

Implementation and Challenges of Jail Services in District Jails in Western Visayas, Philippines

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ABSTRACT. This study assessed the implementation of jail services in district jails within Antique, Philippines, focusing on basic needs, health, livelihood, education, sports, recreation, visitation, paralegal, and religious provisions, relative to population, location, budget, and personnel. Utilizing a quantitative, descriptive, and comparative approach with 153 Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) as respondents, the research revealed a generally very great extent of implementation. Notably, assistance for voting-eligible PDLs was the highest-rated service, while insufficient cell ventilation emerged as a top challenge. Implementation varied significantly based on population, location, budget, and personnel, supporting Scheirer's Program and Implementation Theory—that service effectiveness is context-dependent. This underscores how population size directly impacts budget allocation and, consequently, service provision. The findings offer actionable recommendations for the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology to improve consistency, particularly in smaller jails, by addressing challenges and fostering external linkages for funding and resources. Future research should delve into the "why" behind implementation variations through qualitative methods and explore the impact of these services on PDL reformation.

1.0. Introduction

Jail services are essential for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) worldwide, as they not only provide necessary assistance but ensure that PDLs are treated as human beings despite their conditions (Herrera-Acosta & Falconí-Herrera, 2021). Furthermore, providing these services preserves their inherent dignity and human rights (Weinrath, 2016). In support of this, the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, known as the Nelson Mandela Rules, mandate that all PDLs be respected for their dignity and human value. Their safety, security, and individual needs must be ensured (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2015).

In Southeast Asia, countries such as Indonesia (Wilma et al., 2023; Fajriando & Sujatmiko, 2021; Efendi & Hariansah, 2024), Malaysia (Khamis, 2020; Januin et al., 2023), and Thailand (Chuenurah et al., 2021) recognize the importance of jail services.

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Meanwhile, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) demonstrates a commitment to the quality delivery of these services through programs for bail reduction, speedy release, and jail decongestion (ASEAN Briefs, 2018). According to the ASEAN handbook on rehabilitation, PDLs should be provided with support—such as familial and community engagement—to elicit a reform process that bolsters positive renewal. Providing these necessary services facilitates transitions, care, and a robust support system to address the vulnerabilities and needs required for rehabilitation and reformation (Shatnawi & Walsh, 2015).

In the Philippines, the *Comprehensive Operations Manual* (2015) of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) provides a complete framework for implementing jail services. This manual contains provisions for the humane safekeeping and holistic reformation of all PDLs. It also provides guidelines for improving jail facilities and conditions in response to the needs of PDLs (Patlunag, 2020; Guadamor & Martinez, 2018). However, the implementation of these services

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is often questioned due to limited budget allocations, high PDL-to-resource ratios, and structural shortages (Narag & Lee, 2018; Narag & Jones, 2017). Challenges also persist within the judicial system, such as slow court responses, postponements, and the delayed disposition of criminal cases (Commission on Audit, 2023).

The district jails in Western Visayas, where this study is situated, face challenges in observing the BJMP *Comprehensive Operations Manual* (2015) due to inadequate resources. Jails struggle to maintain facilities, prepare adequate meals, and provide services, which may potentially deter the holistic reformation of PDLs, as noted in Bacolod City (Pilar, 2015). Similarly, a study by Sagge Jr. et al. (2023) in Iloilo revealed that PDLs faced issues regarding literacy, numeracy, and entrepreneurial skills.

Several studies have been conducted on jail services in the Philippines. Patlunag (2020) studied inmate satisfaction with BJMP services, while De Vera et al. (2022) discussed rehabilitation programs. Others delved into the efficiency of jail personnel (Guadamor & Martinez, 2018), service delivery (Martinez, 2018), and the general conditions of the BJMP (Agustin, 2019). Given the available studies, however, there is still a dearth of literature on jail services specifically regarding their implementation. This is the gap that this study seeks to fill.

Thus, this paper assessed the implementation of jail services in the district jails in the province of Antique, Philippines, in terms of the provision of basic needs, health, livelihood, education, sports and recreation, visitation, paralegal, and religious services relative to population, location, budget, and number of personnel. It also identified other services provided by the district jails and the challenges encountered in implementation. Lastly, it compared the differences in implementation when grouped according to demographic profiles. The findings of the study may serve as the basis for an enhanced development plan for the continuous improvement of services in the district jails of Antique, Philippines.

