



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

Guiding Lives for the Better: Work Narrative of the Parole and Probation Officers

Pedro D. Fenellere, Jr. MSCJ, Joseph Roque A. Pensotes, Jr., Ph.D, Rhett Caesar L. Piczon, Atty. Dodelon F. Sabijon Ph.D, Mark Jerick L. Reposo, MSCJ*

*Purok 3 Mercedes Catbalogan City, Samar 6700 Philippines
Barangay 10 Mckenley Street Catbalogan City, Samar 6700, Philippines*

ABSTRACT

This study explored the work experiences of parole and probation officers in Western Samar, Philippines, particularly focusing on their challenges and contributions to the rehabilitation of probationers. This research aimed to highlight the role of these officers in implementing rehabilitation programs. Using a phenomenological research design, the study sought to uncover deeper insights into their professional experiences.

A total of ten (10) parole and probation officers assigned in different municipalities in Western Samar, including Calbayog, Catbalogan, and surrounding areas, were selected as informants. These officers, each with at least two years of experience, were chosen from provincial parole and probation records to ensure a well-rounded representation of their experiences.

The study identified nine emergent themes: Fulfilment in Extending Help, Motivation and Sense of Purpose, Personal and Professional Growth, Budgetary and Resource Constraints, Disparity Between Employee and Workloads, Away from Home, Collaboration and Community Involvement, Unified Therapeutic Program, Budgetary and Logistical Support, and Legislation for Hope. These themes emphasized the critical role of parole and probation officers in bridging the gap between the criminal justice system and the community. The officers highlighted the challenges they face in implementing rehabilitation programs, including resource limitations and alignment with government policies. They expressed a continuous commitment and dedication to their roles, stressing the importance of recognition for their contributions in the rehabilitation and reintegration of probationers. The study underscored the officers' aspirations for greater support and acknowledgment of their vital work within the justice system.

Keywords: *Rehabilitation, Reintegration, Parole and Probation Administration, Parole and Probation Officer, probationers, live experiences, Fulfilment and aspiration*

1. Introduction

Community-based corrections refer to programs and services provided to individuals who have been convicted of a crime but are allowed to serve their sentence outside of prison or jail. Community-based corrections are considered more effective in reducing recidivism rates compared to traditional jails. These programs are also less costly and help alleviate overcrowding in prisons and jails (Kent State, 2024). These programs are designed to help offenders reintegrate into society and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

Community-based corrections involve examining how countries implement and utilize community-based programs to address their unique criminal justice challenges. Implementors play a significant role in the success of these programs by overseeing their development, implementation, and evaluation. They may include probation officers, social workers, counselors, and other professionals who work directly with offenders in the community (National Institute of Justice, 2014).

In England, judges were granted the authority to issue a 'judicial reprieve,' which allowed an offender, typically convicted of a minor infraction to retain their full rights as a citizen while avoiding immediate punishment. This marks one of the earliest examples of community corrections. The concept of 'recognizance,' which involved releasing a guilty offender based on a promise to demonstrate good behavior, gained popularity in the United States during the 1800s. Recognizance typically applied to minor offenders and allowed them to avoid full legal consequences, while still giving the court the authority to impose penalties if further violations occurred (Kent State, 2024).

Probation and parole are parts of community supervision, commonly referred to as community corrections. Probation and parole are two different programs, although they both aim to keep criminals out of jail. For instance, the Father of Probation, John Augustus, helped destitute alcoholics entangled in the legal system by posting their bail when they were unable to do it on their own. Augustus, in turn, helped people find work, education, and abstinence

to lessen criminal activity in the future. Probation and parole have their roots in rehabilitation because parole was established in the United States with the goal to reform and reintegrate (Stephenson, 2020).

The role of probation officers is essential to maintaining balance and oversight within the criminal justice system. They collaborate closely with parole and police departments and other law enforcement organizations to ensure that criminals are held responsible for their misdeeds. A probation officer's job is to evaluate the needs of probationers and provide them with the tools and support they need to properly reintegrate into society. It includes putting them in touch with community services, finding work for them, or recommending them to counseling or drug treatment programs. Additionally, probation officers are essential in keeping an eye on probationers' conduct and ensure they follow the terms of their probation. This also includes conducting home visits, drug testing, or attending court hearings (Department of Justice [DOJ], n.d.).

Probation officers are among the people who significantly contribute to the decrease in recidivism. In addition to any additional services required under the probationer's sentence, probation officers ensure that offenders attend anger management classes, educational programs, mental health therapy, and/or drug abuse treatment programs. When a probationer neglects to appear for required programs or transgresses probationary restrictions, probation officials usually follow a standard procedure and make reports to the court. In addition to recommending whether evidence-based practice(s) may be required, the probation officer will also recommend regarding whether the offender should undergo treatment in the community when a violation report is submitted (Brandon, 2020).

Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on Albert Bandura's (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory and is further supported by Michael Lipsky's (1980) Street-Level Bureaucracy and Weiss's (1995) Theory of Change.

Self-efficacy Theory, proposed by Albert Bandura (1977), is a foundational concept in understanding human motivation and behavior. At its core, self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capability to perform tasks and achieve specific outcomes. This belief is not merely confidence but a dynamic judgment of competence in a particular situation. Bandura emphasized that people with high self-efficacy are more likely to approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than threats to be avoided. As a result, they show greater resilience, determination, and a proactive mindset, even when facing obstacles or failure. This sense of control over environment is central to personal growth, effective performance, and long-term success.

Bandura identified four factors that support the development of self-efficacy: (1) enactive mastery experiences, or the ability to overcome relevant challenges with persistent effort; (2) vicarious experience through social models, or the ability to witness similar others succeed or fail at relevant tasks and compare performance to these successes and failures; (3) verbal persuasion, or the ability to interpret positive or negative physiological and affective states while engaging in relevant behaviors; and (4) the interpretation of positive physiological and affective states while engaging in relevant behaviors.

