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AGING IN CONFINEMENT: A PHOTOVOICE STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCES OF SENIOR MALE PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY

Cepe, Kelvin M.
Graduate School, Philippine College of Criminology, Manila.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative phenomenological study explores the lived experiences of senior male persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) aging within the Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail employing photovoice methodology complemented by semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the study captures participants personal narratives through drawings and verbal reflections. Anchored primarily on Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory, the study examines how senior male PDLs navigate the psychological challenges of late adulthood.

The study highlights the multifaceted challenges faced by senior male PDLs, including chronic physical health issues, inadequate medical care, emotional distress from family separation, and institutional limitations that restrict mobility and autonomy. The slow passage of time and pervasive loneliness exacerbate psychological suffering, while family connections and spiritual faith emerge as vital sources of meaning, hope, and resilience. Participant's artworks reveal deep themes of vulnerability, longing, and acceptance, illustrating how they find meaning through faith, family, and altruistic acts, despite the harsh realities of prison life.

Findings underscore the urgent need for age-responsive prison policies and programs that address healthcare deficits, promote psychosocial support and facilitate meaningful social engagement. The study proposes "Art Behind bars" an advocacy initiative using senior PDLs artworks to raise awareness, foster empathy, and drive systematic reforms. This research contributes to criminological knowledge on aging in correctional settings, advocating for humane, dignified treatment that supports successful aging among senior male PDLs.

KEYWORDS: *Aging in Confinement, Emotional Resilience, Photovoice Method, Senior Male Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the number of senior male PDLs is increasing in the prison system. This change brings many challenges but also opportunities to comprehend how these men can age well while they are still inside the prison. It is important to focus not only on their physical health but also on their mental and emotional well-being. Aging in prison is different because the natural process is affected by the conditions of confinement. This affects their bodies and minds, and each senior PDLs experiences aging in different ways with many difficulties.

The problem of aging inmates in the Philippines is becoming more urgent, but it is still not adequately addressed. The nation has one of the most overcrowded prison systems in the world, ranking third in the world for jail and prison overcrowding (UNODC, 2024). About 26,000 offenders between the ages of 40 and 59 and over 8,000 inmates 60 and older were housed in Philippine prisons as of January 2025, indicating a sizable and expanding senior jail population (Statista Research Department, 2025). Most of these convicts are kept in overcrowded institutions; the New Bilibid Prison alone houses nearly 24,000 detainees, the majority of them are in the 40-59 age range (BJMP, 2024).

Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail, located in Butuan City, is the primary detention center in the province. And there are approximately 210 living spacers, mostly male, with only limited resources to cater their needs. Due to lack of resources, overcrowding, and poor infrastructure, it confronts many of the same difficulties as other provincial jails in the Philippines (BJMP Agusan del Norte, 2024). The facility's capacity to offer adequate care and assistance is significantly impacted by these limitations, especially for elderly male persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) who suffer from age-related health issues.

This research aims to explore what aging means to senior male PDLs who are deprived of their freedom. The ultimate goal is to find out how these individuals see themselves as they age and how they find meaning and purpose in spite of the restrictions of prison life. I will employ a method called Photovoice whereby the participants will narrate their stories through drawings and words. This method can help to show their experiences become more sincere and personal. The study will additionally look at the various challenges they face as they age like poor health, feelings of isolation, and a lack of resources.

By understanding their experiences, this study hopes to provide useful information that can help to improve programs and policies

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for senior male PDLs, especially in places like Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail. It is important to help these individuals live with dignity and find purpose even when they are confined.

The study's findings will be used to develop interventions and programs that are designed to the unique requirements of older men not just at Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail but also in other parts of the Philippines.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study examines the well-being of older prisoners using the successful aging framework. The research highlighted that older inmates often face unique challenges in confinement but can achieve a sense of purpose and well-being through various coping strategies (Yates, J., & Gillespie, W., 2021). According to McLennan et al. (2025), psychological stresses such social isolation and lack of autonomy are common among older people who are detained and can exacerbate depressive symptoms. Despite these obstacles, many people use healthy coping strategies to maintain their mental health, such as self-improvement initiatives, preserving relationships with others, spiritual activity, and peer support.

Kaiksow, F. A., & Lobczowski, N. G. (2023) found out that incarcerated older adults experience accelerated aging due to incarceration-related stressors. Opportunities exist to improve care through policy modifications and practice changes, with gerontological nurses playing a pivotal role.

