



## PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY (PDL): A SCOPE ASSESSMENT ON DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, STRESS AND COPING STRATEGY IN ILIGAN CITY

Jalani M. Hadjinassef<sup>1</sup>, Chyler H. Lachica<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jalanimangondaya.hadjinassef@my.smciligan.edu.ph,

<sup>2</sup>chylerhatague.lachica@my.smciligan.edu.ph

St. Michael's College of Iligan, Inc., College of Arts & Sciences, Department of  
Psychology Quezon Avenue, Iligan City, Philippines

### ABSTRACT

This study explores the mental health and coping strategies of Persons Deprived Of Liberty (PDLs) in Iligan City, focusing on their experiences with depression, Anxiety, and stress, as well as the coping mechanisms they use. The primary aim is to assess the psychological well-being of PDLs and identify the strategies they employ to manage the challenges of incarceration. A descriptive correlational design was used, with a sample of one hundred PDLs from Barangay Tipanoy, Iligan City, selected through purposive sampling. These participants completed a Face-to-face survey that assessed levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, along with coping strategies, including problem-focused, emotion-focused, and Avoidant coping. The findings revealed significant gender differences in coping Mechanisms, with females more likely to use problem-focused and emotion-Focused strategies compared to males. While PDLs generally reported low levels Of depression, occasional feelings of sadness and downheartedness were noted, Suggesting some resilience. Although most participants appeared to manage stress effectively, instances of agitation and overreaction indicated a need for continued support and resources. Additionally, the study found that PDLs predominantly engaged in problem-focused coping, indicating an active and adaptive approach to managing stressors. These findings underscore the importance of targeted mental health interventions for incarcerated individuals.

**Keywords:** *persons deprived of liberty, depression, anxiety, stress, coping mechanism*

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### 1.0 Introduction



The Philippine Correction System is one aspect of the country that is responsible for the confinement, supervision, and rehabilitation of individuals who have been found guilty of committing a crime. The system is overseen by the Bureau of Corrections, which operates several prisons and correctional facilities throughout the country. Much research has studied the current situation of the corrections in the country and based on the results, different problems and challenges are being faced by the system, especially with regards to the welfare of the prisoners. Events such as imprisonment can be significantly stressful to an individual and can change a person's biophysical balance to the extent that it affects the ability of a person to cope with reality (Thomas, 2021).

Many studies in general have provided the relationship between coping mechanisms and mental health problems. According to them, the stronger the coping styles are, the less mental health struggles an individual can experience (Han, et. al., 2023). However, coping mechanisms vary depending on the individual. This research aims to determine and assess the experiences of Persons deprived of liberty (PDL) regarding depression, anxiety, and stress that they experience in prison. Specifically, this research aims to understand the coping mechanisms of the participants in dealing with mental health problems such as those previously mentioned in this paper and assess its relationship with the level of stress, depression, and anxiety felt by the respondents.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**



This study aims to determine the relationship between Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) and its underlying effects. To be more specific, this study would focus on the experience of the detainees if being detained brings them depression, anxiety, and stress and know about how they deal with it. The researchers would use purposive sampling to select the respondents who are detained.

## 2.0 Methods

### The Respondents

Table 1:

#### *Distribution of Respondents*

Gender	No. of Respondents
Male	79
Female	21
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>100</u></b>

The sample size for this study would be 100 with the respondents drawn from the BJMP Iligan City Jail, and it would be limited to those who are incarcerated. The participants were restricted to a specific demographic profile,



and age. Lastly, the respondent's availability and accessibility would also be taken into consideration.

### **Statistical Treatment of the Data**

These are basic and inferential statistical tools appropriate to the nature of the data sets gathered. These are the following:

**Frequency and Percent.** These basic descriptive statistical tools were used to describe the respondents' profiles. Thus, to describe them the most frequent observation is considered using frequency and percentage equivalent.

**Mean and Standard Deviation.** These basic statistical tools were used to describe and measure the average location and variation of the respondents' psycho-emotional state and coping mechanism.

**Mann-Whitney U test.** This tool is more appropriate to test significant differences among independent categories in the profile of the respondents.

**Shapiro-Wilk test** yielded significant results of the data sets in the subscales of psycho-emotional state and coping mechanism. This led the researcher to reject the null hypothesis stating that the data sets are normally distributed. This means that the normality distributions were not satisfied. These results allowed the researcher to utilized the non-parametric test for differences of observed rating scores among respondents' self-assessment.

**Spearman (rho) Rank Correlation.** This tool is more appropriate since this does not require the normality of the distribution of the data sets with few tied ranks. This is because the distributional shape of the data sets involved in the testing relationship between the respondents' psycho-emotional state and coping mechanism were not normally distributed.

### 3.0 Results and Discussion

**Problem #1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex and age range?**

**Table 1**

*Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile (n = 100)*

Profile		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	79	79.0
	Female	21	21.0
Age Level	18 - 21 Years Old	8	8.0
	22 Years Old and Up	92	92.0

The distribution of the respondents in terms of demographic profile shows that in terms of sex, male are many taking to seventy nine (79) percent while women are twenty one (21) percent. In this case, men are more over women.