Self-efficacy is closely related to the concept of motivation, as a person's beliefs are fundamental to their aspirations. It serves as an explanation for a person's trajectory in various areas, professionally, relationally, academically, and beyond. Higher self-efficacy translates to greater intrinsic motivation, more goal-oriented behavior, increased confidence, and persistence in completing tasks. The self-efficacy theory of motivation fosters optimism about future success.

Therefore, self-efficacy theory applied to the lived experiences of parole and probation officers might provide insightful analysis for better program implementation. We can create plans to increase their feeling of self-efficacy by analyzing the elements that affect their belief in their capacity to influence probationers positively. Better program delivery and, eventually, improved results for probationers seeking recovery and reintegration into society can result.

Street-Level Bureaucracy (SLB) aims to explain how front-line employees in public services carry out their daily tasks and how they hold certain ideas and working practices. Designed by American Michael Lipsky, it looks at the workplace from the perspective of systematic and real-world problems that workers have to solve, emphasizing public services like welfare, law enforcement, and education. The thesis is established on the idea that public services serve as the coal mines of welfare where the state does the hard, dirty, and dangerous work.

Street-level bureaucracy refers to the part of a public agency or government institution where civil servants engage directly with the public. These front-line workers implement and enforce government laws and public policies across various sectors, including safety, education, social services, and more. Examples of street-level bureaucrats include public school teachers, social workers, police officers, and border security personnel.

Unlike civil servants who work behind the scenes—such as those involved in policy analysis or economic research—street-level bureaucrats regularly interact with citizens. They serve as the face of government, acting as the link between the public and policymakers. In doing so, they play a vital role in translating high-level policy decisions into practical services and actions that directly impact people's lives.

The Theory of Change, proposed by Weiss, is a methodology used by organizations to map out the steps needed to achieve a desired outcome or impact. It helps organizations identify the assumptions underlying their work, articulate their goals and objectives, and clarify the pathways through which they believe change will occur.

The theory of change is a thorough explanation and example of how and why a desired change is expected to occur in a specific situation. It focuses especially on outlining or filling in what has been called the missing middle between the activities or interventions that make up a program or change endeavor and how these contribute to achieving desired outcomes. It accomplishes this by first identifying the desired long-term objectives and then working backward to determine all the necessary prerequisites or outcomes and the causal relationships between them that must be in place for the objectives to materialize. These elements are typically illustrated in an outcome framework.

Weiss brought widespread attention to the term theory of change, defining it as the set of underlying assumptions that illustrate how specific program activities are expected to lead to outcomes at various stages, eventually contributing to a long-term goal. She encouraged the creators of complex, community-driven programs to articulate the theories behind their interventions clearly. According to Weiss, doing so would enhance the quality of their evaluation frameworks and better position them to take credit for the results their programs were intended to achieve. She promoted a seemingly straightforward approach: map out the sequence of expected changes resulting from the intervention and develop an evaluation plan to track whether those changes occur as anticipated.

Together, these theories emphasize the complex dynamics between individual agency, institutional constraints, and the need for broader reforms to support the crucial work of parole and probation officers.

To oversee the probation system, Presidential Decree No. 968, often known as The Probation Law of 1976, established the Probation Administration. The Probation Administration was renamed the "Parole and Probation Administration" and given the additional responsibility of supervising prisoners who, after serving part of their sentence in jails, are released on parole pardon with parole conditions under Executive Order No. 292, "The Administrative Code of 1987," which was promulgated on November 23, 1989 (Department of Justice [DOJ] 2024).

Under Presidential Decree No. 968 also known as Probation law of 1975 describes the duties probation officer which are as follows: a) investigate all persons referred to him for investigation by the proper court or the Administrator; b) instruct all probationers under his supervision of that of the probation aide on the terms and conditions of their probations; c) keep himself informed of the conduct and condition of probationers under his charge and use all suitable methods to bring about an improvement in their conduct and conditions; d) maintain a detailed record of his work and submit such written reports as may be required by the Administration or the court having jurisdiction over the probationer under his supervision; e) prepare a list of qualified residents of the province or city where he is assigned who are willing to act as probation aides; f) supervise the training of probation aides and oversee the latter's supervision of probationers; g) exercise supervision and control over all field assistants, probation aides and other personnel; and h) perform such duties as may be assigned by the court or the Administration.

The Parole and Probation Administration was formerly known as Probation, which was established pursuant to Presidential Decree 968. The Parole and Probation Administration is currently putting into practice a three-pronged approach program called the Therapeutic Community (TC), Restorative Justice (RJ), and Volunteer Probation Assistant (VPA) Programs, to assist clients who have been released into the community in their rehabilitation. This law provides less-costly correctional approach to the offender and improve the quality of life of the offenders. This law encourages the offender by providing them opportunity of rehabilitation and reformation. They focus on providing alternatives to incarceration for suitable candidates, with the to reduce recidivism and reintegrate, intending to reduce recidivism and reintegrate (Department of Justice [DOJ], n.d.).

The role of a probation officer in the criminal justice system is to supervise and support individuals placed on probation as an alternative to incarceration. Probation officers work with probationers to ensure they comply with the conditions of their probation, such as attending counseling, drug testing, and staying out of trouble. They also provide resources and referrals to help probationers successfully reintegrate into society (National Institute of Justice, 2024).

Probation officers have several challenges in their employment, such as an excessive number of cases. Officers argue that there are still as many offenders to deal with despite an increasing automation of many employment functions. A 2014 study by the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services highlights a key issue: probation officers in Maryland manage an average caseload of 83 individuals. Due to this heavy workload, they are often required to focus primarily on high-risk offenders, resulting in minimal or no supervision for lower-risk individuals.

