



LIVED EXPERIENCES OF PROBATION OFFICERS IN HANDLING PROBATIONERS

Judy Ann P. Bidong¹, John Dave G. Cabidog², Henderson P. Cinco³, Raiza Mae S. Elegio⁴,
Princess L. Lumbré⁵, Elaissa T. Morante⁶, Geraldine S. Oñate⁷, France Joseph S. Roa⁸,
Ereco P. Sarino⁹, Lance Denver S. Villero¹⁰, Jessielyn M. Abordo, PhD¹¹
Faculty of Criminal Justice Education, Visayas State University Tolosa Tanghas, Tolosa, Leyte

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ABSTRACT

This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Probation Officers (POs) in handling probationers at the Leyte Parole and Probation Office (LPPO) and Tacloban Parole and Probation Office (TPPO) in Region VIII, Philippines. Additionally, it investigated the challenges, strategies or coping mechanisms and aspirations employed by POs in their multifaceted roles within the Philippine criminal justice system. Nine (9) POs from the LPPO and TPPO were selected through purposive sampling. Data were gathered through individual interviews and Focused Group Discussion and was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and key themes. The findings revealed that POs experienced both positive aspects, such as witnessing positive change in probationers' lives and significant challenges, including limited resources, geographical constraints and dealing with resistant clients. POs employed various strategies to address these challenges, including patience, self-care, and building rapport with probationers and their aspirations included greater resources, improved support for probationers, and a more effective probation system. The study concluded that POs play a crucial role in the Philippine criminal justice system, but they face significant challenges that impact their well-being and effectiveness. The study highlighted the need for increased funding, resources, and support for POs to enhance their ability to effectively supervise and rehabilitate probationers. Recommendations included developing and implementing tailored rehabilitation programs, providing transportation support for officers working in remote areas, increasing collaboration with POs, securing funding for rehabilitation and transportation services, offering training for officers in conflict management, emotional regulation, and trauma-informed care and expanding resources for rehabilitation services.

KEYWORDS: aspirations, burn-out, coping mechanism, lived experiences, probation officers

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of probation, it is considered by many as the oldest and most extensive form of intermediate sanctions, has its origins in the common law principles of England, much like several other legal and correctional practices. During the early days of American courts, individuals could secure their release by pledging to be law-abiding citizens and settling their debts (Carter, 2019).

In the 1840s, John Augustus, a bootmaker from Boston, took it upon himself to oversee these individuals as a surety. A surety was responsible for assisting these individuals in court proceedings and ensuring that they reimbursed the courts for their expenses (Carter & McLean, 2019). The state employs probation officers under the control and supervision by the local or city agencies. In many countries, there is a community justice level structure in place where probation offices are established.

Within these offices, probation officers are tasked with managing cases or caseload of probationers. The number of cases in a probation officer's caseload can range from a few high-need/risk clients to several hundred probationers, depending on the

jurisdiction, the structure of the local probation officer's office, and the capabilities of the probation officers themselves (Fox et al., 2021).

The role of a probation officer is multifaceted and at times contradictory. Its main responsibility is to ensure that individuals on probation comply with the conditions set for them. This involves conducting check-ins, random drug screenings, and enforcing other requirements placed on the probationers.

Moreover, probation officers may need to venture into the field to execute warrants, conduct home visits for compliance checks, and even make arrests if necessary. Simultaneously, probation officers strive to assist individuals on probation in achieving success. This includes helping them secure employment, pursue education, enroll in substance or alcohol programs, and provide overall support to ensure their success while on probation. This dual role of being supportive while also enforcing compliance makes the job of a probation officer intricate, often likened to that of a parent (Fields, 2023).



The Philippines is recognized as one of the most dynamic economies in the region, marked by its increasing urbanization, a growing middle class, and a vibrant labor market. Aside from its rising economy, its legal and policy frameworks are not lagging behind, with its established executive, legislative, and judicial branches. Philippines still confronts several issues on law enforcement, particularly, in its prison and correctional management. An overpopulated prison system is a natural consequence of under developed prison and correctional framework. The country ranks 3rd as the most overcrowded incarceration system in the world.

