Phenomenology of Prison Crowding among Filipino young adult detainees

SALVACION VILLAFUERTE1, Candice Marie Bea2, Maria Isabelle Florin2, Jade Maverick Gadil2, and Mary Catherine Faith Lana2

1Bicol University
2Affiliation not available

July 04, 2023

Abstract

Over the years, reports of overcrowding, unsanitary circumstances, and inhumane treatment towards detainees have been increasing. In the Philippines, specific reports on poor inmate living conditions and violence are prominent. Moreover, the incarcerated are placed in life-altering circumstances when the prison cells are overcrowded, resulting in varied prison crowding experiences. This phenomenology study aims to understand how the detainees give meaning to their crowding experiences. Ten (10) male and female Filipino young adult (20–35 years old) detainees from the Legazpi City Jail were interviewed, excluding any participants under solitary confinement or isolation due to precautionary health measures. The participants’ narratives were examined through within- and cross-case analysis, and four (4) themes: Kulog sa kapungawan (longing and yearning), Kulog sa kapanahunan (sentiments over a period of time), Kulog sa pag-aso (experiences that instill hope), and Kulog sa oportunidad (forced opportunities and routine-based life) were rendered via repertory gridding. These contextualized the prison crowding experiences of Filipino detainees specific to family and community concepts in a Bicolano culture. The findings of this research may contribute to intersectionality studies, especially in clinical, rehabilitation, and community psychology. The findings can also be substantial as a springboard for implementing culture-specific programs for the incarcerated.
Phenomenologizing Prison Crowding Among Detained Young Adults in Legazpi City Jail

Candice Marie B. Bea, Maria Isabelle M. Florin, Jade Maverick O. Gadil, Mary Catherine Faith K. Lana and *Salvacion Laguilles-Villafuerte

https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4640-0555
Psychology Department, College of Social Sciences and Philosophy
Bicol University, Albay, Philippines

* Corresponding author: lallyvillafuerte0705@gmail.com, slvillafuerte@bicol-u.edu.ph
Bicol University College of Social Sciences and Philosophy Psychology Department, Daraga, Albay, Philippines

Abstract

Over the years, reports of overcrowding, unsanitary circumstances, and inhumane treatment towards detainees have been increasing. In the Philippines, specific reports on poor inmate living conditions and violence are prominent. Moreover, the incarcerated are placed in life-altering circumstances when the prison cells are overcrowded, resulting in varied prison crowding experiences. This phenomenology study aims to understand how the detainees give meaning to their crowding experiences. Ten (10) male and female Filipino young adult (20–35 years old) detainees from the Legazpi City Jail were interviewed, excluding any participants under solitary confinement or isolation due to precautionary health measures. The participants' narratives were examined through within- and cross-case analysis, and four (4) themes: Kulong sa kapungawan (longing and yearning), Kulong sa kapanahunan (sentiments over a period of time), Kulong sa pag-asa (experiences that instill hope), and Kulong sa oportunidad (forced opportunities and routine-based life) were rendered via repertory gridding. These contextualized the prison crowding experiences of Filipino detainees specific to family and community concepts in a Bicolano culture. The findings of this research may contribute to intersectionality studies, especially in clinical, rehabilitation, and community psychology. The findings can also be substantial as a springboard for implementing culture-specific programs for the incarcerated.

Keywords: Filipino detainees, prison experiences, prison facilities, prison overcrowding, young adult-detainees

Introduction

There are various factors contributing to the well-being of incarcerated individuals, including characteristics of the prison environment and prison climate, and individual vulnerabilities and circumstances (Van Ginneken et al., 2019). The mission of correctional facilities is focused on the effective safekeeping and rehabilitation of national prisoners (Bureau of Corrections, 2022). However, in each range of years, there has been an increase in reports of overcrowding, unsanitary, and inhumane treatment of detainees (Prison Overcrowding, 2021).

Prison overcrowding is when the number of prisoners exceeds the prison capacity (Baggio et al., 2018), which leads to a myriad of problematic outcomes for the prisoners (Molleman & Van Ginneken, 2014). Research studies (e.g., Juan et al., 2019; Muirhead et al., 2020; Walker et al., 2013) have investigated the effects of prison crowding on detainees, and results show that jail congestion undoubtedly affects the physical and psychological well-being of inmates. Additionally, severe prison crowding may affect inmates’ behavior, according to Spencer (2012); it may cause inmates to become more violent.
A number of jails fail to meet the given minimum United Nations standards due to the inadequate food, poor nutrition, unsanitary conditions, and generally poor living conditions being prominent in the Philippines (Cagande, 2022). Furthermore, the Commission on Human Rights (CHR) pointed out several jails and detention centers in the Philippines holding numbers of prisoners over five times their capacity. According to CHR, this situation can be considered cruel and inhumane, subsequently exploiting the rights of the prisoners. Apart from this, even with the anti-torture law, CHR claims that there are still persistent reports of torture and abuse between detainees and persons accused (Perez-Rubio, 2020).

Moreover, the Philippines can be considered one of the world’s worst in terms of jail congestion. To resolve this issue, mass releases were implemented in recent years. However, jail authorities are often still compelled to look for ways to expand their facilities, as there are still very few additional facilities that have been built (Guda, 2022). Although they have announced that they are seeking to acquire more land to build additional facilities to end the long-standing suffering of inmates in the country’s overcrowded prisons (Calleja, 2022).

In the Bicol region, there are a total of 18 congested jails, wherein there is a 3,032 total population of detainees compared to the ideal detainee capacity of 1,405. There are three (3) city jails in the province of Albay, namely Tabaco City Jail, Ligao City Jail, and Legazpi City Jail.

The Legazpi City Jail holds custody of inmates- both prisoners and detainees. Inmates generally refers to incarcerated individuals in one of the various correctional facilities in the country and are classified into two: (1) prisoners- inmates who are already serving prison terms while (2) detainees are inmates who are still undergoing investigation, awaiting judgment, have an undergoing trial, or awaiting final judgment from the courts (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 2021).

As of November 2022, Legazpi City Jail ranked as the first (1st) most populated in the province of Albay (Grajo, Personal Communication, 2022), and as of January 10, 2023, the congestion rate had amounted to 293%. Thus, 70% among the total detainee population is composed of drug-related cases (Grajo, Personal Communication, 2022). With this high percentage and an observable lack of Filipino research literature focusing on prison crowding experiences among young adult detainees, intensifies the imperative to conduct a research on the prison crowding experiences as stated by young adult detainees in Legazpi City Jail.