Seven out of ten convicted individuals were released from prison in 34 states were jailed again within five years, according to a 2012 Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) analysis. According to the BJS (2012), due to parole and probation infractions, half of the freed inmates returned within five years. According to the BJS, 74% of reincarcerated inmates were between the ages of 25 and 39, and 61% of them were 40 years of age or older in 2012 (Durose et al., 2021). The Mass release of inmates back into society following their jail sentence is a significant problem with reincarceration. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2018), 1 in 58 adults in the US were under community probation supervision.

Despite the efficiency of the criminal justice system, the relationship between rehabilitation and recidivism was a source of concern because of an increase in criminal offenses. Countries have reported a high percentage of ex-offenders being detained again for comparable crimes during the past few decades, raising concerns about the efficacy of rehabilitation initiatives. Society and the next generation are concerned about the massive rise in criminal recidivism since these trends cast doubt on the viability and usefulness of rehabilitation programs. A personal, social, economic, and lifestyle variables contributes to the higher recidivism rate (Lebbie, 2021).

Exploring the various challenges that probationers encountered upon reintegrating into society. The challenges that need to be addressed include looking for work, getting hired, finding accommodation, reuniting with family, getting around, getting health care, getting into treatment programs, and following parole requirements (Kılıç & Tuysuz, 2024).

Given that clients rehabilitation occurs in the community, recruiting, training, and assigning Volunteer Probation Aides (VPAs) would further energize the therapeutic community treatment model in conjunction with restorative justice principles. The goal of the VPA program is to encourage as many citizens as possible to participate in the community-based probation and parole program. Since the VPAs live in the same community as the clients they oversee, they are able to apply the principles of restorative justice more deeply. As a result, it is feasible for the volunteers to ask for help in meeting the requirements of their clients and support the field officers in keeping an eye on the parolees, and probationers (Correction and Rehabilitation - Parole and Probation Administration, 2024).

The National Institute of Corrections (NIC) has assisted parole and probation agencies in applying evidence-based procedures (EBP) to promote recidivism reduction and reform during the past 20 years. According to Thompson (2022), probation officials views may have a significant impact on how well an offender does under supervision. Thompson, There is no universal agreement regarding what works in routine offender supervision.

Despite playing a crucial role in the criminal justice system, the probation service is often overlooked and treated like an underground organization. Compared to the highly developed images of police, courts, and jail officials, the image of probation officers is less developed. While probation service employees operate silently backstage, members of these organizations are regularly criticized and exalted by the media (Dioses et al, 2019).

Prison administration and important stakeholders don't know how institutional barriers affect parole and probation officials' capacity to manage offenders and lower recidivism rates in a Midwestern state. The United States correctional system consists of two systems: jails and prisons. Both parole agents and probation officers are accountable for maintaining low recidivism rates (Lusby, 2019).

Since inmates are released from jail every day in the United States, the problem of successfully reintegrating into society is not new and it has grown to be a significant social concern (Bryant, 2022). According to data from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE, 2022), 600,000 criminals are freed from state and federal prisons yearly. In the United States, 6.9 million people are either under community supervision or incarcerated in jails and correctional facilities, and approximately 67.8% of released offenders return to prison within three years (APSE, 2022). The various requirements and obstacles faced by female offenders make their reintegration into society a challenging process.

According to Stephenson (2020), the lack of financing for community supervision organizations prevents parole and probation officers from helping prisoners properly reintegrate into the community. Skepticism about prison release and rehabilitation persists due to the current political environment, an increasing jail population, and a lack of affordable housing, factors that contribute to budgetary challenges in implementing these programs.

According to Bryant (2022), several factors should be measured in the reintegration program: the number of former offenders in the community sentencing programs, the accessibility of resources, and the number of parole and probation officers who supervise and evaluate the probationers' compliance with the program. As a result, more probationers had violated a probation condition and reintegrated into society than ever before. Thus, it was vital to identify effective offender reentry programs that led to successful reentry.

The positive results of the therapeutic community treatment modality are connected to the implementation of restorative justice. To highlight the standards of restorative justice, guilty parties are required to compensate victims and provide community services to help restore the broken relationships caused by harming the involved parties. Intervention and conferencing are moreover utilized in uncommon cases to patch and reestablish clients relationship with their casualty and the community. Considering that restoration of clients takes place within the community, the utilization of therapeutic community treatment, combined with the standards of restorative justice, would be enhanced by the recruitment, training, and deployment of Volunteer Probation Associates (Chan, 2021).

Thompson (2022), research identified providing probation officers in their daily efforts with reducing recidivism through effective training for and assisting the offenders with their criminogenic needs. Additionally, the results from the study identified stress as a factor related to high volume caseloads. Probation officers disclosed that due to a high case volume, less time was spent with offenders.

Stephenson (2020), the author of this study, identified three key subjects related to Parole and Probation Officers addressing criminogenic needs: (a) individual-centric variables, (b) organizational-centric variables, and (c) inherent-centric variables. This result demonstrates that, despite the fact that PPOs endeavor to address criminogenic needs, they tend to prioritize non-criminogenic needs or responsivity. The suggestions for social change from this study include community supervision agencies effectively implementing RNR to have a greater impact on reducing offenders' risk factors. Also, PPOs and society may have an increase in understanding their effect on recidivism and people overcoming names that obstruct recovery endeavors. Future investigation ought to investigate the discernments of differing socioeconomics among probation and parole officers, restorative officers, and community partners to address criminogenic needs.

According to the study of Brandon (2020), findings from the research of probation officers under this study concluded, that officers did not believe the programs available to offenders were working. In addition, the study revealed that probation officers believed the offender had to decide at the beginning of probation if they were going to follow the rules of probation and the court. Also, probation officers indicated they did not play a large role in the offenders failure to remain crime-free. In summary, probation officers pointed out they did not know about evidence-based practices despite using programs such as drug treatment, anger management, and cognitive-behavioral therapy; Increased training will be essential for probation officers to understand their role in reducing recidivism.