Hence, during the National Decongestion Summit, according to Chief Justice Alexander Gesmundo, it emphasizes better jail management and responsive justice (UNODOC, 2023). In the Philippine Criminal Justice System, probation officers have a crucial role in the field of probation programs as they act as a mediator between the courts and probationers. Probation officers have the difficult task of navigating the legal, social, and human complexities that arise when overseeing and assisting probationers throughout their community supervision term. Working with probationers themselves is a key component of their job, as they encounter a variety of situations that influence both their professional and personal lives as offenders experienced several challenges when transitioning from custody to society (Paudac et al., 2024).

As a probation officer, their primary role is to supervise and oversee the well-being of a person under the probation and to ensure that probationers comply to the certain conditions they are under, such as attending to time and date of meetings agreed about. It is their task to calculate situations to avoid future problems and creation of strategies like creating assessments and collaboration to the community for the purpose of successful reintegration and avoidance of further discomforts to the part of the probation officer (Singh, 2024). As part of a successful reintegration of a probationer, it is also necessary to check for the probation officer's sake on how they handle the expected negative experiences (Sakib, 2022).

The research gap lies in the "need to enhance attention to the well-being and mental health of probation officers, lack of resources, and the "need for more individualized and community-based approaches" to probation supervision, as highlighted by research on the stressors faced by probation officers. Additionally, there is a call for "wider geographical research" to fully understand the scope of probation officers' challenges across different regions (Deinse et al., 2021).

With the foregoing premises, the researchers aimed at exploring the lived experiences of the probation officers of the Tacloban City and Leyte Probation Offices. Secondly, the challenges they encountered in handling probationers. Thirdly, their coping mechanisms used in addressing the challenges. And lastly, their aspirations in the performance of their duty in handling probationers.

2. METHODOLOGY

The phenomenological research design was used to explore the lived experiences, challenges, coping mechanisms and aspirations of probation officers in handling probationers. The participants or informants was purposively selected with nine (9) probation officers; five (5) for individual/in-depth interviews and four (4) for Focused Group Discussion from the Parole and Probation Office VIII, Tacloban City Office and Leyte Office. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: 1.) must be a probation officer from Parole and Probation Office VIII Tacloban City Office and Leyte Office: 2.) Has experience of handling probationers for at least 3 (three) months and; 3.) Is open to being asked of his or her experiences and is willing to cooperate in the study.

Data were collected using a researcher-made interview guide with open-ended questions validated by the three (3) experts from the academe and Parole and Probation Office 8. The interview guide was divided into five (5) parts: Part 1 was about informants' personal circumstances, as the preliminary or conditioning questions. Part 2 was about the lived experiences of probation officer in handling probationers. Part 3 was the challenges encountered; part 4 was coping mechanisms or strategies in addressing the challenges, and part 5 was the aspirations of the probation officers.

Upon approval of the letter request and after obtaining a Special-Order letter from Parole and Probation Office VIII Tacloban City, the researchers conducted a face-to-face interview in a natural and informal setting to promote a comfortable environment for honest responses. Prior to the interview, researchers introduced themselves to the participants/informants and guaranteed to them the confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study.

Following the collection of data, a thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns, topics, and categories within the data. It was then interpreted, with emphasis placed on significant statements.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data gathered revealed the following emergent themes:

A. Lived Experiences of the Probation Officers in Handling Probationer

Positive experiences of Probation Officers in handling probationers.

The Reward of Probation Work. Perhaps the most significant reward for probation officers is seeing a positive change in the lives of the individuals they supervise. Witnessing someone successfully complete their probation, overcome challenges, and make a fresh start can be incredibly gratifying. It's a reminder of the impact a dedicated probation officer can have on an individual's trajectory and the broader community (Jed Youth Probation Officer Certification Guide, 2024).