As stated by Narag and Lee (2018), succeeding researchers must look at other correctional settings both within and beyond Metro Manila to verify the transferability of the results. In fact, Glazener and Nakamura (2018) suggested that there is a need to investigate the functional form of crowding effects. Thus, information revealed in this topic is in place, aimed to give insight and understanding of the detainees’ perception of their quality of life in the context of the Filipino culture and value systems, including family-centeredness, collectivist mentality, resiliency, tolerance, religiousness, and utang na loob or reciprocity, in which they live in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns, as well as their standard of health, comfort, and level of happiness experienced inside LCJ (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023; World Health Organization, 2012; Macaranas & Macaranas 2018).

**Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on the Humanistic Psychoanalysis theory of Erich Fromm (1947), which assumes that people go through human dilemma or existential dilemma (Badillo, 2018), which combined with the separation from the natural world eventually lead to basic anxiety (Badillo, 2018; Fromm’s Humanistic Psychoanalysis, 2019). Additionally, Fromm believed that people are motivated by existential needs, or the need to find answers to their existence. These needs include relatedness, transcendence, rootedness, sense of identity, and frame of orientation (Pinugu, 2013).

This existential dilemma is usually experienced by young adults, which can be supported by the theory of Erikson’s Psychosocial Stages of Development. Young adults
experience the sixth stage of psychosocial development, where the main conflict to be resolved in this stage revolves around intimacy vs. isolation. According to Erikson, succeeding at this stage would lead to acquiring fulfilling relationships, while failing at this stage can result in feelings of loneliness and isolation (Cherry, 2020). And as prison is a symbol of isolation and endangering contact from others (Duff, 2001, as cited in Schliehe et al., 2021), most young adults would struggle with overcoming the existential dilemma, and will be increasingly difficult for those in constricting circumstances such as being a detainee, and their ability to expand or build their relationships with others would be highly restrictive.

Upon exploration of various references (Macabago et al., 2020; Ofori-Dura et al., 2020; Van Ginneken, 2015), it becomes clear that every prison crowding experience and every individual realization eventually leads the detainees to have different needs from one another. Therefore, as the prisoners reflect, recognize, and realize their needs, they seek to fulfill them for the sake of improving their well-being inside the prison. Responding to these needs would help suffice and address the dilemma of the persons deprived of liberty, specifically the young adult detainees of this study who may be experiencing these situations behind bars.

There are various studies showing that there are different ways in which prisoners tend to relate and form relationships with their cellmates as a means to exhibit social support and comfort (Ofori-Dura et al., 2020; Schaefer et al., 2017). This can be observed through the prison gangs and pangkat systems, wherein some inmates become more dominant or more submissive. Somehow, being a member of a group allowed them to experience rootedness and generated a feeling of unity inside the jail; creating a secondary home and family. As stated by Lee and Narag (2018) in their study, the pangkat offers a support system resembling a family, and it not only fosters and strengthens members' emotional bonds but also makes it easier for members to access additional useful resources like caretaking and general assistance (Lee & Narag, 2018; Monceda et al., 2021; Narag & Jones, 2020). However, not all prisoners prefer being part of a gang or participating in the pangkat system in order to preserve their sense of identity (Lee & Narag, 2018).

Time in prison also allows the inmates to plan their future and conceptualize possibilities as they have enough time for reflection, and as a response to being oriented and being rooted in relatedness, it eventually leads to some prisoners developing a sense of direction, and therefore will subsequently lead to a difference in their identity and themselves (Comfort, 2012). Moreover, there are different activities that the inmates may participate in to help them develop these skills further, such as various religious, psychological, psychosocial, and other activities (Convocar et al., 2020; Macabago et al., 2020).

In consideration of existing literature (Ofori-Dura et al., 2020; Lee & Narag, 2018; Schliehe et al., 2021; Van Ginneken, 2015), it is now summarized that detainees may experience these dilemmas and a feeling of loneliness due to certain limitations they may face because of being detained. Consequently, Fromm called these "existential dilemmas," and the detainees must address these needs to continuously cope with their lives' transitions and adversities. Addressing these existential needs would critically affect the detainee’s well-being and interpersonal relationships, inside and outside prison. Despite the circumstances the detainees face, they should be given a fair chance to develop and address these needs accordingly. Figure 1 shows the central concepts of the Humanistic Psychoanalysis Theory of Fromm.

![Figure 1. Theoretical Paradigm](image)
Materials and Methods

The Legazpi City Jail holds custody of inmates, both prisoners and detainees. As of September 2022, the total detainee population was 340, of which 304 were male and 36 were female. The living space in the present Annex Building of the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) has a total floor cell size of 412 m² where the ideal capacity for each cell should hold only 4-5 PDLs; however, upon the time of gathering these data, 20 PDLs occupy each cell (Del Mundo & Jamili, Personal Communication, 2023).

Through purposive sampling, ten (10) male or female Filipino young adult detainees from Legazpi City Jail were included as participants. The participants in this study were centered on young adults who are in the age of 20–35 (APA Dictionary of Psychology, n.d.) and who were first-time offenders residing for one (1) year and above in Legazpi City Jail. They were able to verbally express/articulate their emotions in Bikol, Filipino, or English and were able to read and understand English and Filipino language. Furthermore, this study excluded any participants under solitary confinement or isolation due to health precautionary measures both for the researchers and also the detainees themselves.

This research aimed to understand the prison crowding experiences among the detained young adults in Legazpi City Jail. Through the participants’ collective narratives, this qualitative inquiry utilized the phenomenological research design that answered the central question, "How do the young adult detainees describe their prison crowding experiences in Legazpi City Jail?"

This study utilized an interview guide as its data measure in order to answer the central question. Specifically, a semi-structured interview guide prepared in the Filipino language with English translation was used. This semi-structured interview guide was formulated in reference to the identified a priori codes from various literature. The interview questions were arranged from introductory, transition, core, and closing.

Findings

In answering the central question, "How do the young adult detainees describe their prison crowding experiences in Legazpi City Jail?" the participant’s narratives were vertically and horizontally analyzed, and themes were rendered via repertory gridding. The prison crowding experiences of the detainees were collectively interpreted through the following themes: *Kulong sa kapungawan* (longing and yearning); *Kulong sa kapanahunan* (sentiments over a period of time); *Kulong sa pag-asa* (experiences that instill hope); and *Kulong sa oportunidad* (forced opportunities and routine-based life). Table 1 shows the tabular simulacrum of the prison crowding experiences.
Kulong sa Kapungawan

*Kulong sa kapungawan* is a theme that was identified in the research, it came from the Filipino word “*kulong*” which means imprisonment. Meanwhile, *kapungawan* came from the Bikol word *pungaw* which literally translates to “loneliness.” However, when contextualized based on the findings of this research, *kulong sa kapungawan* is the first theme that emerged and is described as the participants’ representation of being imprisoned by their experiences of longing and yearning. From the narratives of the young adult detainees, four (4) dimensions were identified in understanding their experienced *kapungawan*.