According to Williams et al. (2019), when Black males who have served time in prison return to society, they encounter numerous obstacles. Long-standing research has shown that incarceration is a risk factor for ill health and wellbeing. Research has demonstrated that access to legally constructed barriers (such as housing, work, and social assistance) can be difficult after incarceration, but much less is known about Black men's actual reentry experiences daily. This study explores the difficulties Black men face after being incarcerated by using critical ethnography and semi-structured interviews with formerly incarcerated Black men in a Northeastern region.

Dioses et al. (2019), based on their research findings, reported that the life experiences of probationers focused on mindfulness training, improving social skills, maintaining personal hygiene, fostering healthy relationships, counseling, spiritual encouragement, collaborative efforts with government agencies, and vocational training programs. Additionally, their life experiences centered on identity development training; after completing these programs, probationers exhibited positive behaviors as they internalized the training, which led to a more positive outlook on life. It is recommended that parole and probation offices consider seeking the assistance of various organizations to continuously and economically facilitate the necessary training to promote human and social change among their clients. Furthermore, additional research is suggested to expand the scope of this study, and other researchers may conduct studies not covered by this research.

According to Osei and Watson, the reintegration, recidivism, and reunion experiences of African American fathers following a jail sentence and their involvement in reentry programs. The following primary themes emerged from the thematic analysis: recidivism, self-identification, unresolved childhood trauma, reentry, self-worth and self-esteem, and reunification with family following incarceration. Unresolved childhood trauma and post-release stress have recognized as the main obstacles to a successful release from prison. There are implications for research, practice, policy, and education in social work.

As a whole, the theoretical background provided a framework for understanding the lived experiences of the parole and probation officers in implementing the rehabilitation program for the probationers. Reviewing of existing literature and related studies offered valuable context and established the current knowledge base on study. We observed both convergence and divergence in the findings, highlighting areas of established knowledge and gaps that require further investigation. This comprehensive review serves as a springboard for our research, which aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of parole and probation officers in implementing rehabilitation programs for probationers

Statement of the Problem

This study explored the experiences of the Parole and Probation Officers in the implementation of the rehabilitation programs for probationers, Samar, Philippines.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of the informants in implementing the rehabilitation program?
2. How do the informants address the challenges encountered in the implementation of the rehabilitation program?
3. What are the aspirations of the informants to improve the rehabilitation program for probationers?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study was a qualitative type of research utilizing a transcendental phenomenological research approach. According to Busetto et al. (2020), qualitative research can be characterized as the study of the nature of phenomena and is particularly suitable for answering questions about why something is (or is not) observed, evaluating complex multi-component interventions, and focusing on intervention enhancement. Transcendental phenomenology is a philosophical method developed by Edmund Husserl that seeks to uncover the structures of consciousness and how we experience the world.

It involves bracketing or suspending our assumptions and preconceptions about the world to focus on the pure experience of phenomena. Through observation and detection of informant behavior against the social reality in the community, phenomenology becomes a tool for dissecting the human mind (Umanailo, 2019). Gaining knowledge about peoples lives experiences, what they do, how they use things, and what they require for their everyday or professional lives is its main goal. In this context, the study seeks to explore the experiences of parole and probation officers in implementing the rehabilitation programs for probationers, focusing on three main components: the Therapeutic Community Modality, Restorative Justice, and the Volunteer Program Aides. Research Environment

This study was conducted in the 1st and 2nd district of Samar province where the parole and probation officers were assigned in the different municipalities. The Parole and Probation Administration office for the 2nd District is located in Catbalogan City, with a satellite office in Calbayog. Based on the records of the Parole and Probation Administration of Samar, the following areas under the jurisdiction of the Second District include the City of Catbalogan and the municipalities of Basey, Calbiga, San Sebastian, Hinabangan, Jiabong, Motiong, Paranas, Pinacdao, San Jose de Buan, and Sta. Rita. Meanwhile, the First District covers the municipalities of Tarangnan, San Jorge, Gandara, Pagsanghan, Matuguinao, Sta. Margarita, Calbayog City, Tagapul-an, and Sto. Niño.

Samar, an island in the east-central Philippines, is the third biggest in the Visayan Islands archipelago, trailing Mindanao and Luzon. Situated between the Samar and Philippine seas, it is divided from the northwest Bicol Peninsula of Luzon by the San Bernardino Strait. A bridge that crosses the San Juanico connects Samar and Leyte to the southwest.

Catbalogan City is a first-class city comprising fifty-seven barangays and serves as the provincial capital, situated in Eastern Visayas, Samar, Philippines. In addition, it serves as Samar financial, political, educational, transportation, and economic hub. It is located near the Maharlika Pan-Philippine Highway and is the entryway to the nation's three Samar provinces. It was known for a long time as the Gateway to Samar City. With a surface size of 105.88 square miles, or 274.22 square kilometers, the city makes up 4.53% of the entire Samar region. The population, as of the 2015 Census, was 103,879. That accounted for 2.34 percent of the population in the Eastern Visayas area and 13.31 percent of the overall population in the Samar province. These calculations indicate the population density is 379 people per square kilometer, or 981 people per square mile. Where the main provincial office of the Samar Parole and Probation is situated.

Calbayog City is a first-class component city in the province of Samar, located in the Eastern Visayas region of the Philippines. It is politically subdivided into 157 barangays, making it one of the cities with the most barangays in the country. As one of the major urban centers in Samar, Calbayog functions as a key commercial, educational, cultural, and transportation hub in the province. It is strategically situated along the Maharlika Pan-Philippine Highway, enhancing its connectivity to other parts of Samar and nearby regions. Calbayog is located in the northwestern part of Samar and is bordered by the Samar Sea, making it an important hub for trade and fisheries. The city spans a total land area of approximately 880.74 square kilometers or (340.05 square miles), which accounts for 14.54% of the entire land area of the Samar province. According to the 2015 Census, Calbayog City had a population of 183,851 people. It is represented 4.14% of the population of the Eastern Visayas region and 23.56% of the total population of Samar province. The city is also home to various government institutions, including; regional and provincial offices, such as a satellite office of the Samar Parole and Probation Administration, supporting the city's role in regional governance and public service.