Actually, as a probation officer ano бага fulfilling man gud iton hiya nga makita ka an im mga kliyente ano nga nasucceed hira ha ira reformation program ngan labot la iton,



after an ira probation period nagigin maupay an ira kabutangan, so usa iton na fulfilling na experience actually. (IDI5: SS5)

(As a probation officer, it is fulfilling to see my clients succeed in their reformation program. Moreover, seeing them doing well after their probation period is one of the most fulfilling experiences I've had)

Informant 5 in the individual interview shows the deep sense of purpose and fulfillment that a probation officer derives from their work. It expresses the joy and satisfaction that comes from witnessing their client's progress and success.

This emphasizes the core purpose of probation work: to help individuals make positive changes in their lives. The probation officer finds satisfaction in directly contributing to their client's rehabilitation and growth. It also emphasizes that their work is about more than just completing a task; it's about helping individuals build a better future.

Siguro an feeling of satisfaction at the same time labi na kun nakikita nimo nga ini hiya nga nag apply han probation nakgawas ha prisohan aadto na hiya together ht iya family. (IDI4: SS4)

(A feeling of satisfaction at the same time, especially when you see that the person who applied for probation has come out of prison and is now together with his family.)

Informant 4 in the individual interview shows the satisfaction and accomplishment that a probation officer feels when witnessing a client's successful reintegration into society, particularly when it involves a positive reunion with family. Probation officers play a significant role in helping individuals rebuild their lives and find path to a brighter future.

Doing probation work and assisting in the rehabilitation process can be rewarding. In this type of job, you play an active role in helping others rejoin society and find value and motivation to live a healthier lifestyle. This type of work can give you a deep sense of accomplishment in your job, and lead to higher rates of job satisfaction (Indeed, 2024). This study emphasizes the positive impact the probation work can have on both the probation officer and the client's they assist. It discusses the sense of purpose and accomplishment that comes from helping others turn their lives around.

Moreover, in order for positive outcomes to be achieved, it is important that the probation practitioner works alongside the individual, ensuring that whenever possible work is done 'with' and not 'to' the person under their supervision. A 'one size fits all' approach is unlikely to be successful and work needs to be tailored to meet individual needs and be personally meaningful (Mostafa, 2022). It states the importance of a humanistic and client-centered approach to probation work, recognizing individuals are complex and require personalized support to achieve positive change. It also emphasizes the needs for a

collaborative partnership between the probation officer and the client they are supporting.

A Probation Officer's Passion for Redemption. Probation work is not just any job, it is a vocation. The prize is the smile on their faces, a happy mother, or after years they remain grateful and they understand that whatever decision the Probation Officer made, they made it in the name of love for their clients. It is also the special friendship they build with those few colleagues (Attard, 2021).

It was like a strange word for me before when our facility head in Tagaytay who says that "everyday there is a miracle, a change of behavior, from person who is isolated, short tempered, disrespectful and what they call attitude of drug dependent. So, if you see this. change in people from that state to positive personality or behavior, you will be inspired to see the change. (IDI1: SS1)

In individual interview, Informant 1 highlights the deeply personal and rewarding nature of probation work. It emphasizes that probation work is not simply a career choice, but a calling. It requires a deep commitment to helping others and a strong belief in the possibility of rehabilitation. It's about more than a job; it's about making a difference in the lives of others and finding meaning in the work itself.

Labi na kun myda ka kuan parole or probationer na natagan hin Termination order, bagan feel nakon successful ako as a probation officer. (FGD1: SS20)

(Especially if you have a parolee or probationer who was given a Termination order, I feel like I'm successful as a probation officer.)

Significant statement 2 in the Focused Group Discussion states the fulfillment when a probationer has their supervision terminated because when a probationer successfully completes their term, it signifies that the officer's efforts have been effective. It also reflects the personal satisfaction and sense of achievement that comes from a client.

Probation officers were observed to be focused on encouraging positive behavior change. They adopted a constructive and responsive approach to work with offenders to make changes rather than focusing on compliance.

The probation officers, like many professionals, may experience ambivalence about changing their practices. While training can help reduce this ambivalence, the importance of addressing the staff concerns and fostering a supportive environment for change (Kamp et al., 2013). This suggest that while passion might not be explicitly measured, it is a factor that can be influenced by training, support, and organizational culture.