The first dimension that was identified was *pungaw sa pamilya at kaibigan* in which the narratives gathered continue to highlight the profound experience of *kapungawan*, or loneliness and longing, that they face while being detained. The detainees express a deep sense of longing and yearning for their families, significant bonding moments, and the warm company of their loved ones. However, there is also a conflict in their emotions, as they acknowledge that their families visiting them in jail can be distressing, seeing their loved ones struggle outside the jail. To quote in the vernacular, sample of these narratives are:

"Sometimes there’s a feeling of longing- like homesickness. Because I, of course, miss spending time with my family, as they seldom visit, but I also prefer it that way because I don’t want to see my parents having a hard time while queuing outside" [P4].

"There’s feelings of sadness, of course. You can’t avoid feeling sad since my family and friends are not present" [P2].

Similarly, other detainees express the internal struggle and emotional burden of being detained, as they try to cope with the situation while inevitably thinking about the things and people they have left behind outside the jail. Statements like "Habang nagahahaloy, may mga kamunduan talagang nangyayari na dai ko tigasahan. Medyo mapagal ta dae maiwasan ang pag sip ta su mga nabayaan mo sa luwas dae mo maitwasan mag isip" [P1] highlights the emotional struggles and the longing for companionship and support from their families and friends. However, one detainee did mention that there are moments of relief from loneliness during activities or events inside the jail, stating "Puro lang kalungkutan kasi yung family ko po di ko nakakasama. Pagminsan nauugma man po kami - pag may mga activities po digdi"
This suggests that engagement in activities and interactions with fellow detainees can provide some companionship despite the experience of kapungawan.

Their kapungawan also extends to other aspects hence, pungaw for safety and stability was identified. The detainees have expressed their struggles as they adjusted to life in prison in which they have expressed how it was more difficult that it was overcrowded. Moreover, they experience “pakikisama” or conformity to maintain harmony, in order to avoid conflicts or arguments in the cell, as the limits and preferences of every person in the cell varies. Thus, feelings of longing for safety from other inmates arise. See verbalization:

“There are times where it’s hard, times where you will feel pressure and times where you’ll really struggle. There are some good moments however, it is very limited. There are people inside the jail who are easily irritated and ones who dislike how crowded it is but as you know we’re in jail, you have to learn how to get along with people. At first it was really stressful for me and until now I still think of my family but now that I’ve adjusted, it has gotten better for me. However, there are still some who would stay on the ground and in truth it is crowded” [P8]

“Being overcrowded doesn’t really affect my personality however, since the number of people would change from time to time and would increase or decrease, whenever it would increase I noticed that I would feel suffocated” [P9]

As the detainees shared their stories of pungaw for safety and stability, their pain and hardship were palpable. Aside from yearning for safety, the detainees long for stability, in which they crave the feeling of consistent contentment or yearning for a stable situation inside the prison. Some detainees bravely admitted what they had to go through while inside and revealed the following statements:

“Because of every difficult thing that I had to endure here, I even thought of committing suicide” [P2]

“Because of how hard life is in here, there are times where I would have bad thoughts—be suicidal—but I try to ignore it. I think it’s really important to fight those thoughts especially since I heard that there was an incident here where someone died due to that. There would be times where there would be fights inside and when a lot of people join, it does turn physical sometimes” [P4]

Another dimension that was discovered was the pungaw for personal space and comfort. A number of the detainees said that due to the lack of space, they barely had space for sleeping and much less for their personal time and privacy. They were able to share their experiences and discontentment over the quality of their living space. The following statements were shared:

“Whenever we would sleep, we had to sleep on our sides, and there would be minimal space between us since there isn’t enough space for us—not even a little extra space. Whenever one of us would move, the rest would follow—basically a domino effect. If you ever move away from your space, no matter how quick you are, when you come back, you will have nowhere to go since your spot will be taken up by another. When that happened to me, I had to force myself in and squeeze myself beside them” [P2]

“When someone new comes in, they would be laying down at the very end of the line and this is where everyone has to sleep on their side. There are ten beds in our cell and it is occupied by those who came in first. We follow a rotation in our cell, whenever someone gets released, another would take over their bed while another would then be able to lay down on a bed. However, those who still do not have their own bed have to stay on the floor and continue to lay on their sides. The only time you’ll get your personal time is when it’s time for bed. That’s usually when you’ll start to think of your problems. In addition to that, no one is allowed to make any noise once we start watching movies or shows.” [P3]

In addition to the uncomfortable experiences that they face when it comes to their sleeping arrangements, the detainees shared what they experience with regards to their privacy:
“Obviously there is no privacy because it is crowded” [P4].

“There is no privacy. Since I don’t really have a choice, whenever I would feel like I needed to be alone, I would just stay in my bed” [P9].

Lastly, pungaw for basic needs was identified as the detainees share their discontentment, revealing the lack of the quality of the basic needs being provided to them. These basic needs include food, water, and grooming and hygiene needs, wherein some detainees have learned to compensate for what is lacking. Sample of these narratives are:

“There is a lack of water and nutritious food. The rice that they give us isn’t enough. If you were to ask whether there is a shortage of these resources, it is undeniably lacking since there are many of us here, and we have to divide it among ourselves” [P2].

“The food here is horrible and maybe I can even go as far as to say that it’s not appropriate even for people like us. The rice that they serve here is brown and it has a lot of rice bran and the vegetables they give us doesn’t even look edible as it usually looks like it’s ready to be thrown away. The only time we’ll be able to have decent food is when we have money to buy it. Sometimes they would even give us chicken the size of my pinky finger. And since we don’t really have a choice, we had to force ourselves to get used to this kind of food and just eat. And just as I have mentioned before, when it comes to bathing, it’s difficult since we only have a certain amount of time to bathe. We are given an hour and within that given time, everyone should be able to bathe however there would be times where not everyone could bathe and that is why we established a rule where you have to finish bathing within three scoops of water” [P8].

Contrary to this, some have expressed contentment over their situation as they have found ways to compensate for it. According to one detainee “The people in my dorm contribute money to afford mineral water. The food here is okay and isn’t lacking since there are people who are willing to provide whatever we lack inside” [P7].

The dimensions that were shared by the detainees based on their narratives are essential in understanding the profound experience of kapungawan or loneliness that they face while being detained. All of these dimensions contributed to the detainees' profound sense of loneliness and longing amidst the challenges they faced in jail, as they grappled with the harsh realities of their situation and the deep longing for a sense of normalcy and well-being. The experience of kapungawan was compounded by the realities of jail life, including the experiences of longing for family and friends amidst crowded cells, yearning for safety and stability, personal space and comfort, and basic needs caused by a multitude of situations faced inside the jail.