2.0. Framework of the Study

The study theorized that the extent of jail service implementation in district jails, along with the challenges encountered, varies based on jail population, location, budget, and the number of personnel. This inquiry was anchored on Scheirer's (1987) Program and Implementation Theory. This theory provides a framework for evaluating program execution by examining the extent of implementation, the factors influencing differences, and the scope of service coverage.

Furthermore, input from PDLs helped identify specific implementation challenges, offering insight into

why programs succeed or fail. By applying this theory, the study aims to identify strategies that enhance jail service delivery, ultimately improving inmate rehabilitation and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the complex variables involved in implementation.

3.0. Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative research design, specifically a descriptive and comparative approach. As noted by Creswell & Creswell (2023), this design statistically measures variables to answer theory-guided questions.

The descriptive approach assessed the extent of the implementation of jail services in the district jails of the province of Antique, Philippines. It also identified other services provided and challenges encountered during implementation. Meanwhile, the comparative approach investigated differences in the implementation of jail services when grouped according to demographics.

The respondents were 153 Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) in the district jails of Antique during the fiscal year 2023-2024, selected using stratified random sampling.

Table 1

<i>Demographic Profile of the Respondents</i>		
Variable	n	%
Population		
Big	110	71.9
Small	43	28.1
Location		
Near	110	71.9
Far	43	28.1
Budget		
Big	110	71.9
Small	43	28.1
Number of Personnel		
Few	43	28.1
Many	110	71.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>153</i>	<i>100.0</i>

To assess the implementation of jail services, a 40-item, validated, and reliability-tested researcher-made questionnaire was utilized. The items were based on the comprehensive manual of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP, 2015). This instrument covers eight areas: provision for basic needs, health, livelihood, education, sports and recreation, visitation, paralegal, and religion. The instrument was subjected to validation by seven jurors, yielding a validity score of 4.34 based on Good and Scates (1982). It was also pilot tested on 30 non-actual respondents, yielding a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.93. The items were rated using a scale ranging from "very poor" to

"very great extent." Additionally, researcher-made checklists were used to identify other services and challenges.

Data were analyzed using descriptive and comparative methods. Descriptive analysis determined the extent of implementation using mean and standard deviation. Comparative analysis examined differences in implementation when grouped by demographics. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine data normality; it revealed that the implementation variable [KS=0.093, p=0.003] was not normally distributed. Consequently, the Mann-Whitney U test was used as the non-parametric statistical tool to investigate significant differences in the implementation assessment.

Lastly, regarding ethical considerations, this paper adhered to the principles of respect for persons, beneficence, and justice, in accordance with the ethical standards of the Philippine Health Research Ethics Board (PHREB). Specifically, the study safeguarded the respondents' vulnerability, anonymity, and the confidentiality of the gathered data.

4.0. Results

Extent of implementation of services of the district jails

The implementation of jail services refers to the operationalization of services offered by district jails to Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). These include provisions for basic needs, health services, livelihood programs, education, sports and recreation, visitation, paralegal assistance, and religious services (BJMP Comprehensive Manual, 2015).

Table 2 presents the extent of service implementation in district jails in Antique, Philippines. generally, the extent of implementation is very great (M=3.39, SD=0.42), with all specific areas rated to a very great extent. regarding demographics, PDLs from jails characterized by larger populations (M=3.46,

SD=0.40), accessible locations (M=3.46, SD=0.40), larger budgets (M=3.46, SD=0.40), and higher personnel numbers (M=3.46, SD=0.40) rated the services higher than their counterparts.

The overall rating of very great extent indicates that district jails in Antique consistently implement services for PDLs. This implies that these facilities effectively provide for the needs of PDLs, offering robust services in health, sports, and recreation, while ensuring opportunities for family visitation, paralegal assistance, and religious exercises. Furthermore, this implementation aligns with the mandate of the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

This exceptional rating may be attributed to the budget allocated for the operationalization of these services. Without adequate funding, it is difficult for jails to maximize and sustain implementation, as supported by Patlunag (2020). Additionally, the high rating may be ascribed to strong support from the local government and non-government agencies. Finally, the outstanding ratings observed in the demographic breakdown may be influenced by the prevalence of respondents from jails with larger populations, better accessibility, and higher staffing levels.

Research confirms that budget significantly influences the implementation of jail services. Contextual aspects, such as funding availability, are crucial for successfully implementing services involving drug counseling (Jaspers et al., 2022). Conversely, jail healthcare delivery strategies are often constrained by resource scarcity, particularly in smaller facilities (Carda-Auten et al., 2022).

