




## Research Article

### EXAMINING THE PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY'S (PDLs) PARTICIPATION, PERCEPTION, AND SATISFACTION ON THE THERAPEUTIC COMMUNITY MODALITY PROGRAM OF BJMP CAUAYAN CITY USING MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

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#### ABSTRACT



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The fulfillment of human needs is one of the motivations for the optimal functioning of an individual. Maslow suggests that when these needs are unfulfilled, individuals may resort to frustrated actions. In penitentiary institutions, there exists a challenge to its fulfillment, which has impacted the reformation of PDLs. In this study, the researchers utilized a qualitative descriptive research design to determine if the Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP) fulfills the needs of the PDLs. A semi-structured interview guide was crafted, and ethical considerations were strictly followed. The results show that in the TCM Program, PDLs serve as peer counselors, trustees, spiritual networkers, and Therapeutic Community (TC) leaders. Being in the said program, the PDLs experienced behavioral reformation, change in perspective, and spiritual recovery. The result also indicates that the PDLs' needs according to Maslow's theory were fulfilled in the implementation of TCMP especially in their physiological and esteem needs. However, such fulfillment indicates self-efficacy and social desirability bias. In terms of the impact of TCMP as a rehabilitating tool, it is perceived by the PDLs as a program with desirable results since it inculcates positive impacts. Conversely, this study also recognizes that PDLs receive negative criticism while undergoing the TCM Program.

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#### 1. Introduction

Crime is a universal and ever-present situation. It is the most severe obstacle to people's existence, and it is not a new phenomenon but came even with society's earliest inception. Crime, criminals, and criminality have affected human life, property, and liberty (Singh, 2020).

According to the World Prison Brief (2021), there are over 11 million people imprisoned across the globe. It was noted that crime rates were high in the areas and neighborhoods with overpopulation and unemployment. It is a serious concern for all residing in the country, particularly larger cities (Sanidad-Leones, 2019). The National Capital Region, which is densely populated, has the highest crime rate in the country. 2018, the region's average monthly crime rate was 90 per 100,000 people (Caba-ong, 2019).

Due to the increasing number of admitted PDLs in prison annually, numerous problems emerge in jail facilities, including but not limited to congestion, which affects the reformation of the PDLs. Congestion in jail was found to affect the fulfillment of needs, which demotivates the participation of the PDLs in rehabilitative programs. According to Bersamina et al. (2021), prison has negative repercussions, including the loss of physical liberty and the depravity of the needs and other aspects of an individual's optimal functioning. The actual pain is from the frustrations or privations that have occurred from the loss of freedom, such as the absence of heterosexual relationships,

segregation from the free community, withholding of goods and services, and so on.

Hence, in a penitentiary institution, the fulfillment of the needs of the PDLs is required to motivate their effective rehabilitation. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, PDLs in correctional institutions require various necessities to live normally (Maryani et al., 2022). Unmet needs can lead to indecision, anger, or anxiety, prompting individuals to take action to satisfy them. These needs stem from internal drives triggered by external stimuli, including basic organic needs like eating, sleeping, and sex. Maryani et al. (2022) identified four critical impulses: hunger, sex, fear of the unknown, and the need for praise, which are sociogenic urges such as the desire for acceptance and love. Gillin and Gillin (as cited in Maryani et al., 2022) referred to these as the "primary drives" for breathing, eating, drinking, and resting.

This raises concerns about whether the Therapeutic Community Modality Program meets their needs based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. To address this, researchers studied the participation, experiences, perceptions, and satisfaction of PDLs at BJMP Cauayan City District Jail using Maslow's theory. The researchers emphasized the conditions of jail facilities in a non-urban area like Cauayan City, Isabela, to provide a contextualized comparison with urban jails.