Bello et al. (2021), chronic diseases and restricted access to health promotion activities are just two of the many health issues that elderly prisoners must deal with. Notwithstanding these limitations, older inmates use self-care techniques to preserve their welfare, including making use of the resources at their disposal, keeping a happy attitude, controlling their nutrition, exercising, and practicing self-defense. A study by Portuguez, M. R. V. (2021) revealed that older prisoners adopt various coping strategies, including maintaining social connections, engaging in religious activities, and participating in prison programs, to navigate the challenges of incarceration and strive toward successful aging.

There is growing interest in ageing offenders and their lives in prison. However, this subject is often studied from a deprivation perspective, focusing on issues such as lack of medical care and proper environmental conditions. This article highlights experiences of wellbeing while ageing in confinement, using the conceptual framework of successful ageing. The narratives revealed four themes: 'Like all other older men': comparing ageing in prison with ageing within the community; 'Better than what I have outside': prison as an escape from a life of loneliness, poverty and delinquency; 'Here I get some respect': the older prisoner as a mentor; and 'I feel accomplished': experiences of growth and self-discovery as a means for successful ageing in prison. The findings suggest that ageing in prison may not be perceived as a single, unified process, but as a personal and individual phenomenon, and that old age may facilitate positive changes in the lives of ageing offenders in prison (Maschi, T., Morgen, K., Hintenach, A., & Kaye, A., 2021).

Recent research examines the quality of life (QoL) and welfare of elderly male inmates, emphasizing the influence of various prison regimes on their experiences. A mixed-methods approach was used in a study by Williams and Smith (2020) to evaluate the quality of life (QoL) of older inmates in a variety of prison environments, such as open prisons, high security, and training. According to their findings, open prison regimes, which offer more autonomy and chances for inmates to uphold good social identities, result in better levels of contentment and wellbeing among older inmates. Fostering a positive quality of life and overall wellness for the elderly inmate population requires these facets of humanity and dignity (Williams & Smith, 2020).

The complicated issues that correctional systems confront in dealing with the increasing number of elderly prisoners are brought to light by recent studies. These difficulties cover the social, psychological, physical, and gerontological aspects of aging while incarcerated. The status of prisons, crime trends among older criminals, problems associated with long-term incarceration, and the unique requirements of older female inmates are all reviewed in the current study. It also tackles systemic issues including violence, overcrowding, the need for healthcare, and rising expenses. Recent research addresses correctional programs and legislative initiatives aimed at reducing the challenges experienced by older criminals and prisoners, with a focus on the health needs of an aging jail population (Widra, 2023).

Compared to the general population, prisoners typically have worse general health and greater rates of health care consumption. Significant health inequities and the pressing need for focused healthcare treatments within the prison system are highlighted by recent data showing the high frequency of infectious diseases and chronic illnesses among those who are incarcerated (Carson, 2023).

The older adult prisoners are the most vulnerable to the pressures and the harsh conditions in the prison environment which may be deteriorating and compromising both to their physical and mental health conditions (De Los Santos et al, 2019). The aging process can be different for those who have been incarcerated, including issues related to physical health, mental health, and social dynamics. Much of the existing research on incarceration tends to focus on younger or middle-aged populations. The unique experiences, needs, and challenges faced by older adults who are incarcerated often receive less attention and can be better explored qualitatively (Milallos & Cutamora, 2024).

As an intersubjective human experience, fear impacts the health and quality of life of older adults. To date, no clear and empirical attempt has been made yet to describe how fear is developed among older inmates toward other inmates, hence this grounded theory study. Twenty-five (25) older prisoners from the National Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa, Philippines took part in an in-depth,

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face to face individual interview (De Guzman, A. B., Garcia, A. C. R., Garcia, M. D., & Garcia, R. J. B., 2021).

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework/Paradigm of the Study

This research is based on one major theory and four sub-theories that emphasize aging in prison: Erikson's Theory, Activity Theory, Continuity Theory, Socioemotional Selectivity Theory, and Life Span Development Theory. These theories are important because they describe the different aspects of aging for senior male PDLs like their development, social interactions, and mental state. They provide us insight into these men's experiences of aging in prison.

The study utilizes Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, which originally proposed eight stages representing the human life cycle: Trust vs. Mistrust, Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, Initiative vs. Guilt, Industry vs. Inferiority, Identity vs. Role Confusion, Intimacy vs. Isolation, Generativity vs. Stagnation, and Integrity vs. Despair. Recent expansions of Erikson's theory include a ninth stage that addresses very late adulthood (Erikson & Erikson, 1997). This stage focuses on the psychological challenges faced by individuals in advanced age, such as coping with increased dependency, physical decline, and confronting mortality. It emphasizes the task of maintaining hope, faith, and meaning despite these difficulties. This ninth stage provides a pertinent framework for understanding the psychological experiences of senior incarcerated individuals as they navigate the compounded adversities of aging and confinement.