2.2 Research Informants

The informants of this study were 10 selected parole and probation officers assigned to implement the program in various areas with a high number of privileged persons deprived of liberty. Each informant was required to have at least two years of experience as a parole and probation officer. Those who did not qualify were automatically excluded as informants. Four informants were individually interviewed who are assigned in respective municipality of 1st district and other informants were interviewed using focused group discussion who were assigned in 2nd district of Samar.

2.3 Research Instruments

The Interview Guide was drafted according to the sub-problem of this study. Part I deals with the experiences of the parole and probation officer in implementing the rehabilitation program. Part II deals with the coping mechanism of the parole and probation officers on the challenges encountered. Lastly, Part III deals with the aspiration of the informants. The Interview Guide were validated by the panel and undergo ethics review. Surveys, interviews, and observations are among the most commonly used research instruments.

The two methods used in the qualitative inquiry, however, were observation and interview. Other methods commonly employed in qualitative research include case studies, focus groups, in-depth interviews, discussion groups, life histories, and more (Trigueros, 2017).

In this study, an interview guide, a standard tool in qualitative research, was created by the researcher to help with the in-depth examination of participant experiences. This guide comprises open-ended questions designed to provide informants with the freedom to express their perceptions and experiences about their life in implementing the probationer's rehabilitation program.

According to Rouder et al (2021), Open-ended questions are questions that do not have a specific answer and allow respondents to provide their thoughts and opinions. In qualitative research, open-ended questions are often used to gather in-depth information and participants insights.

The chosen informants were then subjected to focus groups and individual conversations using the prepared questions. While in-person interviews predominated, some were performed online using Google Meet to give informants more flexibility and convenience (Archibald et al, 2019).

2.4 Research Procedure

Data Collection. Before the actual data collection, the researcher drafted a permission letter to the Dean of the graduate school asking permission to conduct the study outside the school. Upon approval of the letter request from the Dean of the Graduate School, a request letter was drafted to the Provincial Head of Parole and Probation Administration asking permission to conduct the research study among the parole and probation officers. Also, the researcher was drafting a consent letter for the informants. Approval of the letter request from the concerned individual was necessary so that the researcher start the actual collection of data. The data were gathered through a personal interview of the informants, in person and audio-recorded. After the interview, the transcript was prepared.

Data Analysis. After data collection, the data was analyzed using the thematic phenomenological method. According to Creswell (2009), thematic analysis involves six steps. These included collecting and organizing the data, reviewing it all at once, doing a thorough analysis using the coding process, creating a description of the data, outlining the information been examined, and interpreting the data. This method of data analysis will be suitable to

uncover the experiences of the Parole and Probation officers who directly implement the rehabilitation program to the probationers in the 1st and 2nd Districts of Samar.

2.5 Ethical Considerations

Before the researcher proceeds to the actual interview, informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality of information shared during the discussions and interviews. To ensure that the informants were informed of the nature of the study, the researcher was personally delivered the informed consent to the informants and clearly explain to them the purpose and nature of this study.

Beneficence. It is authoritative to ensure that the research contributes positively to the welfare and wellbeing of the parole and probation officers of the 2nd District of Samar. It entails conducting the study with sensitivity and respect towards the experiences and challenges faced by parole and probation officers, while highlighting their invaluable contributions to the rehabilitation of the probationers. Moreover, any findings derived from the research should be utilized to inform policies and practices aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the rehabilitation program provided to the probationers by the parole and probation officers' initiatives, thereby furthering the goal of guiding life for the better of the parole and probation officers.

Non-maleficence. On the other hand, the researcher will recognize and mitigate any potential risks or adverse effects associated with the participant's participation. It involves protecting the participants' privacy and anonymity, particularly in light of the sensitive nature of their work and the possible consequences of disclosing their identities or experiences without permission. Furthermore, the researcher will ensure that the methods used for data collection and conducting the research do not unintentionally subject participants to additional stress or trauma, and that appropriate support channels are in place to address any adverse reactions or emotional distress that may arise during participants' involvement.

Justice. Furthermore, it is important to ensure that parole and probation officers in the 2nd District of Samar have unbiased opportunities to participate in the study, regardless of their position, affiliation, or background. It entails using inclusive recruitment techniques, making the goals and methods of the research easily accessible, and consider the various requirements and preferences of participants to enable their meaningful participation. Similarly, the researcher will also consider the wider result of their conclusions and suggestions, working to advance social justice by supporting laws and other measures that deal with the underlying injustices and vulnerabilities on the part of the probationers.

Autonomy. Lastly, the researcher respected participants' autonomy by securing their voluntary and informed agreement before including them in the study. It entails giving participants thorough information about the study's goals, risks, advantages, and methods and allowing them to ask questions and get explanations when necessary. It also means honoring their right to resign from the study without facing any consequences. The researcher will also take consider power dynamics.

2.6 Trustworthiness

According to Stahl and King (2020), credibility, reliability, transferability, and confirmability are monitored to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. The study credibility was guaranteed as all the data were sourced from reputable sources. Additionally, the interview was carried out at the participants' convenience. The researcher ensured that every response provided by the subjects stemmed from their individual experiences and perspectives.

Credibility. Credibility is determined by whether the findings accurately reflect the scope of the investigation and by the researcher's comprehension of the information sought. To maintain integrity, reflexivity is employed to prevent informant presumptions, and any partiality is considered and documented throughout the interview process. In the preliminary stages of the research, the informants are also made aware of my relevant personal experiences, as well as the main goal of the study and the methodology to be used. My informants agreed to the interview process, so I carried on with the interview.