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## 2. Methods

The researchers utilized a qualitative descriptive approach to understand the implementation of the Therapeutic Community Modality Program comprehensively. The researchers emphasized the importance of the perspectives and insights of PDLs for evaluating the research objectives. A semi-structured interview guide was created and reviewed by a panel of experts to ensure the study's validity. This guide was also examined by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology Regional Office to ensure it met BJMP policies in conducting research. The study received approval from the regional office, and voluntary consent was obtained from the participating PDLs. Seven PDLs—three (3) women and four (4) men—who had been in rehabilitation for over two years were selected as participants due to their extensive experience with the daily activities of the TCMP.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1 Participation of PDLs in the implementation of the Therapeutic Community Modality Program

In implementing the TCM Program, it was revealed that a hierarchical structure exists through which PDLs support jail personnel. The results show that PDLs share responsibilities as peer counselors, trustees, spiritual network members, and TC leaders. In TCMP, the PDL community serves as a source of motivation for reformation, taking on roles as peer counselors who provide advice and guidance to their co-PDLs. It also indicates that PDLs create a supportive community to foster behavioral and attitudinal change, especially during morning sessions and exercise activities. PDLs correct the wrongdoings of their peers, aligning with Yates et al. (2021), which highlights the effectiveness of peers as role models in demonstrating the philosophy and values of the TC. Thus, peer counselors positively influence their co-PDLs by instilling TCM principles and philosophy to them.

Secondly, PDLs also function as trustees. Trusteeship is a common practice in numerous correctional facilities, where PDLs are granted privileges in return for their roles and responsibilities, aiding the prison staff in program implementation. Alvarez and Dundao (2024) found that PDLs take on leadership roles, maintain dorm order, and coordinate with BJMP management. This position secures the program's continued implementation as they mechanize to support the insufficient number of TC jail implementers. Due to the limited number of jail personnel Cauayan City, PDLs were entrusted with supervising the various activities under TCMP.

The third role is that of PDLs as spiritual networkers. In implementing TCMP, PDLs are mobilized as sharers of biblical reflections in their concept of the day and leaders during their religious sessions. The study of Sutphin (2021) provides that spiritual networks within the rehabilitation institution play a crucial role, especially in helping PDLs reflect on spiritual teachings. Thus, the aim of the spiritual network is to integrate religious concepts in rehabilitation so that PDLs can restore their religious beliefs and inculcate change in their misbehaviors.

Lastly, TC leaders play a role as program implementers. Some of the TC leaders were tasked to ensure the preparation for effective implementation of activities in their institution. Respondent 7 shares, "*As a TC leader, I make plans on how to do the activities.*" (Respondent 7, personal communication, March 8, 2024). Significantly, allowing PDLs to have roles in implementing TC develops confidence and self-worth. As supported by Nario-Lopez (2020), leadership can help prisoners build their self-worth. TC leaders find impact in their positions because they are given trust and acquire the ability to mold and implement programs.

### 3.2 Experiences of Persons Deprived of Liberty under the Therapeutic Community Modality Program

The interviews indicated that the program significantly resulted to behavioral reformation as perceived by the PDLs, demonstrating how the modality influenced them. Respondents in this study have reflected on their attitudes outside the prison compared to their present situations indicating that they have better attitudes. It is important to note that the PDLs in this study may have exhibited social desirability, meaning they likely presented attitudes and behaviors they believed the interviewers would find favorable to avoid making the interviewers uncomfortable. The responses suggest that PDLs have undergone behavioral reformation driven by a desire for social acceptance and belonging. This desire for change is motivated by their aim to alleviate societal fear and discrimination and to foster community acceptance despite the jail's negative reputation.

Significantly, Respondent 5 contradicts the perceived behavioral reformation, stating that some PDLs still became shameless and fearless. The data above reflects each individual's assessment during their reformation process. It supports the belief that every PDL has experienced behavioral changes compared to their previous behaviors and attitudes. Saguran (2023) supports this finding, stating that the attitudes and behavior of PDLs are central to rehabilitation and take time and effort to reform due to their diverse backgrounds. Therefore, behavioral management, alongside emotional and psychological programs, is crucial since problematic attitudes and behaviors are common issues leading to the imprisonment of PDLs. However, PDLs becoming more audacious and shameless indicates a significant risk of adopting negative attitudes and behaviors, potentially leading to the failure of the reformation program and increased recidivism.

Aside from the perceived behavioral reformation, PDLs also experienced changes in their perspective. The study shows that PDLs have presented reformation in terms of their mindset. They have reflected the fulfillment of a productive and abiding law citizen, which they didn't realize its importance outside their incarceration. This is supported by the study of Deleon (2021), which states that TC has adopted a recovery orientation focusing on changing the life perspective of PDLs. However, Respondent 3 indicates resistance losing the belief in the effectiveness of their reformation. In this case, PDLs lose hope in reformation, which demotivates their participation. This is the case with the PDLs who have been incarcerated for a long time.

