & Mendez, 2012).

The prisoners also cope up by attending Mass and participating in Bible studies. This is confirmed by previous studies that coping through religious programs always plays an essential part in correctional programming (Partyka, 2001, Thomas & Zaitzow, 2006, Maruna, Wilson & Curran, 2006 and Ferszt, Salgado, DeFedele & Leveillee, 2009). This contention is also proven by the prisoners, as revealed by the majority that involving one's self in religious activities such as mass and bible studies helps them to cope with the sufferings in prison. According to the prisoners, their devotion to God gives them light and hopes that someday they will all be freed; it helps them release their problems to Him for even just to speak of His name it's as if all their problems are solved. Similar to a previous study where it is revealed that religion is vital in the lives of people that most of the time they turn to God when dealing with stressful situations (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005 & Clear, Hardyman, Stout, Lucken & Dammer, 2000). Consequently, religion greatly contributes to prison adjustment likewise in a prior study where the findings conclude the same (Clear & Sumter, 2002).

Another challenge confronting the prisoners is with their families who are left behind, the male informants posited that while they are imprisoned problems with their family arises without them knowing, it reminds them that they have a broken family and their incarceration only worsens the situation. They further attested having a family supporting you is important, the absence of which would lead to complications and depression. The presences of outside connections bring significant contribution to their well-being. Accordingly, while they are imprisoned, such help or support coming from their families would already be enough for the informants, as it will ease them in their struggle inside. Similarly, the effects of imprisonment strains the familial relationship (Comfort, 2009), but guidance and support from families is important as it prevents the probability of further recidivism and delinquency (Finney-Hairston, 2001).

While the male prisoners experienced such family issues, only few female prisoners experienced such. According to them, they have their family to support them, that they have constant communication with their families and children. The female informants see to it that their children would be guided properly in their development. They female informants know how hard it is not to see their children grow up, in order to do so, they cherish every visitation afforded to them.

Remotely, however, some prisoners to the extent do not want their families and their children to visit them, as the prison facility itself will change their view as to the persons of such informants, and such visits would only be too emotionally painful to them. They believe there is little that they can do about their family, and to make matters worse, they even feel like their family abandoned them. This confirms the findings of a previous study that prisoners and their families experience a tremendous sense of loss when incarceration occurs and that loss is compounded when children are involved (Finney-Hairston, 2001).

Apposite with loneliness and stress, a small number of prisoners also express their feeling of being lonely and stressed out, particularly at the beginning of their prison sentence because to them it is anxiety provoking. But the findings indicate that the prisoners know how to amuse their selves with creativity, and suggested there are many inmates to talk to. They also find time in making each hour counts as they make their livelihood, play sports, cook food, exercise, and bible studies. This proves that because of social support, over the course of time, they become less stressed (Jiang & Fisher-Giorlando, 2005; Pelissier & Jones, 2006). The findings also show that frequent visitation boost up their morale, provides them with happiness. But it is also stressed that not all of them has visitors, so in effect they would distract themselves with recreational activities. These simple activities like watching television or listening to radio or playing sports reduces their boredom and it further elevate their spirits (Elger, 2009; Khalfa, Bella, Roy, Peretz & Lupien, 2003). It should also be noted that participating in mass and bible studies further lessens their burden in life; it helps them face the adversities that would come their way (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005).

Lastly, the findings attested that, a lot of times prisoners in their own initiative, they would avoid conflicts because of the fear of the higher-ups, so they maintain their good relationship with another. Even so, the tension between conflicting personalities disrupt their communication and friendliness with another, it would sometimes lead to confusion and isolation. Truly, tension from co-prisoners tends to contribute to a prisoners' emotional state (Ferszt, Salgado, DeFedele & Leveillee, 2009). But it is reflected and clearly indicated by the informants that while there is tension with their co-inmates, it is more likely to be resolved and there would be no physical violence that would happen, or more likely the ill-will or resentment they feel will be

contained by them. Similarly, prisoners ensure to conceal their agendas and their true character in order to lessen tension, so as to provide them avenue to mingle in peace and avoid getting unnecessary attention (Burnett & Maruna, 2006). As the findings also show the rules and regulations is maintained and always followed between and among prisoners. The jail officers also help them with how they should treat each other as a family, and as a family they should take care of each other.

## **Health Challenges**

The prisoners hinted that they cannot truly express their aversions when it comes to prison food. Further, they also mentioned that there is a cut-down in their budget under the current administration. But the prisoners do not hint to any kind of food refusal as it may, for sometimes they are the ones cooking their own food. Accordingly, they are greatly indebted for their beloved warden for shouldering the expenses for their food. Aside from this, they also suggest that the family who visits from time to time brings food for them; they also have a cooperative inside manage by the prisoners themselves.