Moreover, several studies highlight the vital roles played by both government and non-government agencies in the operationalization of services for PDLs (Bhatia & Ghosh, 2022). Government schools and private institutions frequently provide extension activities and apostolates that support these jail services (Carda-Auten et al., 2022). This reinforces the claim that

Table 2A

Extent of Implementation of Services of the District Jails in the province of Antique, Western Visayas, Philippines

Variable	Basic Needs			Health			Livelihood			Education			Sports and Recreation		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Population															
Big	3.54	0.48	VGE	3.35	0.57	VGE	3.44	0.48	VGE	3.53	0.51	VGE	3.53	0.45	VGE
Small	3.28	0.69	VGE	3.27	0.60	VGE	3.15	0.64	GE	3.29	0.62	VGE	3.24	0.54	GE
Location															
Near	3.54	0.48	VGE	3.35	0.57	VGE	3.44	0.48	VGE	3.53	0.51	VGE	3.53	0.45	VGE
Far	3.28	0.69	VGE	3.27	0.60	VGE	3.15	0.64	GE	3.29	0.62	VGE	3.24	0.54	GE
Budget															
Big	3.54	0.48	VGE	3.35	0.57	VGE	3.44	0.48	VGE	3.53	0.51	VGE	3.53	0.45	VGE
Small	3.28	0.69	VGE	3.27	0.60	VGE	3.15	0.64	GE	3.29	0.62	VGE	3.24	0.54	GE
Number of Personnel															
Few	3.28	0.69	VGE	3.27	0.60	VGE	3.15	0.64	GE	3.29	0.62	VGE	3.24	0.54	GE
Many	3.54	0.48	VGE	3.35	0.57	VGE	3.44	0.48	VGE	3.53	0.51	VGE	3.53	0.45	VGE
Whole	3.47	0.55	VGE	3.33	0.57	VGE	3.36	0.54	VGE	3.46	0.55	VGE	3.45	0.49	VGE

Note: 2.51- 3.25 = Great Extent (GE), 3.26 -4.00 = Very Great Extent (VGE)

Table 2B*Extent of Implementation of Services of the District Jails in the province of Antique, Western Visayas, Philippines*

Variable	Visitation			Paralegal			Religious			Implementation		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
Population												
Big	3.46	0.54	VGE	3.46	0.52	VGE	3.40	0.56	VGE	3.46	0.40	VGE
Small	3.23	0.54	GE	3.02	0.60	GE	3.27	0.47	VGE	3.22	0.43	GE
Location												
Near	3.46	0.54	VGE	3.46	0.52	VGE	3.40	0.56	VGE	3.46	0.40	VGE
Far	3.23	0.54	GE	3.02	0.60	GE	3.27	0.47	VGE	3.22	0.43	GE
Budget												
Big	3.46	0.54	VGE	3.46	0.52	VGE	3.40	0.56	VGE	3.46	0.40	VGE
Small	3.23	0.54	GE	3.02	0.60	GE	3.27	0.47	VGE	3.22	0.43	GE
Number of Personnel												
Few	3.23	0.54	GE	3.02	0.60	GE	3.27	0.47	VGE	3.22	0.43	GE
Many	3.46	0.54	VGE	3.46	0.52	VGE	3.40	0.56	VGE	3.46	0.40	VGE
Whole	3.39	0.55	VGE	3.33	0.58	VGE	3.36	0.54	VGE	3.39	0.42	VGE

Note: 2.51- 3.25 = Great Extent (GE), 3.26 -4.00 = Very Great Extent (VGE)

partnerships with community organizations enhance jail service implementation (Leukefeld et al., 2017).

Finally, literature supports the finding that jails with larger populations, accessible locations, and larger personnel complements typically avail of more government support compared to those with smaller populations, remote locations, and fewer personnel (Walker et al., 2016). In fact, Caño et al. (2024) stated that a lack of finances can lead to ineffective rehabilitation programs for PDLs.

Other services implemented

Table 3 presents the additional services implemented in district jails across the province of Antique, Western Visayas, Philippines. The three top-rated services, which were not included in the standard BJMP comprehensive manual, are: voting assistance for eligible PDLs ($f=147$, 96.1%), E-dalaw ($f=145$, 94.8%), and mental health services ($f=141$, 92.2%).

regarding the provision of voting assistance, the data suggests that most PDLs consider this service essential. The high rating indicates that, despite their condition, they still perceive themselves as part of society. This finding contrasts with previous studies suggesting that

PDLs often feel ostracized the moment they are placed behind bars (Moore et al., 2015) or feel hopeless regarding government support (Wati & Zikra, 2019). However, the implementation of this service demonstrates that the government has not abandoned them, ensuring they retain equal rights and privileges to vote (Sopiandy et al., 2024).