Furthermore, probation officers were also observed to act in a way likely to engage the offender, as demonstrated by their strong relationship building skills. They appeared interested in what the



offender had to say and remained respectful and friendly throughout the session (Parole and Probation Administration, 2025). This study found that probation officers were primarily focused on helping offenders change their behavior for the better, rather than the simply ensuring they comply with the terms of their probation. This signifies a move away from purely punitive a punitive approach towards a more rehabilitative one. By focusing on positive behavior change, adopting a constructive and responsive attitude, and building strong relationship with offenders, they are creating a more supportive and effective environment for rehabilitation.

Negative Experiences of Informants in Handling Probationers.

Struggles with Unmet Expectations. Probation officers often experience negative experiences when probationers struggle to meet their expectations. These expectations can relate to behavior, compliance with rules, program completion, or progress in rehabilitation. When probationers fail to meet these expectations, it can strain the relationship and lead to dissatisfaction on both sides (Fields, 2023).

Usa talaga nga dre ko makakalimtan nga kumbaga negative experience and traumatic experience para haakon an usa ka beses nga an akon client pag conduct ko hin random drug test, nag positive hiya. So karuyag signgon, despite han imo mga life coaching mga advices nadara la ghap hiya. (IDI4: SS4)

(There's one experience that I can never forget; it was negative and traumatic experience for me. It was when I conducted a random drug test on my client, and he tested positive. What I want to say is that despite your life coaching advice, he still ended up using it).

Informant 4 in the individual interview shows the common frustration for probation officers: the feeling of powerlessness when a probationer relapse despite their best efforts. It's a reminder that rehabilitation is a complex process, and even with the best life coaching and support, individuals may struggle with addiction or other challenges. The emotional labor involved in probation work, specifically focusing on the experiences of probation officers working with high-risk offenders. The relentless nature of this work, characterized by constant exposure to challenging situations, emotional demands, and the need to manage complex relationships with individuals who may be resistant to supervision or treatment (Westably et al., 2021).

The experience was traumatic for the probation officer, indicating the profound emotional impact of seeing a client relapse. It's a reminder that probation officers are not immune to the emotional weight of their work, and they can be deeply affected by the successes and failures of their clients.

This experience may lead the probation officer to question the effectiveness of their approach. It's natural to wonder if their life coaching strategies were sufficient, or if there were other factors contributing to the relapse.

An negative la is an mga hard headed nga clients an bisan ano nim nga pag bulig diri na mamati matig matig a it ulo diri ba na sugot kun ano it sugo it opisina bisan bisan e ane on one mo bisan kinag anak nga kaistorya diri na dara so that is ah bagan nakaka nakaka down ghapon. (IDI2: SS2) (Negative is the hard headed clients who don't listen to any of your help. They are stubborn and don't agree with what the office orders.)

Informant 2 in the individual interview shows dealing resistant clients who refuse to engage in the rehabilitation process. Dealing with resistant clients can be emotionally draining for probation officers. It can lead to feelings of frustration, exhaustion, and even burnout, as their efforts to help seems not effective. The problem of high caseloads for probation officers can lead to limited time and resources for individual clients, making it difficult to build rapport and address specific needs, especially with clients who are resistant or uncooperative (Chron, 2025).

Probation officers are often concerned about being held liable if a probationer re-offends, which can lead them to err on the side of caution and use more restricting supervision strategies (Viglione, 2018).

Further, probation officers may also experience frustration and disappointment when their expectations are not met. They may feel that their efforts to support and guide the probationer are not being valued or recognized. This can lead to a breakdown in communication and trust between the probation officer and the probationer, making it difficult to work together towards successful rehabilitation and reintegration.

Overall, struggles with unmet expectations can create a negative cycle of distrust, resentment, and disengagement in the probation relationship. It is important for probation officers to communicate clear expectations, provide support and guidance, and work collaboratively with probationers to address any challenges that may arise. By fostering a positive and constructive relationship, probation officers can help probationers overcome obstacles and achieve their goals.