Erikson's theory is relevant to this study as it provides a framework for understanding the psychological challenges and opportunities faced by older prisoners in achieving successful aging. The experiences of senior male persons deprived of liberty in Agusan del Sur Provincial Jail can be explored through the lens of this theory, examining how they find meaning and purpose in confinement and navigate the crisis of integrity vs. despair.

Activity Theory

In accordance with activity theory, senior adults who remain active and take part in various activities or interactions with others claim to feel happier and better (Havighurst, 1961). This theory is relevant because this shows that participating in group activities like painting, music, or even just participating in group activities can really help the senior male PDLs to feel better. It gives them a purpose and gives them a feeling of importance regardless how they feel inside. Having the chance to talk with people or get new knowledge helps them forget about the downsides of being confined. These possibilities, given all the limitations, are important for senior male PDLs. Being active and social not only helps them pass the time, but it also makes them feel better and improves their quality of life while they're there.

Continuity Theory

The continuity theory states that individuals try to maintain the consistency in their lives by maintaining the same relationships, activity, and behaviors over the span of their lives (Atchley, 1989). This theory is very relevant to my study because it helps us understand how senior male PDLs may try to maintain parts of their personalities before their imprisonment or change their coping mechanisms in order to handle the challenges of aging while confined. Even though imprisonment is really difficult, senior male PDLs may still feel okay and calm if they continue with their usual activities and routines. They show how they maintain or alter these aspects of their identities while they are inside using Photovoice. In order to help senior male PDLs better adapt to prison life and maintain their mental health, it may be crucial to help them in keeping to their former routines and the things that make them feel like themselves.

Socioemotional Selectivity Theory

The socioemotional selectivity theory states that as people age, they get more interested in important events and personal connections as compared to having many friends or big social groups (Carstensen, 1992). For senior male PDLs, this means that they prefer to build close relationships with their family or other prisoners, maybe through visits or simply interacting with another. This theory shows how older prisoners continue to find meaning and happiness in the relationships that are most important to them, even in a place like prison where their social life is very limited.

Life-Span Development Theory

The Life-Span Development Theory perceives aging as a continuous process that is influenced by many factors, such as biology, psychology, and social factors (Baltes & Baltes, 1990). This theory is very important to understand how senior male PDLs in prison deal with both aging and confinement since it explains the relationship between a person's development and the limitations of their surroundings. It additionally helps us to understand how older prisoners manage their specific situation to try to age in a beneficial manner even with the challenges they face inside the prison.

Together, all of these ideas aid in our understanding of how senior male PDLs at Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail deal with aging, find meaning while being incarcerated and cope up with the challenges of prison life. The theoretical framework guides the study's exploration of how older prisoners navigate the challenges of confinement, maintain their sense of identity and integrity, and achieve successful aging despite the limitations imposed by their circumstances.

This study explores the experiences of senior male PDLs incarcerated at Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail, their attempts to age well while being imprisoned, and how they find meaning and purpose in their lives even with the numerous challenges they are facing. The study is based on ideas connected to successful aging, meaning in life, and what it means to be confined: Successful aging is defined as keeping a good physical and mental health as well as keeping socially active as ages, meaning in life is defined as feeling that one's life has meaning and purpose from all that one does and experiences , and confinement in this setting refers to the impacts of imprisonment on one's body, mind, and social life.

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The study is anchored on several legal bases: Republic Act No. 7438, which defines certain rights of persons arrested, detained, or under custodial investigation, as well as the duties of arresting, detaining, and investigating officers, and provides penalties for violations thereof; Republic Act No. 10575, the Bureau of Corrections Act of 2013, which strengthens the Bureau of Corrections and provides funds for it; and Republic Act No. 9994, the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010, which grants additional benefits and privileges to senior citizens, further amending Republic Act No. 7432. The study is relevant to these legal bases, since they establish legal framework for the rights and treatment of senior male PDLs, highlighting the significance of safeguarding the well-being, dignity, and ability to age well while being imprisoned (Republic Act No. 7438; Republic Act No. 10575; Republic Act No. 9994).