Kulong sa Kapanahunan

Kapanahunan is a Filipino term derived from the word panahon which in the context of this study translates to period or length or portion of time. Through the detainees’ collective responses, Kulong sa kapanahunan (sentiments over a period of time) emerged as one of the major themes which encompasses two (2) dimensions, pagbabalik-tanaw (retrospection) and kinabukasan (progression).

The detainees' experiences inside the jail reveal a complex interplay of emotions related to pagbabalik-tanaw (retrospection) and kinabukasan (progression). Different emotions emerged as they contemplated their past. Regret, reflection, and appreciation of the things in the past were some of the factors that intensified the detainees' pagbabalik-tanaw. Some detainees expressed regret over their past actions and choices, such as joining pangkat or committing crimes, and reflected on the consequences of their decisions. Long pauses, sighs, and expressions of sadness were observed as they recounted their regrets and were evident in their answers:

“I am disgruntled as I was not able to tell them what I wished to say and ask for forgiveness for not abiding by what they wanted, which in fact, was all good for my sake. I
have numerous what-ifs in life: "What if I obeyed you? What if I did all the things you told me?" I would've been a professional now, and I would've established my own business. I would have improved myself by then” [P8].

"At first, I thought of joining as I heard that life inside the jail would be easier once you became part of pangkat. However, nothing really changed in my life; if only I knew this, I would not have joined. It absolutely does not affect my life here inside. Being part of pangkat seems to have no benefit at all. And with this, I sometimes get active but oftentimes do not. I was just active at first, as I realized that I could manage even without pangkat" [P9].

Additionally, one detainee conveyed feelings of regret as she struggled while in jail as she was going through her pregnancy. According to her "I always cried before and always got scolded. I was pregnant when I entered here, but I eventually got accustomed to the things I witnessed and experienced here inside. I was not used to the existence of fights and being in a crowded place with people I was not familiar with, and these things made it difficult for me to adjust. With all the difficulties I encountered here, I had thoughts of conscience and regrets over my wrongdoings" [P7].

However, under the next dimension, kinabukasan (progression), it has been shown that amidst their remorse, there were also glimpses of hope for the future. Some detainees expressed a mindset focused on progression and a desire to make amends for their mistakes. They spoke about learning from their past actions and striving to correct them for the sake of their own well-being and their families. Maintaining connections with their families was also seen as a source of support and motivation for a better future. As conveyed by one detainee “During COVID, family visits have been limited, but the e-dalaw helped. When I finish crafting them (referring to their projects), I give them to my family, just so I can pay back for the things they have given me here inside. To compensate to some extent- it feels good whenever I am able to give them the things I work hard for here” [P1].

With conviction, one detainee shared "I can honestly say that with the current state that I'm in right now, I give up. I don't ever want to experience this ever again. I've already learned my lesson inside the jail because when you're in jail, you will really ponder about the things you need to fix, especially your wrongdoings. In case I would be released from prison, I would amend the sins I've done for myself and my family, as there truly is nothing good you can get from here. No one can help you but yourself, your family, and nobody else" [P3].

The theme of Kulong sa kapanahunan reflects the detainees' struggle with being confined in their thoughts and emotions related to the past, but also their anticipation of a better future. It portrays the complex emotions and reflections that detainees experience as they navigate their time in jail, with regrets and remorse for the past, but also a sense of hope and determination for a better future.

**Kulong sa Pag-asap Pag-asap**

Pag-asap is literally translated to the English term “hope”, it describes a person’s wanting or desire for a positive outcome or fulfillment in the future. Hence, Kulong sa pag-asap depicts the experiences that instill hope for the detainees.

The detainees in the study are seen to have different sources of hope and coping strategies despite the challenging situation they experience inside the jail. The “Pag-asap sa magandang karanasan” as source of hope, is hope in positive experiences through acquaintances with cellmates is an important coping strategy for detainees. Despite the challenging situation of being in detention, detainees find solace in sharing and talking to their cellmates even if they do not directly express their inner thoughts and feelings. This coping strategy serves as a way for detainees to distract themselves from their challenging circumstances and find moments of peace, harmony, and emotional outlet. By engaging in conversations and forming acquaintances with their cellmates, detainees are able to create a sense of companionship and support within the confines of their cell. This provides them with
a source of hope, albeit limited, they still find comfort in the presence of others and the opportunity to connect with fellow detainees.

The quote from one of the participants exemplifies this coping strategy, as they mentioned “I sometimes talk to my cellmates when what I feel is a little unbearable, although I do not directly express to them what I truly feel. I just tell them anything but not what I feel, just to have something to talk about, just to be entertained” [P9]. This shows that talking to their cellmates help them cope when their thoughts and feelings become unbearable, even though they do not directly express their true emotions. Instead, they talk about anything or something just to have a topic to talk about and be entertained.

Overall, "Pag-asa sa magandang karanasan" or hope in positive experiences through acquaintances with cellmates serves as a coping strategy for detainees in the study, providing them with a sense of companionship, support, and distraction from their difficult circumstances. It emphasizes the importance of human connection and social interaction as a source of hope in the midst of adversity.

"Pag-asa sa ka-selda" is a coping strategy and a source of hope for detainees, as it provides them with a sense of guidance and protection within the cell. According to one detainee “Yung mga namungkulan, meron. Igwa kaming tigaapod digdi sa kulungan su mga “Mayor”, “Big brother”. Magsunod lang siya. Su mga tamang tigapalakad ninda na aram mo man na ikakarahay mo, sunudon mo” [P1] and another shared “Meron kami ditong “big sister.” Nakakatabang man siya ta kung ano man ang reklamo mi nalalapitan mi po agad siya para magkaigwang solution” [P6]. The designated "big brother" or "big sister" acts as a mentor, mediator, and peacemaker, helping to resolve conflicts, provide advices, and ensuring that detainees can coexist harmoniously. This figure serves as a source of hope for detainees who may feel vulnerable or overwhelmed in the prison environment, providing them with a sense of security and support.

The "pangkat system" or group system, which is often established among detainees, also serves as a source of hope and support. One participant happily shared “Even the group system helps us survive as they serve as our second family inside. This group system provides you people who you can turn to in difficult times just like how your big brother could be there for you through tough times” [P2]. Detainees form groups or "pangkat" provide a sense of community and camaraderie. These groups may offer emotional support, companionship, and a shared sense of identity and purpose. Detainees may turn to their fellow group members for comfort, guidance, and assistance in navigating through the challenges of their incarceration.

These sources of hope, including the "big brother" or "big sister" figure and the "pangkat system," highlight the importance of social connections and support among detainees. They provide a sense of belonging, solidarity, and mutual aid, which can help detainees cope with the difficulties of their situation and maintain a positive outlook amidst challenging circumstances.