Battle with Resistance. Battle with resistance reflects a common negative experience for probation officers, highlighting the frustration and disappointment that arise when working with probationers who repeatedly violate the terms of their probation, especially those struggling with substance abuse and relapse behaviors. This experience can lead to feelings of powerlessness, emotional exhaustion, and even burnout. Probation officers often experience a range of complex emotions when probationers violate conditions, including disappointment, frustration, and a sense of personal responsibility for the individual's actions (Jeung et al., 2018).

Para haakon it mga pasaway nainum, nagamit hin droga, balik iton nag relapse nagkakaroon ng relapse behavior. (FGD: SS1) (For me, those who are disobedient drink, use drugs, relapse and have relapse behavior.)



Significant statement number 1 in the focused group discussion indicates the disappointment of Probation Officer in their high hopes for their client's progress but ended up violating their probation terms again and again. One of the potentials for violence and safety threats faced by probation officers when dealing with clients who repeatedly violate probation rules can heighten these safety concerns, leading to feelings of anxiety and fear (Canning et al., 2025).

Moreover, this disobedience can manifest in various ways, creating a difficult and emotionally draining environment for officers. Probation Officers may feel frustrated and disappointed when their efforts to help are met with resistance.

Furthermore, probation officers often face limited resources, including insufficient staff, funding, and access to specialized services. This lack of resources can hinder their ability to effectively address the complex needs of probationers, particularly those with substance use or disorders or mental health issues. Probation officers working with clients who struggle with drug abuse face a unique set of challenges and stressors. Recognizing and addressing these stressors is crucial for supporting the well-being of probation officers in improving the effectiveness of probation service (Reichert & Gleicher, 2019).

The themes outlined above illustrate the personal experiences of the informants and highlight how their work in probation contributes to their personal growth and transformation into improved versions of themselves. Engaging with probationers can be gratifying at times. Nevertheless, the informants have recounted challenging experiences when dealing with probationers who are resistant to adhering to the conditions of their probation.

B. Challenges Encountered by the Probation Officers in Handling Probation

1. Struggle for Reach. Probation officers often have large caseloads, with clients dispersed across wide geographical areas (Muhlhausen, 2021). Traveling to remote locations for regular check-ins can be logistically difficult, consuming time and resources that could be allocated to other aspects of supervision.

Actually, iton amon as a probation officer it challenge talaga haagrayo, it makuri operingon. (IDI: SS2)

(Actually that's our challenge as a probation officer, the hard to operate areas.)

Informant 2 in the individual interview indicates the probation officer struggles in difficult to reach areas. Residents of these areas may face systemic barriers to success, such as poverty, lack of education, and limited social support networks, making it more challenging for probationers to comply with probation conditions.

We're definitely struggling with the budget. We're not well-funded, especially when it comes to rehabilitation. (IDI3: SS3)

Informant 3 in the individual interview shows the struggles the probation officer faced in handling probationers. This lack of

resources directly impacts their ability to effectively support probationers and promote successful reintegration into society. Inadequate funding for rehabilitation programs creates a significant challenge for probation officers, limiting their ability to provide essential services, manage their caseloads effectively, and ultimately, promote public safety. The lack of funding for probation department is a serious issue that has significant consequences for both probationers and the public. By addressing the financial challenges facing probation, states and countries can ensure that these programs have the resources they need to effectively support clients and promote public safety (Brett et al., 2020).

Further, this situation complicates their capacity to offer personalized attention and assistance to each probationer, thereby impeding their effectiveness in monitoring progress and addressing intricate needs. The lack of adequate funding contributes to a recurring cycle of re-offending, placing additional pressure on already scarce resources (Wallang & Taylor, 2018).

Furthermore, the absence of adequate funding contributes to a recurring cycle of re-offending. In the absence of sufficient support, individuals on probation often face heightens their likelihood of re-offending. This ongoing cycle places additional pressure on the already scarce resources, establishing a detrimental loop that necessitates further interventions and ultimately compromises the fundamental objectives of probation.

A Probation Officer's Battle with Trust.