Consistently, religious programs had brought significant experiences to the PDLs, as shown in Respondent 5's response, "*When I underwent TC, I always kept the bible in mind and learned more about God*" (Respondent 5, personal communication, March 8, 2024) and Respondent 6 also stated "*because of TC, I have tried to lead a prayer*" (Respondent 6, personal communication, March 8, 2024). Dioses et al. (2019) found that the program helps PDLs develop a positive outlook and strengthen their beliefs through spiritual activities like sharing a "verse of the day." Villafuerte (2024) adds that spiritual programs provide a sense of solace and support, aiding PDLs in connecting with something more significant and facilitating life changes.

On the other hand, PDLs also share hardships inside the jail as they have faced difficulty adjusting. Accordingly, PDLs show difficulty in adjusting to their life inside the prison, indicating the different environment and their frustrations from their separation from their families. Corroborated to Quandt and Jones (2021) found that separation from family and friends was a major stressor for incarcerated persons, leading to significant psychological suffering. Many PDLs considered this separation the worst aspect of their incarceration. Thus, the transition from freedom to

incarceration has severe consequences, particularly on PDLs' mental health. Their struggles are mainly due to separation from family and the current jail environment.

### 3.3 Perception of PDLs about TCMP in addressing their needs according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

In a jail facility, the loss of freedom complicates the fulfillment of individual needs, impacting functioning and motivation for reformation. In the study, PDLs indicated fulfillment based on:

#### 3.3.1 Physiological Needs

In line with Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, "A person who lacks food, safety, love, and esteem would probably hunger for food more strongly than anything else." Thus, food is a valuable commodity for basic human survival, which, when fulfilled, motivates the PDLs to satisfy their more complex needs in the hierarchy. The respondents convey that they are provided with food three times a day, which indicates the effective delivery of basic needs. Their small population influences this perceived fulfillment in the provision of food. Accordingly, it is the jail program under the Inmates Welfare and Development Program (IWDP) to ensure that PDLs are provided with their basic needs, as it is important for their reformation and ensuring the respect of their human rights. Hamid (2014) supports this claim, stating that food-related and physical conditions are obligations of the government to fulfill. On the contrary, only one respondent has claimed that PDLs need not be choosy about the food that the jail personnel serve. This indicates that PDLs have diverse economic and financial backgrounds outside the prison, presenting different satisfaction regarding the quality of food served to them.

Consequently, the PDLs perceived satisfaction in their dormitories as they were provided with spacious and individual bedding. PDLs have acquired enough sleep throughout the night since all their reformation activities are conducted during the day. However, Respondent 4 highlights that despite their individual beddings, they face problems inside the jail, such as bedbug infestations, which may be influenced by the hygiene of PDLs and the cleanliness of dormitories. Significantly, the PDLs' perceived satisfaction in the delivery of hygiene needs stating that they have monthly supplies for their toiletries referred to as "bureau." However, Respondent 5 also highlights some challenges with the sufficiency of supplies provided, stating that they have livelihood programs to supply their needs once it fell short. Thus, despite the fulfillment of individual beddings and the supply of toiletries, the infestation of bedbugs is influenced by the personal hygiene of the PDLs.

The findings also highlight sexual pleasures as basic needs of the PDLs. The result of the study would show that all respondents were separated from their spouses. Hence, despite the presence of conjugal room for marital obligations, the PDLs cannot fulfill their sexual needs due to their separations. However, this highlights that PDLs affirmed that a lack of sexual needs does not hinder their normal function as individuals.

#### 3.3.2 Safety Needs

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1950), fulfilling needs means feeling safe in one's surroundings, environment, thinking, and the people around one. The fulfillment of the safety needs of the PDLs presents prominence in establishing rules and regulations and respecting human rights. This finding indicates that PDLs perceive safety, especially in the absence of inhumane treatment, such as assaults and maltreatment from their peers and even the jail personnel. The jail has been known for its bad reputation, and the need for safety by the PDLs is maintained by keeping them safe from any form of assault that endangers their

life and rights. This finding, collaborated by Yahayah (2017), suggests that adults have limited awareness of their security needs, except during emergencies or periods of social disorganization.