It can also be inferred from the findings that they eat three times a day, and when ask to rate the food in prison, the prisoners' responses, in general, suggest that though nutritious enough it is very insufficient for their number. Similarly, food refusal can be perceived as a political tool, as a method of exercising control over others, at either the individual, family or societal level (Brockmann, 1999). This is true only in the sense that if it is denied and controlled. They suggest that they have no worries whatsoever, only when it is not properly cooked. Thus, the responses underlines the fact that the food is supposed to be good enough, a kind of food fitting the prison, not a hotel or a restaurant (Ugelvik, 2011).

As revealed by the prisoners, personal hygiene is also one of their concerns. They attested that hygienic supplies such as soap, shampoo, and toothpaste are badly needed, for not everyone can afford to buy those things. Frequent visitations of their family help them acquire these basic necessities. However, this is hard for those prisoners who have no visitors to give them such necessities as they would beg for their fellow inmates to lend them such. They also stated that they fall in line in order for them to take a bath. However, with their number waiting for one's turn is a very crucial factor since not all of the time water is accessible; they have attested that some hours of the day water is not available. As expressly mentioned, some days they would not take a bath, or sometimes they practice wash and wear for their clothes.

Meanwhile, the female prisoners attested that their family, during visitation, provides them menstrual pads. But some female informants, who



have no family to visit them, buy those things from the profits they earn in the livelihood activities. Similar to previous literatures which revealed that engaging in livelihood activities is necessary for prison survival. It stands as source for their financial needs to aid in providing personal supplies such as soap, shampoo and the like (Gamo, 2013, Escabel, Abliter, Asi, Dimaano, Villavicencio, Seco, 2015 & Looc, 2015); or if none at all, borrow from their fellow inmates. They further attested that the Bureau does not necessarily provide them these materials. This situation strongly assert the claim of a previous study that Philippine facilities fall short particularly on personal hygiene and gender-sensitive provisions, such as decadent bathroom facility, lack of shampoo and soap, and many others.

The findings of the study suggest that the prisoners' health and medication is supervised by the jail officers. Medicines can be afforded to them easily, and health check-ups and dental care is also conducted at least twice a month, also nurses are stationed to different post. This negates the notion of a previous study that prison presents an unhealthy environment which causes poor health conditions (Jaka, Roshi & Burazeri, 2014), for the prison itself affords sustainable remedy for health and medication. While some informants hinted that they lack the necessary medicine for the available medicine are generally for common ailments like coughs and colds, headaches, stomach pains, etc., nevertheless, if they feel very ill, and the medicine available is not effective, they will call upon the attention of the jail officers and the nurses, and may even call the help of a medical doctor. Thus, the conclusion of a previous study that many correctional facilities does render an opportunity to receive medical care (Green, Miranda, Daroowalla & Siddique, 2005 & Quina, Garis, Stevenson, Garrido, Brown, Richman & Mitchell, 2007) is not correct, but rather they provide substantial medication which is easily accessible for them when they get sick.

### **Legal Challenges**

Few prisoners have clearly emphasized their disappointment in the delayed disposition of their cases. It is maintained that one of the common problems of these detainees is awaiting trial or promulgation of judgement. Truly, the findings show that the prisoners are worried about the status of their cases. They have explained that this adds to their agony in prison for most of the time the trial or hearing is postponed. It is likewise emphasized by them that they cannot feel the speedy disposition of cases, and sometimes hearings only take place once a month, or least once a year. Thus, these positively assert that not only does the slow process of the disposition of cases contributes to the bulking up of prison population (Gaillard, Casing-Baring, Sacayan, Balay-As, & Santos, 2016; Adegbami & Uche, 2015), but also to the emotional state of prisoners (Ferszt, Salgado, DeFedele & Leveillee, 2009) as they do not know what would happen to them as their trials are being prolonged and delayed, they seem to be convicted already

even before their judgement has been pronounced for their have already served in prison longer than the supposed judgement or even much longer when found not guilty. Hence, unless these delays are reduced, there cannot be reductions in the numbers of those prisoners awaiting trial or promulgation.

Nonetheless, the prisoners cope in this kind of situation by attending mass and bible studies for their GCTA (Good Conduct and Time Allowance). The prisoners also revealed that aside from the moral and spiritual contribution of religious programs in their rehabilitation, their participation in mass and bible studies helps them reduce their incarceration period as stated in the law governing GCTA. The Good Conduct and Time Allowance of the prisoners allows the inmate to reduce the number of their incarceration period by attending activities initiated by the Prison Management such as these religious activities through mass and bible studies as stated under R.A. 10592. Moreover, the inmates' rehabilitation during their stay in prison is also of utmost priority.

### **Learnings and Realizations**

One of the inquiries of the research study explores the point of view of the informants as they learn new things about themselves and realize that they need to turn themselves anew for the betterment of- not only them- but for their families and the people around them, it mainly focuses on Conversion, Realizing the Value of Respect and Discipline, and Close Family Ties.