Probationers may engage in deceptive behaviors to avoid detection or consequences, creating a climate of mistrust that hinders the officer's ability to effectively guide and support them (Wodahl et al., 2022). This can manifest in various ways, such as concealing drug use, failing to attend mandated appointments, or providing false information about their activities.

Nag-effort kat taspos nag bibinuwa ngay an tun a client.

(IDI2: SS2)

(I made an effort and then, the client was actually lying.)

Informant 2 in the individual interview indicates deception establishing obstacles in communication, complicating the efforts of officers to foster rapport and trust with their clients. This deceptive reporting presents a significant challenge for probation officers. It hinders their ability to accurately assess the probationer's progress, provide appropriate support, and intervene when necessary. The lack of trust creates a barrier to effective communication and cooperation, making it difficult to foster a genuine therapeutic relationship (Wodahl et al., 2022).

Moreover, dishonesty fosters an atmosphere of distrust, which complicates the officer's ability to establish an authentic therapeutic rapport with the probationer. This situation can obstruct communication, collaboration, and the overall success of rehabilitation initiatives. Dishonesty among probationers can significantly undermine the effectiveness of probation, creating a challenging environment for officers and hindering the success of



rehabilitation efforts. Research indicates that dishonesty can erode trust, hinder communication, and complicate the development of a therapeutic relationship between officer and probationer (Wallang & Taylor, 2018).

The previously mentioned themes illustrate the difficulties encountered by informants in managing probationers. These challenges provide a framework for addressing the intricacies of probationers' dishonesty, necessitating a profound comprehension of each individual's experiences, a dedication to fostering trust, and an openness to employing effective interventions that encourage positive transformation. Such an approach is vital for establishing a more efficient and compassionate probation system that facilitates successful reintegration and diminishes recidivism.

C. Coping Mechanisms of the Probation Officers in Addressing the Challenges Encountered in Handling Probationers.

Patience is a Virtue. It underscores the importance of patience in dealing with probationers, who often come from backgrounds of trauma, abuse, or systemic disadvantage, making their journeys towards rehabilitation complex and often fraught with setbacks. Probation officers often strive to develop an understanding of the complex social, economic, and personal factors that contribute to probationer's circumstances, recognizing that individuals' backgrounds and challenges can influence their behaviors and responses (Jannata & Widodo, 2024).

Im patience hilawagi talaga (FGD1:SS1) (Have a room for patience)

Significant statement 1 in the individual interview patience allows officers to approach these relationships with understanding and avoid reacting impulsively to difficult situations.

Moreover, probation by its very nature, is a process demanding patience. Probationers often come from backgrounds of trauma, addiction, or systemic disadvantages, making their journeys towards rehabilitation difficult and unpredictable. They may exhibit resistance, engage in deceptive behaviors, or experience relapses, testing the officer's commitment and requiring a steady hand.

Contain yourself relax lang panghawakan mo ang iyong sarili remember that what you are going to do to this client/ is the right intervention. (IDI1: SS1)

(Contain yourself relax just hold yourself remember that what you are going to do to this client/ is the right intervention.)

Informant 1 in the individual interview shows a potent reminder of the emotional and mental demands placed on probation officers, and the vital need for self-regulation in their challenging profession.

This emphasizes the need for self-control and emotional regulation. Probation officers often face difficult situations involving probationers with challenging behaviors, complex histories, or potential for conflict. The pressure to maintain

composure and avoid impulsive reactions is paramount. This containment is crucial for establishing a safe and productive environment for both the officer and the probationer. Patience is a crucial virtue for probation officers, as it allows them to effectively handle the complex and often challenging behaviors of probationers. Research highlights that patience fosters trust, enhances communication, and ultimately promotes positive outcomes in the rehabilitation process (Jannata & Widodo, 2024).

Further, by containing themselves, relaxing, and remembering their training, probation officers can maintain a balanced approach to their challenging work. This allows them to create a more supportive and effective environment for their probationers, fostering positive change and promoting successful reintegration into society. Probation officers who are able to demonstrate patience and trust are essential for the success of probation programs. This approach not only benefits probationers but also promotes public safety by reducing recidivism rates. It is crucial for probation departments to recognize the importance of building strong relationship and to provide officers with the training, resources, and support they need to effectively manage these complex cases (Epperson et al., 2020).