“Kapit sa Maykapal” is another dimension identified by means of the importance of faith and spirituality in detainees' coping strategies and a source of hope, providing them with comfort, strength, and resilience in the face of adversities.

It is evident from the participants' statements that their faith and spirituality also plays a significant role in their coping strategies and source of hope. Detainees rely on their religious practices and activities - such as prayers and touching the altar - as a way to find solace and uplift their spirits as shared by one participant “In my four years inside, when I feel down and heavy, I touch the altar - it helps me feel good and uplifted” [P1]. These practices provide them with a sense of relief and comfort, especially during times when they feel down or overwhelmed. It gives them a source of strength and courage to face the challenges of life inside the cell.

Similarly, one participant shared “Strengthen yourself and pray more in order to overcome challenges in life. All problems have a solution” [P5]. These statements also highlight the belief that all problems have solutions, and through their faith, they find hope in
overcoming the adversities they face. This suggests that their religious beliefs provide them with a sense of optimism and resilience, helping them cope with the difficulties of their situation.

Faith and religion can be a powerful adaptive strategy for detainees, providing them with a sense of purpose, meaning, and hope. It allows them to connect with something greater than themselves and find solace in their beliefs. The practice of their faith gives them a sense of stability and support in navigating the challenges of incarceration and adapting to their life changes.

The "Laban para sa pamilya" dimension emphasizes the importance of family as a source of hope, motivation, and strength for detainees. The support and love of their family members provide them with a sense of purpose and determination to keep going, even in the face of adversities. This dimension highlights the resilience and determination of detainees to fight for their family and maintain hope even in strenuous circumstances.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the detainees faced a variety of limitations, and they found solace and strength in maintaining contact with their families through means such as video calls or phone calls since the thought of their family waiting for them outside provides them with a sense of purpose and motivation to persevere through their current situation as evidently stated by a participant - “Nung COVID wala kaming dalaw, padala lang nakakaabot samin. Pero may video call naman, phone call araw-araw. Inano ko nalang sa pamilya ko na nagahalalat pa sinda para sa paghuwas ko. Nagahalalat sinda kaya tigtanggap ko na arog na kaini ang sitwasyon ko. Pero dai ako nawawaran ki pagasa, kasi su pamilya ko nagahalalat sako sa luwas. Kaya iyo ito ang motivation ko” [P5].


The participants' statements also reflect their acceptance of their current fate while still maintaining hope. They acknowledge their situation but do not lose hope because they know their family is waiting for their release. This suggests that their family serves as a driving force that keeps them motivated and hopeful, despite the challenges they face while being incarcerated.

The dimension of "Laban para sa pamilya" emphasizes the importance of family as a source of hope, motivation, and strength for detainees. The support and love of their family members provide them with a sense of purpose and determination to keep going, even in the face of adversity. This dimension highlights the resilience and determination of detainees to fight for their families and maintain hope even in challenging circumstances. It showcases the significance of family as a source of hope and motivation for detainees, providing them with the strength to cope with their situation and strive for a better future.

Lastly, Kulong sa pag-asa construes the existence of hope amidst living the life of being a detainee and the life behind bars. Hope, although limited, does exist in many forms, like cellmates, family and friends, livelihood programs, and religion or faith. These help inmates to navigate through life's adversities and live on hope.

Kulong sa Oportunidad

The findings from the phenomenological research revealed that despite the challenges and hardships experienced by the detainees, there was a sense of meekness and humility among them. These were observed during their discussions about "oportunidad," a Filipino term that translates to opportunity. In the context of this study, the researchers identified several dimensions that could be classified as part of the detainees’ opportunities inside LCJ, this includes routine-based living, opportunity for empowerment and entertainment, gabay sa loob (guidance from within), and opportunity for self-discovery.
The detainees were able to maintain their meekness when asked about their lives while inside the jail, explicitly stating that they follow a certain routine, starting from the time they wake up to night time. Hence, discovering a routine-based living. Along with this, they utter that within this routine there are different programs provided by the jail, such as therapeutic community and livelihood. Such routines were shared by the following detainees:

“Sa una kasi ang sinunod ko jan, nag rounds department, nag tapok ako ki basura, naglining ako kang sagmawan, rotation kami kaan. Hanggang sa napalitan ako, may pumasok na iba, pinalitan naman. Naglining kami pag Domingo. Hanggang kinaag naman ako sa BOD (Business Operations Department), yung gumagawa ng mga TC form. Sa araw-araw na TC, ako yung lumilista ng mga pangalan. Hanggang hinali na ninda ako sa housekeeping, hanggang hinali ako sa taka hugas. Tapos may mga nakaduty man diyan (hugasan), ano rotation ... may nakalista diyan pangalan - nakalista yung duty maghapon” [P3].


Although they experienced a routine-based living inside the jail, the detainees also revealed that the programs that come along with it provided help through various ways. One of which is livelihood programs. They collectively recognize it as a significant leisure and hobby. It was also seen as a chance for learning, stating, "I'm making use of my time with livelihood programs for me to have skills in case I'll be released and for extra income" [P7]. Thus, making a livelihood program as an opportunity for empowerment and entertainment among detainees.

Furthermore, some detainees indeed expressed difficulty in coping and having a lack of space for privacy (refer to Kulong sa Kapungawan). Nonetheless, despite these hardships and the crowd, some detainees also reveal that, other than entertainment and empowerment, they found a support system that provides a safe place while interacting with others through Therapeutic Community (TC). P6 affirms that TC is helpful for him as it becomes his support system. Likewise, P8 describes TC as a program which promotes unity. Hence, he added that through that program, they were given time to share about themselves. However, TC is not limited to these functions only. P3 disclosed that it also helps prepare oneself for possible court hearing. In a way, this modality was then seen as gabay sa loob or guide inside by the detainees themselves while facing their struggles.

In contrast, those opportunities were not just limited to these programs. As time inside could offer reflection and realization (refer to Kulong sa kapanahunan), opportunity for self-discovery was also evident. Through the interview, with confidence, the detainees believe that being in jail helped them discover more about themselves and their potential while interacting with other PDLs and joining different activities and programs. For example, P7 acknowledged that being in jail helped him to discover his talent. He was also able to develop good attitudes like patience, humility, forgiveness, not holding a grudge, and self-love.

Moreover, self-discovery also includes values and skills that paved the way for building a good relationship inside the jail. They were able to discover their potential to lead and listen to their cellmates and develop their attitude and values that would help them get along with others, especially their cellmates. Such articulation involves:
“Prisoners are really naughty. Jokes are not avoided inside the cell, especially jokes relating to spouse. That’s why you should be open minded and patient… Livelihood offered are also helpful. If you wanna join, you have a chance to get listed. If you wanna learn, you should have an initiative. In terms of school, there’s ALS. Activities such as dollhouse making are provided. Other than those, there are also volleyball and basketball” [P1].