Relative to *E-dalaw*, the rating indicates that PDLs appreciate government efforts to facilitate virtual conferences with family and friends in lieu of face-to-face visitation. This service satisfies their longing to associate with loved ones, particularly those from distant locations. Studies have found that virtual conferences create a positive impact on PDLs' lives and improve their overall condition (do Valle, 2020). Although they are deprived of liberty, the government recognizes they should not be deprived of the human need for socialization, as supported by Cahapay (2020). Furthermore, Briñas (2023) notes that the government strives to maintain a sense of humanity among PDLs through these services, recognizing their inherent dignity.

Lastly, in terms of mental health services, most PDLs believe the government provides necessary programs to mitigate issues regarding their mental wellness. They perceive that the government is actively helping them maintain their well-being while incarcerated. This is crucial, as studies show that the prison environment and daily struggles significantly affect a PDL's state of mind (Goomany & Dickinson, 2015). Consequently, this rating confirms that PDLs value the government's initiatives to support their mental health.

Table 3

Other Services Implemented

Variable	f	%
Provision of assistance to PDLs who are eligible to vote during elections.	147	96.1
E-dalaw	145	94.8
Mental health Services (e.g., stress debriefing, supportive psychological group, seminar on stress management)	141	92.2
Behavioral Management (seminars on positive coping and positive thinking)	132	86.3
Drug Counseling for PDL with Substance Abuse Disorder	122	79.7

Difference in the extent of implementation of services of the district jails

Table 4 presents the difference in the extent of implementation of services of the district jails in the province of Antique, Western Visayas, Philippines. Using Mann-Whitney U test, there were significant differences in the extent of implementation of services of the district jails when grouped according to population [$U=1574.000$, $p=0.001$], location [$U=1574.000$, $p=0.001$], budget [$U=1574.000$, $p=0.001$], and number of personnel [$U=1574.000$, $p=0.001$].

Table 4

Difference in the Extent of Implementation of Services of the District Jails

Variable	U	z	p
Population	1574.000*	-3.212	0.001
Location	1574.000*	-3.212	0.001
Budget	1574.000*	-3.212	0.001
Number of Personnel	1574.000*	-3.212	0.001

Note: *difference is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

In terms of population, the difference indicates that the implementation of jail services varies according to the perceptions of the PDLs. This is supported by the studies of Escabel et al. (2015), Bocar et al. (2018), and Praetorius et al. (2017). This means to say that being big or small in terms of population has something to do with the implementation of these services. The result defies the common thinking that those with small population can implement the services well than those with big population as seen in the study of Mackey et al. (2024). In fact, there are studies which claim that those with large number of populations can implement well the mandated service of the government for the PDLs (Alda, 2020). Perhaps, this has something to do with the budget allocated for the big population in comparison to small population. Meaning, big populations mean big allocation of budget and big budget means adequate resources that can suffice the operationalization of the services (Ferry, 2020). Aside from this, it has been found also in the studies of Skaathun et al. (2022) and Lurigio (2016) that those with big population of PDLs are given priorities in terms of resources compared to those small in terms of population.

Relative to location, the significant difference signifies that the perceptions of the PDLs in terms of the implementation of jail services varies. This result supports the common thinking that those near in terms of location can definitely implement the government services for the jails as supported by the studies of Hernandez and Ingco (2021) and Applegate and Sitren (2018). This could be because those far jails have limited access to the resources compared to those coming from near location (Mitchell-Gillespie et al., 2020). As a matter of fact, the studies of Kowalski et al. (2020) and

Escabel et al. (2015) found that those jails which are near can easily access to the various resources including support from both government and non-government organizations (Carda-Auten et al., 2022).

Regarding budget, the significant difference indicates that the views of PDLs in terms of implementation differs according to big and small. This also confirms the common findings that those with big budget can implement well the jail services as supported by Fortino et al. (2024). There are studies which argue that budget indeed is a prerequisite to implementations (Caño et al., 2024). This means that implementation of jail services can never be materialized without ensuring the budget allocation (Carda-Auten et al., 2022). Several studies also claim that when budget is sufficient, the jails can even exceed in terms of their implementation (Jaspers et al., 2022). They can even provide additional services necessary to improve the well-being of the PDLs (Leukefeld et al., 2017).