This also presents safety in terms of injury caused by calamities and financial burdens. The PDLs perceived the monthly inspections of dormitories by the jail personnel and the conducting of earthquake drills as effective means of preparation to instill safety during earthquakes. However, PDLs express concern regarding the wet floors caused by the rain, which can be a potential source of injury. It undermines the perceived safety of the PDLs in their respective jail dormitories as it can be a potential source of injury and even a loss of life. Hence, this indicates BJMPs failure to ensure safety in the penitentiary. The study by Wozny (2017) states that penitentiary institutions must be responsible for ensuring occupational health and safety. The desired state in this respect is created by the jail authorities as they are entrusted with the safety of PDLs.

The jail alleviated financial problems through income-generating programs and ongoing family support. PDLs find these initiatives effective in earning income and reducing financial stress. The findings align with Cañizares (2021), who states that livelihood programs help PDLs earn money, allowing them to financially support themselves and their families. Thus, establishing livelihood programs has allowed PDLs to sustain their daily needs.

#### 3.3.3 Love and Belongingness

The TCM program mobilizes the community for the practical reformation of the PDLs. It builds a sense that everyone is a part of the community and should feel cared for, loved, and belong. In the interviews, Respondents displayed love and belonging, which they perceived to strengthen their relationships within their community. Respondents 7, 4, 3, 2, and 1 stated, "Inside the prison, we treat each other like a family" (Respondents 7,4,3,2 and 1, personal communication, March 8, 2024). In a reformation facility segregating PDLs by biological sex rather than gender identity, discrimination is common. However, there are indications of established respect, community inclusion, and the abolition of gender identity-based rejection. This helps mitigate alienation and loneliness by promoting connections and mutual support during challenging times, fostering a sense of family and community among PDLs.

#### 3.3.4 Esteem Needs

The study presents Leadership Responsibility and Compliments to Small Achievements, which led to the fulfillment of esteem needs perceived by the PDLs. Two respondents are responsible for ensuring the program's smooth implementation due to their effectiveness as leaders. They viewed compliments on their achievement. In relation to this, giving certificates and tokens to ALS beneficiaries in their graduating has been found to develop their esteem needs. Maslow's theory highlights esteem needs that involve desires for responsibility, capability, and achievement.

#### 3.3.5 Cognitive Needs

The BJMP, in implementing the TCMP, partners with government institutions in providing programs such as ALS and TESDA to help PDLs expand their knowledge and develop their talents and capabilities. The study presents the perceived fulfillment of PDLs in the ALS program as part of the intellectual and spiritual component of TCMP. Respondents perceived that the ALS program helped them expand their knowledge, especially since most of them are elementary and high school undergraduates. However, some PDLs indicate that their



participation in the program is only for the time allowance provided through GCTA and to help them ease their boredom. Ondras et al. (2022) state that the Good Conduct Time Allowance (GCTA) encouraged PDLs to participate in the Alternative Learning System to reduce their sentences. This finding may be motivated due to their age as some recipients are old enough to find it hard to grasp what they are learning.

### 3.3.6 Aesthetic Needs

Recycling waste materials has been perceived to motivate the pursuit of PDLs in expanding creativity and aesthetics. This supports the idea of McLeod (2021), which suggests that aesthetics needs to beautify one's life. This would consist of appreciating the beauty within the world around oneself daily. Thus, the appreciation of PDLs in pursuit of their aesthetic needs was achieved by integrating them into vocational programs, which also expanded the livelihood of PDLs.

### 3.3.7 Self-Actualization

The pursuit of actualization was perceived by the respondent as part of their behavioral reformation. Maslow suggests that self-actualizing individuals have a strong sense of purpose and can create meaningful relationships. In this study, the PDLs have fostered deep relationships as they share a common community and a desirable purpose of reforming. However, this does not clearly provide an indication of actualization. Maslow provides that actualization comes from a spontaneous nature, true to oneself rather than how others want. Hence, there is no evidence of self-actualization among PDLs. Being in a regulated facility limits their freedom to choose and act since they must follow a precise set of rules and regulations that govern their behavior.

### 3.3.8 Self-Transcendence

Self-transcendence is the progress of the individual self, which transcends from its older form and revolves around mental, physical, and spiritual aspects. According to Maslow (1950), "the logic of self-transcendence is based on humility and respect for the mystery we did not create." In this study, PDLs perceived that serving God has brought significant experiences and reflection toward their reformation. It indicates that TCMP religious activities have pushed the PDLs to regain faith in supernatural beings. Therefore, the transcendence of the PDLs inculcates PDLs to generate meanings in their life. In pursuit of their complete reformation, they develop a relationship with God and others. Therefore, the spiritual programs of TCMP have inculcated spiritual awakening, reflected in their behavioral and emotional reformation.