Reliability. I thoroughly verified and validated every detail, including the major findings, themes, and emerging patterns, to ensure that the results align with the collected and processed raw data. It is my responsibility to ensure that, upon reviewing the data, other researchers can arrive at similar conclusions, observations, or findings.

Transferability. The term "transferability" describes how the findings can be useful in different situations or circumstances. From a qualitative perspective, transferability is primarily the responsibility of the reader or researcher who applies the findings to other contexts. Extensive work will be used to describe the research setting and assumptions in this study. It will allow other researchers to use this research in their studies that might be connected to this one.

Confirmability. There was a guarantee of compliance with maintaining the original transcripts and citing audit trails. The original transcripts will be reviewed, similar to the coding process, with the assistance of my adviser and a reputable parole and probation officer. To provide a clear and accurate audit trail for information access, I used classification. In this sense, the findings of the proposed study can be verified or supported by anyone planning to carry out comparable research.

2.7 Bracketing and Reflexivity

Bracketing. To ensure that the result of this study was reliable and factual, the researchers consciously set aside their own biases and assumptions when analyzing data. The researcher should treat the data or information collected from the informants as valuable as treasure in fulfilling this study without malice of changing the ideas and concept provided by the informants.

Reflexivity. To ensure that the findings of this study are complete and accurate based on the data collected, the researcher regularly reflects on their experiences, assumptions, and emotional responses throughout the research process. Sharing interpretations with participants and obtaining their feedback helps ensure that their perspectives are accurately represented. Additionally, discussing the research process and findings with colleagues provides alternative viewpoints and helps identify potential biases.

3. Findings

Through careful data collection from the informants, ten distinct themes emerged, each designed to capture different aspects of their experiences, aspirations, and the challenges faced in the implementation of rehabilitation programs for probationers.

The first set of themes addresses the experiences of the informants as parole and probation officers in the implementation of rehabilitation program for probationers. As follows, *Fulfillment in Extending Help, Motivation and Sense of Purpose, Personal and Professional Growth, Budgetary and Resources Constraints, Disparity of Employee and Workloads, and Away from Home.*

In relation to addressing the challenges encountered in the implementation of the rehabilitation program there were two themes developed: *Collaboration and Community Involvement, and Unified Therapeutic Community Program.*

Lastly, in terms of aspirations of the informants to improve program the rehabilitation program for probationers, there were two themes were generated: *Budgetary and Logistical Support, and Legislation for Hope.*

4. Conclusion

This study explored the lived experiences, challenges, and aspirations of parole and probation officers involved in the implementation of rehabilitation programs for probationers. Through in-depth interviews and focused group discussions, ten emergent themes were identified, highlighting both the personal and professional dimensions of their work.

The findings reveal that while officers find fulfillment, motivation, and growth in their roles, they also face significant challenges such as limited resources, heavy workloads, and personal sacrifices. Despite these obstacles, they remain committed to their responsibilities and recognize the importance of collaboration, community support, and structured programs like the Unified Therapeutic Community in enhancing rehabilitation outcomes. Importantly, the study also captured their aspirations for improving the system, emphasizing the need for increased budgetary and logistical support and legislative reforms that foster hope and long-term success for probationers.

Overall, the insights gained from this research underscore the vital role parole and probation officers play in bridging the justice system and society and offer valuable guidance for strengthening rehabilitation efforts moving forward.

Acknowledgements

First, the researcher would like to thank God the Father in heaven for the wisdom and strength to pursue this research endeavor, for guidance, blessing

He sincerely thanks his advisor, Atty. Dodelon F. Sabijon, for guiding him throughout the process and for the encouragement and support to finish his doctorate. Atty. Sabijon will always be an inspiration and someone the researcher looks up to.

He is grateful to the rest of the panel committee for their insights, guidance, and encouragement. Learning from this people, he considers inspirational professionally is always an honor and a privilege. He thanks his Dean of Graduate Studies, Dr. Yolanda Sayson and Prof. Vanzniel Rover Nellama and Prof. Esmeraldo Damuag, and the ever-supportive and always patient Mrs. Jessica Dela Cerna, the Graduate School secretary.

To Rhett Caesar L. Piczon for financial support, to Dr. Joseph Roque A. Pensotes, Jr., continuous motivation for the fulfillment of this study. Lastly, to Mark Jerick L. Reposo who is my partner in completing this study

APPENDIX A

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

April 29, 2024

DR. YOLANDA SAYSON

Dean, Graduate School

University of Cebu

Sanciangko St., Cebu City

Dear Dr. Sayson:

The undersigned is a graduate school student taking up Master of Science in Criminal Justice. I am now working on my thesis proposal entitled **“GUIDING LIFE FOR THE BETTER: WORK NARRATIVES OF PAROLE AND PROBATION OFFICERS”**

In respect and with regards to this, the undersigned researcher would like to conduct the study in the Parole and Probation Administration. Considering the success of this research endeavor your approval on this matter is necessary on its completion.

I am looking forward for your positive and favorable response on this matter.

May God shower you more blessing and guide your career to your success

Very respectfully yours,

PEDRO D. FENELLERE, JR

MSCJ Student

Noted:

ATTY. DODELON SABEJON, Ph.D., RCri

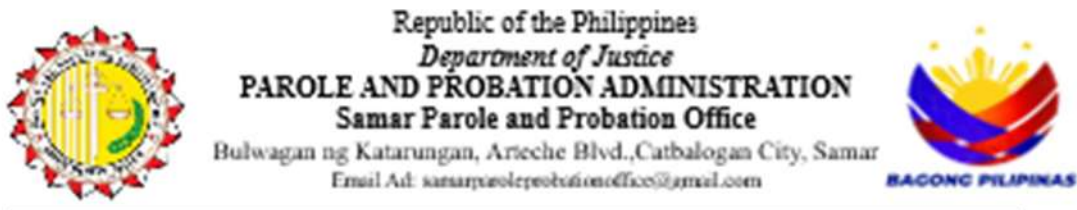
Adviser

Approved:

YLS my sm
DR. YOLANDA SAYSON

Dean, Graduate School

APPENDIX B



PROF. PEDRO D. FENELLERE JR.
College of Criminal Justice Education
Samar College
Catbalogan City

S I R:

GREETINGS!