In the aspect of age, twenty two (22) years old and up got the most high than eighteen to twenty one (18-21) years old. Hence, most of the respondents were in the legal age.

Based on the results, the demographic profile shows a significant majority of adult males which implies that most persons deprived of liberty falls within

these demographics. Shawn (2019) stated that men are more likely to be imprisoned because they commit more crimes and majority of violent crime is done by men, and it is more likely to result in incarceration than other types of crime.

. **Problem #2. What is the respondent's level of psycho-emotional state in terms of depression, anxiety, and stress**

**Table 2**

*Summary of Respondents' Level of Psycho-Emotional State*

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Depression	0.00	13.00	4.30	3.14	<i>Normal</i>
Anxiety	0.80	16.00	4.53	3.02	<i>Normal</i>
Stress	0.00	14.00	5.29	2.62	<i>Normal</i>

The table above displays the overall means of each factor of psycho-emotional state of persons deprived of liberty. In the depression scale where its overall mean is 4.30, interpreted as “normal”. Whereas the anxiety scale has

overall mean of 4.53, labeled as “normal”. Lastly, the level for stress indicates an overall mean score of 5.29 and interpreted as “normal”.

The findings for sadness, anxiety, and stress show that respondents maintain a consistent psycho-emotional state defined by resilience and efficient coping techniques. Wu et. al (2020) exhibited that psychological resilience and



coping methods have been linked to a variety of psychological and mental health concerns.

The mean scores for each category are within a normal range, indicating that, while individuals may experience occasional emotional distress, the majority are in a positive emotional state. According to the study of Cunha et. al (2019), prison sentences have a neutral or criminogenic effect on recurrence and have a significant impact on prisoners' mental health, preventing successful reintegration into society and recidivism. There is a significant prevalence of mental health illnesses among criminals, but little is known about how imprisonment perpetuates and/or worsen these symptoms

**Problem #3. Is there a significant difference on the level of DASS when grouped according to their profile?**

**Table 3**

*Significant Differences in the Level of the Respondents' Psycho-Emotional State When Grouped According to Profile*

	Profile	Depression		Anxiety		Stress	
		Mean	QI	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
<b>Sex</b>	Male	4.14	Normal	4.29	Normal	5.16	Normal
	Female	4.90	Normal	5.43	Normal	5.76	Normal
<b>Mann Whitney U-Value</b>		727		682		712	
<b>p-value</b>		.385		.210		.318	
<b>Age Level</b>	18 – 21 Years Old	5.13	Normal	4.63	Normal	5.88	Normal
	22 Years Old and Up	4.23	Normal	4.52	Normal	5.24	Normal
<b>Mann Whitney U-Value</b>		317		353		368	
<b>p-value</b>		.515		.848		.999	

Among persons deprived of liberty (PDLs), depression, anxiety, and stress were noted to be normal, with no significant differences found between among sex. This shows that psycho-emotional support programs focused at lowering depression, anxiety, and stress can be developed for all PDLs, independent of gender. Similarly, there were no significant variations between the psycho-emotional states of younger and older PDLs, with both groups shown to be normal in terms of despair, anxiety, and stress.

This conclusion means that mental health interventions can be designed for all PDLs without making age-specific modifications.

**Problem #4. What is the level of coping mechanism of the respondents in terms of problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant coping?**

**Table 4**

*Summary of Respondents' Level of Coping Mechanism*

Scoring Scale	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Problem Focused Coping	1.00	4.00	2.79	.713	<i>High</i>
Emotion Focused Coping	1.00	3.75	2.46	.568	<i>Low</i>
Avoidant Coping	1.00	3.38	2.14	.518	<i>Low</i>

The overall result of coping styles among persons deprived of liberty are as shown above. Problem-focused coping has the highest mean score of 2.79 and



interpreted as “high”, whereas avoidance coping brings the lowest mean score of 2.14, presented as “low”.

Generally, in terms of coping mechanisms, it showed that problem-focused coping is utilized, implying that people actively participate in efforts to deal with their problems. Rogers et. al., (2022) performed a research on coping styles among inmates. Similarly, the outcome showed that problem-focused coping was also more likely used by the prisoners to adapt to stressors such as new lifestyle changes, which as being inside the prison. In contrast, emotion-focused and avoidant coping levels are low, indicating that respondents utilize emotional processing and avoidance techniques rarely. A more proactive approach to coping should be emphasized, with less emphasis on avoidance and emotional expression

**Problem #5. Is there a significant difference of the coping mechanism of the respondents when grouped according to their profile?**

**Table 5**

*Significant Differences in the Level of the Respondents' Coping Mechanism When Grouped According to Profile*

Profile		Problem Focused Coping		Emotion Focused Coping		Avoidant Coping	
		Mean	QI	Mean	QI	Mean	QI
Sex	Male	2.69	High	2.35	Low	2.05	Low
	Female	3.20	High	2.87	High	2.47	Low
Mann Whitney U-Value		465		419		458	
p-value		.002**		<.001**		.002**	
Age Level	18 – 21 Years Old	2.59	High	2.35	Low	2.02	Low
	22 Years Old and Up	2.81	High	2.47	Low	2.15	Low



<b>Mann Whitney U-Value</b>	302	327	319
<b>p-value</b>	.401	.606	.537

*\*\*Significant at 0.01 level*

These data show that there are significant differences in the coping mechanisms utilized by respondents based on gender, with females exhibiting higher levels of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping than males. In contrast, age does not appear to have a substantial impact on respondents' problem-focused, emotion-focused, or avoidant coping behaviors.