## 3.4 Satisfaction of PDLs with the Therapeutic Community Modality Program

The study's findings present the PDLs' satisfaction with the reformation program. The gathered data indicates that PDLs were satisfied with the implementation of the TCM Program, manifested in the response of Respondent 1, stating that "*it is a complete package here, the TC will change you as a person, they will teach you how to interact properly, and lastly, they will help you to learn from all of your mistakes*" (Respondent 1, personal communication, March 8, 2024). As shown, the perceived satisfaction was a product of their belief in seeking behavioral change. Additionally, Respondent 3 shared, "*I am satisfied because it affected my life. It never brought me negative thoughts about being in jail, and TCMP taught me how to embrace my situation despite being in jail.*" Thus, the satisfaction of the PDLs with their reformation was due to the visible change in their behaviors, including their emotions and psychology. The study of Virtuzado

and Dausan (2021) confirms this result, stating that implementing TC emphasizes behavioral management. Clients were also thought to control and release their behaviors to improve their emotional and physiological attitudes.

### 3.5 Impacts of TCMP on the daily lives of the PDLs

The PDLs consider that undergoing TCMP has produced benefits impacting their lives. It provides short- and long-term learning, which they can apply once released into a free society. The findings of this study present the impacts of TCMP. Based on the results, Behavioral Change was the prominent result of reformation as perceived by the respondents. Mario (2019) supports this finding by claiming that behavioral management is particularly beneficial as it focuses on modifying the negative behaviors of the PDLs. However, Respondent 2 presents a contradicting idea stating that "*In my 11 years here, what I think is to get revenge, I want to get revenge for what happened because I know in myself what is the truth.*" (Respondent 2, personal communication March 8, 2024). This finding significantly manifests in the study of Balafoutas et al. (2020), in which they assert that there is a lack of investigation into the effectiveness of reformation tools in re-integrating pro-social behavior once they are released from prison. Thus, the ability of PDLs to internalize these learnings and their tendency not to commit crimes once released ultimately depends on the discernment of the PDLs.

Additionally, regarding inculcating value restoration to the PDLs, religious activities have been seen as motivation on the perceived impact of TCMP as it inculcates spiritual awakening among the respondents. The spiritual awakening experienced by PDLs can be attributed to the consistent and focused nature of the religious programs offered. These programs often include regular worship services, Bible studies, prayer meetings, and other forms of spiritual guidance that help PDLs reconnect with their faith. This consistent engagement provides a foundation for developing a deeper spiritual understanding and commitment.

On the contrary, the result highlights the negative impact of reformation. As experienced by Respondent 3, "*We are being criticized. They have a lot of assumptions that since we are PDLs, there are no chances of hope for us to change; instead of motivating us, they tend to look at us as hopeless. Others think we cannot absorb the program*" (Respondent 3, personal communication, March 8, 2024). The respondent reported receiving criticism during their time in the TCM program, adversely affecting their engagement in rehabilitative activities and leading to demotivation. This negative feedback raises concerns about its potential impact on the reformation process for PDLs, as it can hinder their motivation and participation in essential rehabilitative programs. Treatment success is dependent not only on the individual's motivation but also on "environmental [factors] and by the skills and attributes of the therapist." (Gideon, 2010). In essence, a person's level of motivation is influenced by external circumstances and interactions with people rather than their internal power.

## 4. Conclusion and future works

This study examines PDL participation in the Therapeutic Community Modality Program. It was found that PDLs were mobilized as Peer counselors, Trustees, Spiritual networks, and TC Leaders. The lived experiences of PDLs present to inculcate behavioral reformation, change in perspective, and spiritual recovery. PDLs perceived TCMP as effective for fostering collective reformation through structural order and active involvement. However, it is worth noting that the reformation of the PDLs in this study was self-assessed since the program does not evaluate pro-social behavior or moral discernment. Using Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, the study finds that physiological,

safety, love, belongingness, and esteem needs are generally met, with gaps in sexual needs and some safety issues like flooring hazards. Only PDLs without basic education receive academic enhancement, while the program successfully promotes creativity and income through aesthetics. Self-actualization and transcendence needs are unmet. Overall, PDLs are satisfied with TCMP, indicating a positive outlook on the program's impact on them.

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