Journey to Self-Care. Journey implies that self-care is not a one-time event but an ongoing process requiring constant attention. Probation officers must actively engage in practices that support their mental, emotional, and physical health, integrating it into their daily lives as an integral part of their professional well-being (Wodahl et al., 2022).

Diri napadara hin stress. (IDI5: SS5)
(Does not give in to stress.)

Informant 5 in the individual interview conveys the resilience and mental fortitude required of a probation officer. It highlights a critical quality that allows them to navigate the demanding and often emotionally draining nature of their work, effectively supporting their probationers and maintaining their own well-being.

The officer's capacity to maintain composure and concentration enables them to provide unwavering support, even in the face of challenges or adverse circumstances. This steadiness is essential for the probationer's development, reflecting a dedication to their path toward meaningful transformation. By prioritizing physical and mental health, establishing boundaries, and fostering positive relationships, probation officers can better manage the stressors of their profession and provide effective services to their clients (Sturm et al., 2022).

Destressing (IDI4: SS4)

Informant 4 in the individual interview acknowledges the inherent emotional toll of their work while highlighting the vital importance of self-care as a means of navigating and mitigating those challenges.



Self-care is not a luxury for probation officers; it is a necessity for their well-being and the effectiveness of their work. By implementing self-care strategies and fostering a supportive work environment, probation departments can help ensure that officers are equipped to provide high-quality services and support to their clients while maintaining their own mental and emotional health (Wirus et al., 2021).

The afore-mentioned themes explore the Probation officer's way of addressing challenges that arises in their profession. It indicates the importance of self-care and long patience for them to enable create a more supportive and effective system for their clients.

D. Aspirations of the Probation Officers in the Performance of Their Duties

The Seeds of Change. It captures a powerful aspiration of a probation officer, suggesting a deep-seated belief in the potential for transformation within their clients. It speaks to the hope and optimism they hold for each probationer, envisioning them blossoming into more constructive and fulfilling lives. Probation officers often harbor an aspiration for change in their positive transformation and working to guide them towards a path of rehabilitation and reintegration into society (Pendang & Nabe, 2024).

Syempre, maging maupay hira tanan (probationer). (IDI2: SS2)
 (Ofcourse, well to all probationers)

Informant 2 in the significant statement 2 reflects the aspiration of Probation officers to promote a positive transformation in their clients, aligning their work with core principles of restorative justice and effective rehabilitation practices. Building trust is important for justice systems legitimate positions of authority such as probation officers (Sloas et al., 2020).

It shows hopeful message, conveying the probation officer's desire for the probationers to succeed in their rehabilitation journey. It might be used to encourage positive change and express belief in their potential for improvement.

Syempre imo man gud goal pa ha mga client nga makahuman hira hit ira supervision without committing any other offence nga waray hira maka violate, amu man gud pinaka goal namun. (IDI4: SS4)

(But of course your real goal is for clients to be able to complete their supervision without committing any other offense that they haven't violated, that's our real goal)

Informant 4 in the individual interview reveals the core aspiration of Probation officers to facilitate successful reintegration of probationers into society. This aspiration goes beyond simply enforcing rules and monitoring behavior; it emphasizes reducing recidivism and promoting positive change in the lives of those under their supervision. Probationers who reported a more positive helping alliance with their officers evidenced lower

recidivism rates of probation violations and new charges (Wild, 2011).

Moreover, the Probation officer desires to see their clients not simply avoid trouble, but to achieve a state of genuine transformation. This suggests a belief in the potential for their clients to reintegrate into society as responsible and law-abiding individuals.

Funding Probation for a Better Future. It is a powerful call to action, highlighting the crucial role that adequate funding plays in achieving a more just and restorative justice system. While it directly refers to financial resources, it implicitly speaks to the broader aspirations of probation officers, emphasizing the need for support and investment in their work to create a better future for both probationers and society as a whole. Many probation officers express a deep aspiration for increased funding for probation programs, believing that greater resources would allow them to more effectively support their probationers and achieve better outcomes (Jannata & Widodo, 2024).