Lastly, in terms of number of personnel, the significant difference indicates that the perception of PDLs in the implementation varies. This result supports the usual thinking that those jails with many personnel can implement well the services (Rhodes et al., 2024). There are studies which claim that the implementation essentially needs human capital (Owen, 2015). Meaning, no matter how much budget is allocated but without adequate human resources, the services can never be materialized as supported by Sartika et al. (2024). Aside from these, studies from the literature also claim that when there are adequate human resources, the various services can be properly delegated among the personnel to ensure the success of the implementation (Narag & Jones, 2016).

Challenges encountered by persons deprived of liberty

Table 5 presents the challenges encountered by PDLs in district jails within the province of Antique, Western Visayas, Philippines. The top three challenges identified were inadequate ventilation inside the cells ($f=46$, 30.1%), limited space for the receiving area during visitation ($f=35$, 22.9%), and general space shortages ($f=34$, 22.2%).

Although these specific challenges were not cited by the majority of respondents, they are significant issues that cannot be taken lightly. These findings highlight specific areas for improvement that the BJMP and the district administration should address. Notably, the results indicate that PDLs perceive challenges primarily in terms of jail infrastructure rather than mandated services. This distinction explains why the implementation of services was rated to a "very great

Table 5*Challenges Encountered by the Persons Deprived of Liberty*

Variable	f	%
Not enough ventilation inside the cells	46	30.1
Limited space for receiving area during visitation	35	22.9
Space shortage	34	22.2
Congestion in cells	31	20.3
Lack of basic sports facilities	31	20.3
Inadequate meal supply	30	19.6
Scarcity of medicines	27	17.6
Illnesses or body-related complaints are not immediately attended	23	15.0
Not enough access to clean water	20	13.1
Little to no profit sharing from livelihood activities	19	12.4
Not enough books or educational materials	18	11.8
Limited access to time of worship, religious activities	16	10.5

extent" despite the reported physical constraints, such as congestion and poor ventilation.

These findings align with previous research claiming that issues encountered by PDLs are predominantly environmental rather than operational (Guo et al., 2019). Specifically, the studies of Maretti (2016) and Dawal et al. (2020) corroborate these results, noting that most PDLs identify ventilation and congestion as their primary challenges (Khamari, 2022).

In general, the findings are consistent with Scheirer's (1987) Program and Implementation Theory, which suggests that the extent of a program's implementation depends on specific contextual factors. Consistent with this framework, the study reveals that the implementation of jail services is heavily influenced by the facility's population size. Population determines whether specific services can be offered, as it serves as the basis for budget allocation. Since budget and population are directly proportional, a larger population results in a higher budget. This funding is essential to accommodate the number of PDLs requiring basic services.

5.0. Conclusion

The variation in jail service implementation—driven by differences in population size, budget, location, and personnel—highlights the need for improvement, particularly in smaller jails. Achieving consistent, full-scale implementation requires a commitment to continuous improvement. Crucially, this involves initiatives that encourage stakeholders to fund the continuity of these services. Furthermore, facilities must tailor strategies to address the specific needs of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), optimize resources, and enhance operational efficiency. However, because service implementation can still fluctuate despite these efforts, robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are essential.

6.0. Limitations of the Findings

While this study offers valuable insights, it is essential to recognize its limitations. First, the findings

are specific to the context of the municipality where the two district jails are located; thus, they may not be generalizable to other locales. Second, the research instrument, being researcher-made, is limited to eight specific areas of jail services and may not encompass the full range of services currently offered in these facilities. Third, the study relies on self-reported data, which subjects the findings to potential respondent bias. Finally, the research design limits the study's ability to provide a more in-depth, qualitative explanation of the results

7.0. Practical Value of the Paper

These findings offer actionable recommendations for the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP). Regional directors and jail wardens should prioritize the consistent implementation of jail services. Additionally, partnerships with non-government organizations should be pursued to generate funding, particularly for district jails. While these jails have demonstrated a great extent of implementation in other areas, external financial support remains crucial. Moreover, this study provides stakeholders and Local Government Units with valuable evidence to guide fund planning. Policymakers, specifically, must prioritize targeted resource allocation and invest in staff training and development for under-resourced jails.

8.0. Directions for Future Research

Future research should delve deeper into the underlying determinants of implementation and the specific challenges faced by district jails. Qualitative inquiries, utilizing interviews and focus groups, can elucidate the reasons behind the current extent of implementation. Furthermore, comparative analyses with other provinces in the region could highlight unique contextual factors influencing jail services. Crucially, examining the relationship between service implementation and the rehabilitation of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) would demonstrate the long-term value of investing in reformation programs. Ultimately, these findings can guide district and city jails in formulating strategies to uphold the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology's mandates of safekeeping and development.

9.0. Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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