“I learned that it is important to take to heart and to embody the values that we learn at every meeting. Let’s say for example, the value of honesty, and that is actually why our relationship inside the cell is decent. And actually, us LGBTs are in one cell and I can say that there are times that we do feel happy. Additionally, we are also the ones tasked to take care of our elders” [P6].

"I didn't find it hard to be a leader, because I was also able to experience it. I listen to the needs and concerns of my cellmates, and I would tell it to the mother salute. But losing temper can’t really be avoided. Those newcomers are not yet used (with jail life). Not like us who stayed longer, have longer patience. That’s why complications and misunderstandings happen sometimes” [P8].

Regardless of the population, Legazpi City Jail provides different programs and activities inside that can be part of their routine. This allows opportunities for entertainment, self-discovery, empowerment, and guidance that help each individual. Thus, illustrating that the young adult detainees encounter kulong sa oportunidad which describes those experiences of forced opportunities as discovered while having routine-based lives inside the jail, including opportunities that help develop their characters, relationships, and the discovery of talents and skills.

Discussions

This study answered the central question, "How do the young adult detainees describe their prison crowding experiences in Legazpi City Jail?" With data gathering and analysis, four (4) themes were identified: kulong sa kapungawan (longing and yearning); kulong sa kapanahunan (sentiments over a period of time); kulong sa pag-asa (experiences that instill hope); and kulong sa oportunidad (forced opportunities and routine-based life). It should be taken into account the multidimensional nature of these themes that are related to the experiences of detainees. It also highlights the importance of understanding the subjective experiences of detainees, that could contribute to intersectionality studies, particularly in the fields of clinical, rehabilitation, and community psychology.

Prison overcrowding is the reality that inmates at penitentiaries experience, wherein penitentiaries with large numbers of inmates have inadequate space to house them (Penit, 2020). Existing studies (MacDonald, 2018; Narag & Lee, 2018; Newman, 2012; Nkosi & Maweni, 2020; Martin et al., 2012; Van Ginneken et al., 2019) have emphasized that inmates tend to be affected in a multitude of ways by the prison crowding state. However, there is seemingly a dearth of Filipino literature on prison overcrowding and the prison crowding concept in the Filipino context. The findings in this study are rooted in a Filipino perspective and provide valuable insights into the experiences of prison crowding among young adult detainees in Legazpi City Jail.

Kulong sa Kapungawan

The first theme to emerge is Kulong sa kapungawan, it is defined as the detainees’ experiences of longing for family and friends amidst crowded cells, longing for safety and stability, personal space and comfort, and basic needs due to various situations experienced inside the jail. The findings from this study found that there are four dimensions to this phenomena. The first dimension presents pungaw sa pamilya at kaibigan in which the narratives of the detainees revealed that they experience feelings of sadness and loneliness as they are separated from their own family, with feelings of homesickness and longing for their friends.
Filipinos are known for their family-orientedness and are believed to have a strong sense of family values that make them closer to one another (Marie 2018, as cited by Janer, 2019). This is consistent with the findings of Schliehe et al. (2021), wherein they found that feelings of isolation and loneliness may eventually occur to some of the detainees inside the prison due to being apart from their loved ones and being disconnected from the society.

The next dimension explored is *pungaw for safety and stability*; it includes the detainees’ experiences with adjusting to prison and the evident struggles they faced and negative thoughts they encountered, such as suicidal ideations. According to previous studies, the experience of incarceration itself poses a challenge to inmates' physical health and psychological well-being, which, when left untreated, is known to result in poor adjustment to life in prison (Hill, Seigfried, & Ickowitz, 2004, as cited by Juan et al., 2019).

Consequently, jail overcrowding surely has an impact on inmates' physical and mental health (Convocar et al., 2020; Juan et al., 2019). Nonetheless, their resilience has proven to find different ways to help detainees themselves get through challenging circumstances by participating in activities that could ease their loneliness. This suggests that engagement in activities and interactions with fellow detainees can provide some respite from the experience of *kapungawan*.

They have also expressed a longing for a sense of personal space and privacy, wherein the dimension of *pungaw for personal space and comfort* was revealed. Not only do they experience overcrowding, but they also have to go through the struggles that come with it, such as the lack of privacy, the non-existence of personal boundaries, and the deprivation of a proper bed space. Martin and associates (2012) expressed a similar conclusion, wherein it was revealed that there is a lack of privacy in crowded situations, and that might lead to violence to start in cell blocks and other possible locations. The risk of someone being easily irritated increases.

Lastly, the detainees have revealed *pungaw for basic needs*—the struggles they faced in fulfilling their basic needs. It is in these statements where the inhumane situations that the detainees face become evident. As shown in the study of Van Ginneken et al., (2019) and Guda (2022), overcrowding is considered inhumane due to substandard living arrangements for inmates and presents to be a host of other problems, including shortages of resources and facilities, limited access to social services, and public health issues. As humans, it is not only a need for people to get these basic needs but a right to have, purely because they exist, and to quote the words of one of the detainees, "siguro gari bako tama sa arog samuya" [P8], meaning it is not appropriate for them to get this type of treatment, even for people like them.

**Kulong sa Kapanahunan**

*Kulong sa kapanahunan* depicts the experiences of being stuck in a cycle of thoughts such as remorse or regret for past actions and despair over lost possibilities. These also include thoughts of the future that give hope to the detainees. In particular, it encompasses two dimensions, namely, *pagbabalik-tanaw* (retrospection) and *kinabukasan* (progression).

The first dimension, *pagbabalik-tanaw*, represents the detainees’ sentiments as they contemplate the previous circumstances in their lives. The regrets of their past decisions, actions, and irreversible and slipped opportunities lingered in their thoughts as they stayed inside the jail. They felt remorse for the loss of time with their families, and their longing to ask for an apology and forgiveness lingered. Consequently, thoughts of reconstructing their connections with their families and faith have been amplified. This is parallel to other studies that found that missing one’s family and freedom and having so much regret about their past behavior are some of the hardships experienced by the incarcerated (Azemi, 2020; Rocheleau, 2011 as cited by Rocheleau, 2015).

However, even in the existence of their retrospective tendencies, their progressive thinking was still evident. The second dimension, *kinabukasan*, describes the thoughts of the future that may give hope to the detainees. By helping themselves and with the help of their
families, they anticipate a hopeful future, and they also believe that they will not suffer such circumstances once more. Specifically, keeping in touch with their families was viewed as a source of encouragement and drive for a brighter future. Getting both emotional and instrumental support from family can help alleviate the stress of incarceration.