#### **Conversion**

Conversion means to turn or revolve around (Maruna, Wilson & Curran, 2006). On top of the list of prisoners learning and realization is conversion, the prisoners show enthusiasm towards and commitment to changing and giving themselves to God. Most of the prisoners show transformation after exhibiting repentance of the misguided deed they made. Most of these people use their belief in transcendent, being in a way as to cope for the reality shock that hit them, so these people set out to re-estimate themselves why they did it even though it is unlikely of them. Likewise in an earlier study, wherein being imprisoned made them realized how delicate their life is before as they took it for granted (Maruna, Wilson & Curran, 2006).

Moreover, a lot of the informants' reason for conversion or return to God, circles around the thought that it was a predetermined fate, as was stated before in a study where inmates make sense of their lives through assessing their incarceration as the will of the Lord and to determine one's purpose which also serves as an opportunity to reconnect with God (Maruna, Wilson & Curran, 2006).

Apart from those believing in fate, there are also those inmates who consider themselves as a representative of God, as also established in a research for which prisoners assume the role of a missionary after being empowered and began to feel as if they are obligated to profess the Christian religion (Maruna, Wilson & Curran, 2006). In addition, prisoners are very much content of who and what they are as a person after giving themselves into the will of God, similar to an earlier research where it shows that prisoners who resort to religiousness have a higher chance of self-esteem (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). Moreover, based on a prior study, it was found out in one prisoner's narrative that he is enlightened during his incarceration, taking into account that he has once again found his humanity (Rolston, 2011), similar to the inmates who participated in the present study where much regret has been extinguished through conversion. Nonetheless, as far as other are people concerned, conversion is the way of gaining their dignities back (Maruna, Wilson & Curran, 2006).

### **Realized the Value of Respect and Discipline**

People all over the world are entitled to some extent of respect, but during the course of the interview, the prisoners had lost that privilege when they had tarnished their reputation due to a misdeed. And based on the results, prisoners understand the necessity of respect if they ever want to change for the better; some prisoners realized that respect should not be taken for granted; and in a way, their stay in the prison shaped them to be more respectful of others, similar to a previous research where an inmate described that rehabilitation is a service to other inmates to reform and develop oneself in terms of self-confidence, discipline and self-respect, and relationship with other people (Gamo, 2013).

### **Closer Family Ties**

As prisoners illustrate signs of remorse for their past actions, they start to reflect on their short comings before and began to learn and realize that they need to improve themselves. By way of results, it shows that informants display high regards to family and their closeness, where they try to reconvene their lost status as a family, in which informants who, although, have a reasonable closeness to members of the family still want to recover a once happy household. Moreover, some incarcerated parents try to connect with their children whenever they are visited by them and repair the distance between them, akin to a prior study where imprisoned parents try to bridge the parental gaps especially those who have been alienated at a young age (Tasca, Mulvey & Rodriguez, 2016).

However, some inmates had become conscious and realized that being incarcerated in prison has somewhat brought them closer than ever

with their family, such is correlated to a prior study where every visit that the family makes has a high degree of a family relationship qualities (La Vigne, Naser, Brooks & Castro, 2005). Further, some informants use their firm closeness to convey their messages, which was also stated in a prior study where prisoners teach their children lessons so as to prevent ending up like them (Tasca, Mulvey & Rodriguez, 2016). But most often, each and every informant only wants to reconstitute a family that has been broken.

## **CONCLUSION**

This present study revealed that the major issue of congestion subsists and rampant in the prison establishment for there is slow process of trials and hearing, and the current administration's policy against illegal drugs largely contributes to the growth of the prison population. It is also concluded that imprisonment affects individual adjustment with the prison environment itself, burdens family ties and communication with the outside world. Prisoners experience difficulties on bathing, and such has an adverse effect on their personal hygiene; but they are provided with opportunities on health medication. While it is concluded that there exists an issue on their lavatory facilities and food, the prisoners have no strong aversion on such matters. It is also prevalent that the security and management is maintained to ease tension between prisoners, and the rules and regulations of the prison are well established. Lastly, it is concluded that attending Mass and bible studies provides the prisoners hope and ease in their daily lives, and plays a vital part on their rehabilitation and incarceration.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

Along with the growing number of inmates, the prison establishment should be renovated, and if possible expanded and extended, in order to mitigate congestion inside the prison.

The prisoners should have an emergency allocated budget for meals and necessities for personal hygiene, and an emergency budget supervised by the Jail Management to be given to them if the need arises.

The prisoners should have a consistent and reliable water supply for their cooking and bathing. Also the bathroom and the sewage system must be kept clean and repaired regularly.

When planning organizational activities for Legal Management students, the results of this study should also be taken into account. Thus, the conduct of legal consultation, legal counselling and gift giving or charitable activities is suggested.

Further research should be conducted in order to assess and determine fully the effects of incarceration of prisoners with their existing family relationship.

Further research should be conducted in other detaining facilities in order to properly address whether the findings of this study coincide with others with a view of providing material reference for policy administration and management of prisoners.

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