Significant statement 1 in the focused group discussion reveals a critical challenge faced by probation officers: inadequate resources and funding. This challenge directly impedes their ability to fulfill their aspirations for successful probationer reintegration.

Moreover, it indicates how lack of funding directly impacts the effectiveness of probation. Without adequate resources, probation officers struggle to provide essential services and support that are crucial for successful rehabilitation. This aligns with the search results that emphasize the importance of human services in community supervision. The lack of funding creates a service gap that leaves many probationers without the support they need.

We are lack of supplies, as of now. (IDI1:SS1)

Informant 1 in the individual interview indicates the shortage of funds that directly impacts their ability to reintegrate probationer to become a law-abiding citizen. Probation officers often operate within a challenging environment of limited resources, facing inadequate funding, insufficient staffing, and a lack of access to crucial support services for their probationers, creating obstacles to effective rehabilitation and reintegration (Pendang & Nabe, 2024).

Further, this highlights how lack of funding directly impacts the effectiveness of probation. Without adequate resources, Probation officers struggle to provide essential services and support that are crucial for successful rehabilitation. The low salaries for probation officers, which are significantly less than lower than other law enforcement agencies in cities and this disparity makes it difficult to recruit and retrain talented professionals, leading to a shortage of officers and further straining the system (Holden, 2023).

The above-mentioned themes indicate the probation officer's aspiration for a better environment for them and for probationers.



Their aspiration includes the well-being of the probationer and the increased investments of funds for the probation officer to ensure the officers have the resources they need to effectively support probationers and promote successful reintegration outcomes.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The complex roles probation officers play to ensure the rehabilitation of probationers and their successful reintegration into society underscore the vital, albeit complex function that probation officers fulfill in the processes of rehabilitation and reintegration of probationers. Although, these professionals derive considerable personal fulfillment from assisting individuals in their transformation into contributing members of society, such rewards are accompanied by considerable emotional and logistical difficulties.

Probationers also resist the efforts of probation officers and frequently relapse into old habits, of which substance use and abuse is now rampant. This causes the officers concerned to feel frustrated and doomed to failure as they heavily invest in counseling and guidance. Many others are constrained by very scarce resources, working in remote areas with minimal facilities, which further hinders their effectiveness and adds to the stress of the role.

The probation officers' underlines inadequate funding and resource allocation as limiting officer capacity to perform their duties efficiently. Such challenges can be more pronounced in rural settings, where officers have to oversee long stretches of territories, often with scarce support. The psychological impact of these demands, coupled with a lack of mental health resources, greatly contributes to burnout among the officers.

Notwithstanding these challenges, probation officers continue to exhibit a strong commitment to their purpose, deriving both personal and professional satisfaction from their roles in society. This dedication highlights the probation officers' necessity for enhanced training, additional resources, and psychological support, all of which would bolster their efficacy and resilience.

Since challenges still exist and the probation officers' experiences described the difficulties and rewards involved in their profession. It would suffice if probation officers were allowed to "enforce and rehabilitate simultaneously," making sure that all of them have an adequate staff, a concern for mental health, and training opportunities against the constraints of scarce resources. Recommendations included developing and implementing tailored rehabilitation programs, providing transportation support for officers working in remote areas, increasing collaboration with POs, securing funding for rehabilitation and transportation services, offering training for officers in conflict management, emotional regulation, and trauma-informed care and expanding resources for rehabilitation services.

Although the study was conducted in the province of Leyte, Philippines, the results have potential implications for the current and future plans of other Parole and Probation Offices in the Philippines to look into the lived experiences and challenges encountered by the probation officers in handling probationers. Moreover, further studies are encouraged to be conducted to develop innovative intervention programs targeted at both the needs of probation officers and probationers. Also, to enhance rehabilitation services and strengthen the capacity of probation officers in handling probationers towards the full reintegration into the community.

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