All forms of visitation are believed to assist in the prevention of violent rule violations, as inmates view them as part of a reward system for good behavior. Many believe that by allowing inmates to be visited by their families, spouses, and children, they can better maintain a healthy, positive self-image, reducing their need to commit violence against other inmates exerting their dominance. Additionally, higher subjective well-being was linked to satisfaction with the frequency of interaction with family and friends (Monceda, 2021; Rocheleau, 2015; Van Ginneken, 2019).

By recognizing and addressing the emotional and psychological needs of detainees, detention facilities can promote a more positive and fulfilling future, even in the midst of confinement. Moreover, the continuous communication with the detainees' families, as well as their presence, sparked a light of hope for a better future. In this sense, *kulong sa kapanahunan* represents not only the challenges of the present and the past but also the potential for growth and change in the future.

**Kulong sa Pag-asa**

*Kulong sa pag-asa* entails the hope the detainees have inside the cell, the hope they hold on to as they face life behind bars. The existence of positive experiences that instill hopes for their adaptive strategies inside an overcrowded prison. *Kulong sa pas-asa* has four dimensions, namely; pag-asa sa magandang karanasan; pag-asa sa ka-selda; kapit sa maykapal and; laban para sa pamilya.

A study conducted by Narag and Lee (2018) best exemplifies the existence of companionship inside the cell. The study shows that the time spent with your cellmates provides you the chance to develop close relationships with them, almost like a brothehood and long-term companions (*makakasama*), that would provide them opportunities to have a harmonious living with their cellmates and to have an outlet of emotions.

Furthermore, Narag (2018, cited in Monceda, 2021) quoted that, the existence of gangs inside jail facilities may actually aid in the formation of group cohesion. This *pangkatan* system indeed provides numerous benefits, one of them being the security - through *pangkatan*, you are "protected" by your group. Moreover, *pangkat* already exists inside the prison, and joining the mentioned group is solely voluntary. Detainees have the choice whether to join or not without pressure from their fellow detainees.

It is evident that the existence of authoritative heads like "Big brother" or "Big sister" provides a guided-type of living inside the cell, this helps in maintaining order inside a cell. The big brother and big sister system was previously known as the "mayores" system, and this has been prevalent long before it was changed to "Big brother" and "Big sister." The big brother/sister system contributes well to the therapeutic community that is being established inside, and it provides the detainees with a sense of family and belongingness.

Moreover, in Big brother, each cell has one big brother that helps maintain order, assign job functions, and provide assistance to each detainee. In contrast with the big sister system, there is only one big sister for all the female detainees. Big sister also provides assistance if the dorm representative would not be able to handle the concerns and issues. Nonetheless, both big brother and big sister help maintain order inside the cell, provide solutions to problems, and serve as communicators between the detainees and the authorities or officers in charge. One can also be a big brother or big sister through a voting system in each dorm. Supported by the study of Narag and Jones (2017), the *kuya* or brother inmate leadership, is a Filipino cultural dynamic where there exists respectability towards an individual and is seen by the detainees as a potential for being a leader who they hope would aid in managing their very meager cell space.
Moreover, detainees find solace in religious or spiritual practices, and according to some participants, it provides them "hope and strength" amidst the difficulties they face inside. This is supported by the study by Convocar et al. (2020) as it reveals that there is evidence that suggests religiousness helps inmates cope with the prison experiences. It provides them psychological capacities like motivation, hope, and strength to go through the life they have behind bars.

Along the known values of Filipino culture is Christ-centeredness, due to Roman Catholicism being the most prominent religion in the Philippines. Similarly, in the study conducted by Villanueva and Gayoles (2019), it was concluded that religion and faith play a crucial role in the detainees' coping and adjustment with prison life, which subsequently affects their prison experiences.

Additionally, according to a research conducted by Ofori-Dua et al. (2020), detainees were able to discover coping and solace through the social networks formed inside and as well as the relationship they have with their family and friends left outside. At the peak of the pandemic or COVID-19, restrictions were made especially on visitation on the detainees. However, as a response, Chavez (2021) mentioned "to help PDLs to communicate with their family, BJMP provided an e-Dalaw (virtual visit) program during the COVID-19 pandemic", this corresponds to the detainees' reports that the opportunity to talk to their family and even friends outside, even through calls, provides them sense of relief and hope. Flores-Barolo (2019) also stated that "This would also strengthen family communication and improve the privileges in visitation of the detainees", this serves as a response to the needs of the detainees as they draw motivation from their families and friends even though restrictions were made as protective measures against COVID-19.

Kulong sa Oportunidad

*Kulong sa oportunidad* describes the experiences of forced opportunities that were discovered by the detainees while having a routine-based life inside LCJ, including opportunities that helped develop their character and discovery of their talent and skills. Specifically, four dimensions have emerged namely; routine-based living; opportunity for empowerment and entertainment; *gabay sa loob*; and opportunity for self-discovery.

Current study shows that having a *routine-based living* could be a way to find opportunities. This routine-based living involves joining different programs such as therapeutic community, and livelihood programs and doing their duties inside.

A similar finding was seen in a study of Nario-Lopez (2021), PDL’s routine includes participating in TCMP, livelihood, religious activities, and communicating processes which promotes productivity, establishes and maintains relationships. Therefore, regardless of the crowdedness in jail, detainees could still enjoy and join different activities and programs.

Along with this, there was also an *opportunity for empowerment and entertainment* through the livelihood programs. Detainees enroll and enlist in education in Alternative Learning System (ALS), and livelihood programs, such as but not limited to, abaca weaving, salapid weaving, wallet making, doll house making, and sports, for the purpose of time utilization and development of skills and abilities that may serve to be useful and possible source of income once they are released.

In a study conducted by Masanda, et al. (2021), a livelihood program was seen as a learning opportunity that could help in gaining skills that they could use to make business once they are released. However, it is said that imprisonment itself will likely not reduce the likelihood of re-offending, presenting the crucial reason why it is a must to focus on activities that could be of help in improving skills and employability (Lindstrom & Eriksson, 2006, as cited by Beybut & Chemlal, 2015). Nonetheless, these livelihood programs provide means for their interests and leisure while residing in LCJ.

Therapeutic community is also part of the everyday routine of the detainees. This is a self-help program that was mandated by the BJMP for all the jails to reshape PDL’s behavior and beliefs. It is also an effective, highly structured environment with clearly established moral
and ethical boundaries, according to the Bureau of Correction. The main objective is to promote personal development through reshaping a person's behavior and attitudes through the inmate community, helping themselves and each other, regaining self-confidence, and preparing them for their reintegration into their families and friends as useful community members (Escabel, 2015; & Nario-Lopez, 2021).