Please be informed that your letter request to conduct focused group as well as individual interviews to Probation and Parole Officers of our office, relative to the conduct of your research study as part of your requirement in pursuing a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice at the University of Cebu, is APPROVED.

As such, please feel free to visit our office anytime for the interview and gather the necessary data relative to your research study.

Being our partner, in your capacity as the Practicum Coordinator and Instructor of the College of Criminal Justice Education of the Samar Colleges Inc., enlisting our agency to be Host Establishments/Agencies for your Criminology Interns in their On the Job Training (OJT's for brevity), we are deeply honored for choosing to highlight our work as Probation and Parole Officers in your research.

Grateful always for your utmost support in the programs of our office.

Thank you so much and more power!

June 13, 2024 in Catbalogan City, Samar.

Truly yours,


CAROLINA U. MOLINA
Chief Probation and Parole Officer



APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT



This informed consent form is intended for you as one of my research informant in this research entitled: **“GUIDING LIFE FOR THE BETTER: WORK NARRATIVES OF PAROLE AND PROBATION OFFICERS”**. I am inviting you to voluntarily participate in the oral discussion to share your experiences, thoughts and ideas regarding the topic.

Name of Principal Investigator: Pedro D. Fenellere, Jr.

Name of Organization: University of Cebu

Name of Proposal: Guiding Life for the Better: Work Narratives of Parole and Probation Officers

This Informed Consent Form has two parts:

- **Information Sheet (to share information about the research with you)**
- **Certificate of Consent (for signatures if you agree to take part)**

You will be given a copy of the full Informed Consent Form

PART I: Information Sheet

Introduction

I am Pedro D. Fenellere, Jr., presently enrolled in Masters in Criminal justice with specialization in Criminology at the University of Cebu-Main Campus, Cebu City. I will be conducting a qualitative research study titled "Guiding Life for the Better: Work Narratives of Parole and Probation Officers." This study aims to explore the experiences of parole and probation officers assigned in the implementation of rehabilitation program for probationers. We are inviting you to participate in this research as an interviewee. Your participation will involve individual interviews and/or focus group discussions, which can be conducted face-to-face or through online platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet, depending on your preference.

Purpose of the research

The research aims to understand the experiences, challenges, and perspectives of parole and probation officers in the implementation of rehabilitation program for probationers. Your insights will contribute to a deeper understanding of the unique experiences of parole and probation officers and may inform future policies and practices.

Type of Research Intervention

This research involves individual interviews and focus group discussions. These may be conducted face-to-face or via online platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet, depending on your comfort level.

Participant selection

We are inviting parole and probation officers who are currently assigned in Catbalogan, Jiabong, Motiong, Paranas, Daram, San Sebastian, Hinabangan, Calbiga, Pinabacdao and Basey in the 2nd District of Samar, Philippines

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your employment with the Parole and Probation Administration or any related agencies. You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

Procedures and Protocol

As a participant, you will be asked to share your experiences and perspectives during the interviews or focus group discussions. These sessions will be scheduled at your convenience and are expected to last between 40 minutes to an hour. Your responses will be kept confidential, and only the researcher and authorized personnel will have access to the data. The recordings and transcripts will be securely stored and destroyed six months after the completion of the study.

Duration

The research will be conducted over a period of twelve months. Your participation will only require a one-time involvement during the scheduled interview or focus group discussion.

Risks

There are minimal risks associated with your participation in this study. You are not obligated to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable, and you can withdraw from the study at any time.

Benefits

While there are no immediate personal benefits from participating in this study, your contribution will provide valuable insights into the experiences of women police officers in the Philippines, which may inform future policies and practices.

Reimbursements

You will not be provided with any payment or monetary remuneration if you will take part in this research.

Confidentiality

Your privacy and confidentiality will be strictly maintained. All information collected will be coded and stored securely. Only the researcher and authorized personnel will have access to the data.

Sharing the Results

The results of this study will be shared with the academic community and relevant law enforcement agencies. A summary of the findings will also be made available to participants upon request.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Who to Contact?

If you have any questions or concerns about the research or your participation, please feel free to contact the researcher Pedro D. Fenellere, Jr. – 09753467211 and UCAREC's Dr. Juanito N. Zuasula, Jr. - MD - 233-5503 UCAREC.

By agreeing to participate, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in the study.

PART II: Certificate of Consent

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to participate in this research.

Print Name of Participant _____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

Day/Month/Year

If Illiterate

A literate witness must sign (if possible, this person should be selected by the participant and should have no connection to the research team). Participants who are illiterate should include their thumb-print as well.

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Print Name of Witness _____

AND Thumb Print of the Participant

Signature of Witness _____

Date _____

Day/Month/Year

**Statement by the researcher/person taking consent**

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands that the following will be done:

1. focus group discussion/interview
2. record the proceeding of the interview

3. manually record other responses/ answers during the interview

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this ICF has been provided to the participant.