Females had higher levels of both problem- and emotion-focused coping than males, implying that they engage in problem-solving and emotional expression strategies more frequently. Females were shown to use the emotion-focused coping dimension and support the usage of four coping techniques more frequently than males. These included self-distraction, emotional support, practical assistance, and venting (Graves et. al, 2019). However, both genders exhibit low levels of avoidant coping, with females using this technique slightly more than males. Thus, age does not appear to significantly alter respondents' coping techniques across problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant strategies, implying that these coping tendencies are stable.

**Problem #6. Is there a significant relationship between DASS and Coping mechanism?**

**Table 6**

*Relationship Between the Respondents' Psycho-Emotional State and Coping Mechanism*

Psycho-Emotional State	Coping Mechanism	Correlation Coefficient (Pearson <i>r</i> )	p-value
Problem Focused Coping	Depression	.128	.205
	Anxiety	.140	.165
	Stress	.164	.104
Emotion Focused Coping	Depression	.259	.009**
	Anxiety	.135	.180
	Stress	.192	.056
Avoidant Coping	Depression	.246	.014*
	Anxiety	.257	.010**
	Stress	.238	.017*

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Derived from the results above, it signifies that there is no significance between problem-focused coping with levels of depression displaying a *p-value* of .205, anxiety with a *p-value* of .165, and stress having a *p-value* of .104.

On the other hand, it shows that there is a high significance between emotion-focused coping and depression with a *p-value* of .009. For anxiety, however, there is no significance between it and emotion-focused coping, with a *p-value* of .180. Having a *p-value* of .056 it is understood that there is no



significance between stress and emotion-focused coping. Avoidant coping is revealed to be highly significant with the psycho-emotional states of persons deprived of liberty with a *p-value* of .014 for depression, a .010 *p-value* for anxiety, and a .017 *p-value* for stress.

In terms of correlation, there is no correlation between the psycho-emotional states and coping mechanisms of incarcerated persons.

There is no substantial association between problem-focused coping and levels of depression, anxiety, or stress, implying that these emotional states have no impact on problem-solving strategies. In relation, Floreses-Barolo & Vicente (2019) added that prisoners experienced challenges adjusting to prison life, including feelings of powerlessness, obedience to unwritten laws, bearing pain for family, staying out of trouble, and exploitation of the weak. They also felt forgotten as victims. However, emotion-focused coping has a significant positive relationship with depression, implying that people with higher degrees of sadness may utilize more emotional coping techniques. Moreover, Bisri et. al., (2021) reiterated that emotion-focused coping can improve self-adjustment for convicts in correctional settings, leading to increased self-esteem and future problem-solving abilities. Delos Santos et.al (2019) stated that physical issues experienced by the older prisoners which are common in old age. There is mild to severe depression among 80% of the participants. Despite the remarkable physical and mental situations, they are in, there are several positive coping



strategies used by the older prisoners in dealing with their everyday challenges inside prison. Avoidant coping has considerable positive connections with sadness, anxiety, and stress, implying that those who avoid confronting their problems are more likely to suffer negative emotions. This suggests that avoidance may increase emotional issues, but problem-solving strategies are good at all degrees of emotional distress.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

In this research, the data show that people who are deprived of their liberty typically maintain a stable psycho-emotional state characterized by low levels of anxiety, depression, and stress regardless of their demographic characteristics such as gender and age. The majority of participants display resilience and excellent coping mechanisms, primarily adopting problem-focused techniques to manage their circumstances. While occasional sensations of sorrow, increased anxiety, and stress-related irritation were observed, they had no substantial impact on their overall emotional well-being. The lack of significant differences in emotional states between genders and age groups implies that mental health therapies should be universally applicable rather than specialized to particular populations. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the necessity of establishing together continuous support mechanisms to detect and manage any developing emotional difficulties. Fostering the development of social support



networks and improving coping skills can help persons in those challenging circumstances maintain and enhance their mental health over time.

## 5.0 Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following are recommended:

1. Correctional Facilities must implement comprehensive mental health support programs that include regular psychological assessments and access to counseling services tailored to the needs of all inmates, regardless of gender or age.
2. Mental Health Professionals should develop and facilitate workshops focusing on resilience-building and emotional regulation strategies for persons deprived of liberty. These workshops should emphasize problem-focused coping techniques while also introducing healthy emotion-focused strategies to enhance overall coping skills.
3. Research institutions must encourage ongoing research into the mental health needs of persons deprived of liberty to continuously assess the effectiveness of implemented programs and adapt them based on emerging needs and evidence-based practices.

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