This eventually led to a way for *gabay sa loob*, or guidance from within. Escabel et al., (2015) also found out that TCMP was perceived as effective, specifically the work and educational, therapy services, etc. This illustrates that although there might be a lack of privacy, there’s still a way that one could have a safe place inside the jail. However, in a study by Stevens (2013), there are some prisoners who were unconvinced with Therapeutic Community. With this, TC would only be effective and meaningful if one would wholeheartedly cooperate.

Moreover, being in a crowd does help detainees to discover themselves as leaders and friends. The recognition and acceptance of inmate leaders promotes the opportunity to serve others, especially his/her own cellmates (Narag & Jones, 2017). This opportunity for self-discovery also extends to recognizing one’s potential and development of one’s attitude and values. Developing these through joining activities and programs and interacting with others, subsequently creating change among themselves (Comfort, 2012; Convocar et al., 2020; Macabago et al., 2020).

Erich Fromm's humanistic psychoanalysis theory emphasizes the importance of understanding individuals in their social and cultural contexts. Fromm believed that human behavior is shaped by social and cultural factors, and that individuals are motivated by the need to connect with others and find meaning in their lives.

Fromm's emphasis on the role of social and cultural factors in shaping human behavior aligns with the focus of phenomenological research on understanding the subjective experiences of individuals in their cultural and contextual contexts. The findings of this study suggest that the experiences of prison crowding among young adult detainees are shaped by cultural concepts of family and community, which have important implications for the development of interventions and programs that are sensitive to these cultural factors. Fromm’s theory argues that understanding the cultural and social context in which these experiences occur is critical to understanding the motivations and behaviors of young adult detainees.

Additionally, Fromm's theory highlights the importance of personal growth and development as fundamental human needs. The experiences of prison crowding among young adult detainees in this study were characterized by confinement in opportunity, or limited access to opportunities for personal growth and development. Fromm’s theory argues that addressing this need for personal growth and development is essential to the well-being of individuals and can be an important focus of interventions aimed at improving the lives of young adult detainees. Fromm's humanistic psychoanalysis theory provides a useful framework for understanding the experiences of prison crowding among young adult detainees in Legazpi City Jail.

Overall, this study makes an important contribution to the literature on prison crowding and the experiences of detainees. The identification of phenomenologies adds a new dimension to the understanding of the impact of confinement on individuals and underscores the importance of understanding the subjective experiences of marginalized groups.

**Conclusion**

The findings in this phenomenological study provide valuable insights into answering the central question, "How do the young adult detainees describe their prison crowding experiences in Legazpi City Jail?" The four (4) phenomenologies that were uncovered is a significant contribution to establishing the characterization of the prison crowding experiences. Consequently, revealing the multidimensional phenomenologies: *Kulong sa kapungawan* (longing and yearning); *Kulong sa kapanahunan* (sentiments over a period of time); *Kulong sa pag-asa* (experiences that instill hope); and *Kulong sa oportunidad* (forced opportunities
and routine-based life). The findings highlight the multifaceted and complex nature of their confinement, which encompasses various forms of longing and yearning, temporal constraints, limited opportunities, and diminished hope.

In general, the findings conclude that detainees encounter both positive and negative experiences in their stay inside the jail. These experiences were characterized by different phenomenality with the perceptions of young adult detainees in the context of Filipino prison culture and their value systems.

Furthermore, the findings of this study may serve as a springboard for the contribution to intersectionality studies, particularly in the fields of clinical, rehabilitation, and community psychology, by examining the unique experiences of Filipino detainees in the context of prison crowding. The study may serve as a foundation for developing culture-specific programs and interventions that are responsive to the needs of incarcerated individuals in the Philippines. And the findings may have implications for the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

Moreover, this phenomenological study adds to the existing literature on prison crowding and provides valuable insights into the experiences of young adult detainees in Legazpi City Jail. The findings may have implications for revisiting existing policies regarding prison crowding and practice, as well as contribute to the body of knowledge in relevant fields, with the potential to inform future research, interventions, and advocacy efforts aimed at improving the lives of incarcerated individuals in the Philippines, as this contextualizes the experiences of prison crowding among Filipino detainees within the cultural concepts of family and community in the Bicolano culture.

This study also contributed to shedding light on the living conditions and unmasking the reality of detainees, including their psychological well-being. It revealed their stories, ranging from how they yearn for their family and friends to the sacrifices that they made in order to survive the difficult circumstances that they were forced to experience inside the jail. Thus, having the potential to contribute to advocacy efforts aimed at promoting the well-being of young adult detainees by raising awareness about their experiences.

Recommendation

This study is specifically focused on the Filipino young adult detainees in Legazpi City Jail, and the findings on the experiences of detainees in other jurisdictions have not been examined. Furthermore, the collected narratives presented significant findings, although researchers were not able to explore the differences in experiences that might be in line with the experiences of people with different crimes, perspective of recidivists, and those serving their sentence. That is due to the majority of the participants having the same type of crimes committed. While the small sample size and subjective nature of the data are considered limitations of the study, the consistency and authenticity of the participants' narratives suggest that their experiences are representative of the larger population of young adult detainees in similar contexts.

Several recommendations have been identified to address the experiences of prison crowding among young adult detainees in Legazpi City Jail. Firstly, there is a need for the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology to revisit its policies, prioritize efforts, and evaluate what is best to reduce prison overcrowding, as it can have a significant impact on the well-being of detainees. This can be achieved through various measures, such as increasing the capacity of jails.

Second, as detainees were able to see hope and light through various programs and activities, the researchers suggest that jails cater to a variety of recreational activities and livelihood programs. The researchers suggest that the offered livelihood programs be changed occasionally, this is to provide detainees more time-utilization and to also provide a wider opportunity to learn how to help them with their lives once they are released.

Third, the researchers suggest having a psychometrician at office and to have a professional and licensed psychologist based on each jail. In order to closely monitor the
detainees’ mental health, as exemplified by the data from this research that shows detainees exhibiting suicidal and death ideation. It is the right of the detainees to have a proper response to their needs, especially in the time of their crises.

Fourth, for future researchers to explore the perspectives of various age groups in the prison system to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences of different populations. Additionally, for them to consider understanding the prison crowding experiences of recidivists through the use of a different research approach, such as a case study, to gain insight into how the experiences of prison crowding evolve over time.

Lastly, to extend the generalizability of the findings, future research could consider replicating the study in other jails in the Philippines to see if similar themes emerge and are applicable in other contexts. This could help provide a more robust understanding of the experiences of prison crowding among Filipino detainees and inform the development of interventions and programs that are specific to the cultural and contextual factors in each region.

References

interpersonal-relationships-


Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism. (3 November 2021). Retrieved December 6, 2022, from https://pcij.org/blog/2312/faqs