Print Name of Researcher/Person Taking the Consent _____

Signature of Researcher /Person Taking the Consent _____

Date _____

Day/Month/Year

References

- Burke, L., & Collett, S. (2014). *Delivering rehabilitation*. Routledge.
- Small, L. M., & Hackett, P. M. W. (2023). *Offender rehabilitation programmes*. Taylor & Francis.
- Amatya, B., & Khan, F. (2022). Implementation of rehabilitation innovations: A global priority for a healthier society. *The Journal of the International Society of Physical and Rehabilitation Medicine*, 5-(2), 51. <https://doi.org/10.4103/jisprm.jisprm-000160>
- Busetto, L., Wick, W., & Gumbinger, C. (2020). How to use and assess qualitative research methods. *Neurological Research and Practice*, 2-(1), 1–10.
- Chang, A., & Brewer, G. A. (2022). Street-level bureaucracy in public administration: A systematic literature review. *Public Management Review*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2022.2065517>
- Cooper, M. J., Sornalingam, S., & O'Donnell, C. (2015). Street-level bureaucracy: An underused theoretical model for general practice? *British Journal of General Practice*, 65-(636), 376–377. <https://doi.org/10.3399/bjgp15x685921>
- Deitzer, J. R., Leban, L., Copes, H., & Wilcox, S. (2021). Criminal self-efficacy and perceptions of risk and reward among women methamphetamine manufacturers. *Justice Quarterly*, 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2021.1901965>
- Epperson, M. W., Sawh, L., & Sarantakos, S. P. (2020). Building a therapeutic relationship between probation officers and probationers with serious mental illnesses. *CNS Spectrums*, 25-(5), 723–733. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1092852919001871>
- Lehman, W. E. K., Greener, J. M., Rowan-Szal, G. A., & Flynn, P. M. (2012). Organizational readiness for change in correctional and community substance abuse programs. *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*, 51-(1–2), 96–114. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509674.2012.633022>
- Makarios, M. D., McCafferty, J., Steiner, B., & Travis, L. F. (2012). The effects of parole officers' perceptions of the organizational control structure and satisfaction with management on their attitudes toward policy change. *Journal of Crime and Justice*, 35-(2), 296–316. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0735648X.2012.690261>
- Mohd Sukor, N., & Hussin, S. Z. (2019). Self-efficacy and its influence on job satisfaction among substance abuse prevention program teachers. *Abqari Journal*, 21(1), 36–45. <https://doi.org/10.33102/abqari.vol21no1.225>
- Rouder, J., Saucier, O., Kinder, R., & Jans, M. (2021). What to do with all those open-ended responses? Data visualization techniques for survey researchers. *Survey Practice*, 14-(1), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.29115/sp-2021-0008>
- Rudes, D. S., Portillo, S., & Taxman, F. S. (2021). The legitimacy of change: Adopting/adapting, implementing and sustaining reforms within community corrections agencies. *The British Journal of Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azab020>
- Schaefer, L., & Williamson, H. (2018). Probation and parole officers' compliance with case management tools: Professional discretion and override. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 62-(14), 4565–4584. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0306624X18764851>
- Sinfield, G., Goldspink, S., & Wilson, C. (2023). Waiting in the wings: The enactment of a descriptive phenomenology study. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 22. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231207012>
- A Phenomenological Study Examining the Potential Best Practices Used by Adult Probation Officers to Reduce Recidivism in Western Pennsylvania - ProQuest. (n.d.).* ProQuest. Retrieved March 18, 2024, from. https://www.proquest.com/openview/b9204368241b17e1e7d005_0b18cde1fe/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y
- Bonta, J. (2023). *The Risk-Need-Responsivity model: 1990 to the present*. HM Inspectorate of Probation. https://www.justiceinspectors.gov.uk/hmiprobation/wp-content/mup_loads/sites/5/2023/06/Academic-Insight-The-Risk-Need-Responsivity-model-1990-to-the-Present-2.pdf

- Brandon, S. (2020, May). *Exploring the lived experiences of probation officers' efforts to reduce recidivism*. Doctoral dissertation, ProQuest. <https://www.proquest.com/openview/aafada7c2f37ffb3750154754baa3c20/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Center for Theory of Change. (2023). *What is theory of change?* Theory of Change Community. <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>
- Correction and Rehabilitation - Parole and Probation Administration. (2014). *Parole and Probation Administration*. <https://probation.gov.ph/correction-rehabilitation/>
- Department of Justice. (n.d.). *Restorative Justice*. Parole and Probation Administration. [<https://probation.gov.ph/restorative-justice/>]
- Duhaime, L., & Meyer, K. (2016). *Street-level discretion and organizational effectiveness in probation services*. https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/80_1_5_0.pdf
- Editorial. (2024, December 12). *The Guardian view on Labour and prisons: Sustained courage is needed for rational reform*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2024/dec/12/the-guardian-view-on-labour-and-prisons-sustained-courage-is-needed-for-rational-reform>
- Exploring the Lived Experiences of Probation Officers' Efforts to Reduce Recidivism* - ProQuest. (n.d.). ProQuest. Retrieved March 18, 2024, from <https://www.proquest.com/openview/aafada7c2f37ffb3750154754baa3c20/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=18750&diss=y>
- Finn, P., & Kuck, S. (2003). *Addressing probation and parole officer stress (Final Report)*. U.S. Department of Justice. <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/207012.pdf>
- Hines, C. (2023, May 11). *Exploring parole and probation staff perception: Job satisfaction, organizational trust, and work-family conflict*. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.13329.61281>
- Public Safety Canada. (2018). *Risk-need-responsivity model for offender assessment and rehabilitation*. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/rsk-nd-rspnsvty/index-en.aspx>
- Stahl, N., & King, J. (2020). *Understanding and using trustworthiness in qualitative research*. *Journal of Developmental Education*, 44-(1), 26–28. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1320570.pdf>
- Trigueros, R. (2017, March). *Qualitative and quantitative research instruments: Research tools*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323014697_qualitative_and_quantitative_research_instruments_research_tools
- UC Berkeley. (2023). *How social learning theory works*. <https://hr.berkeley.edu/how-social-learning-theoryworks#:~:text=Albert%20Bandura>
- United Nations. (2021). *United Nations system common position on incarceration*. https://www.unodc.org/res/justice-and-prison-reform/nelsonmandelarulesGoF/UN_System_Common_Position_on_Incarceration.pdf