The conceptual framework makes use of the idea of confinement, meaning in life, and successful aging. It also relates to the previous established legal basis. According to this theory, if incarcerated men find meaning and purpose in their lives, they can age well. Many factors affect this process including their personal experiences, coping mechanisms, and the support system within the prison.

The conceptual paradigm of the study is divided into three sections. First, the inputs which contain the coping mechanisms, support networks, and personal experiences of senior male PDLs at Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail. Second, is the process which focuses on how these senior PDLs find meaning and purpose in their incarceration. Reflecting on their lives, adjusting to life behind bars, and engaging in activities that are meaningful to them are a few instances of this. Lastly, the outputs, their social relationships, mental and physical health, and overall well-being are signs of effective aging while being confined.

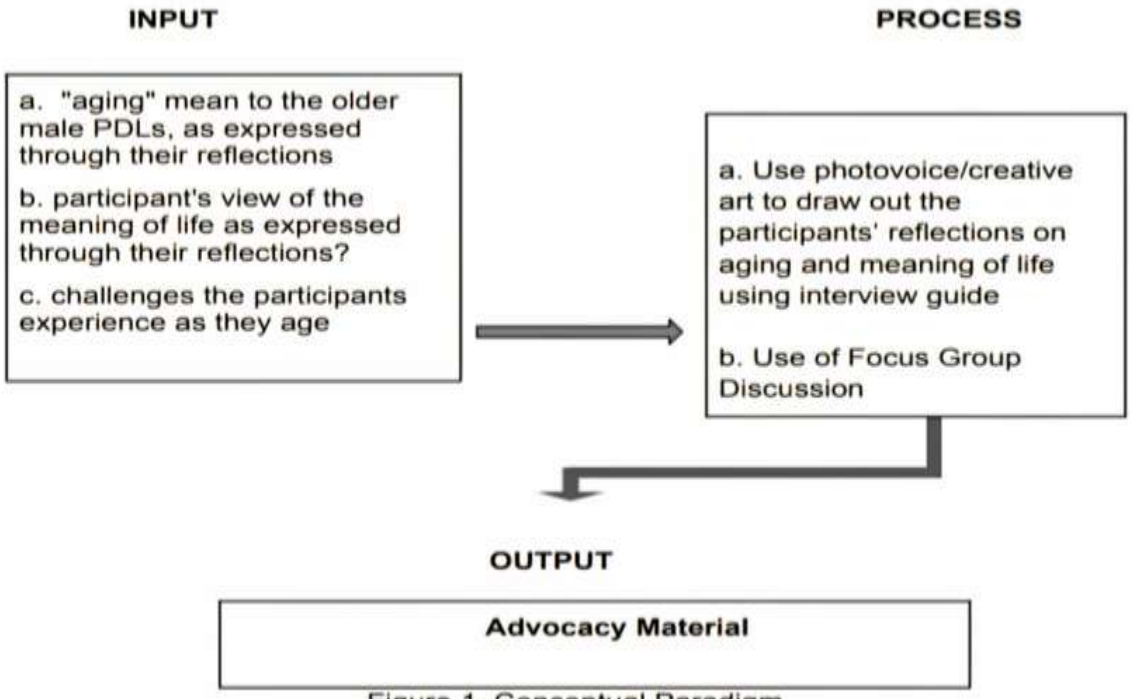


Figure 1. Conceptual Paradigm

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are beneficial to the following:

Senior Male Persons Deprived of Liberty. The findings of the study will contribute to our understanding on how senior male PDLs can age successfully and can find meaning and purpose while imprisoned. Prison administrators can develop programs and activities that meet the physical, emotional, and social needs of senior male PDLs by knowing what helps them age well.

Prison Administrator. The study will help us know better the specific needs and challenges faced by senior male PDLs. The prisons can use this data to create a more conducive and better environment that meets their needs and supports healthy aging. In addition, the findings can be utilized in developing laws and programs that promote the general well-being of senior PDLs.

Policymakers. This study can be used to advocate for improvements and adjustments to the criminal justice system. And the results can be used by policymakers to support initiatives and programs that truly meet the physical, social, and emotional well-being of senior male PDLs. It can also help people to value their well-being by showing how important it is for them to age well and feel good.

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Future Researchers. This study has the opportunity in greatly helping the future studies of aging in prison. Exploring related subjects in different settings, with different persons, or under various conditions becomes possible by it. This will help us to know how aging impacts those who are confined.

Researchers. The result of this study can be used to guide further study and inspire other studies on related subjects, to make sure that this field continues to advance and develop.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to explore how senior male persons deprived of liberty in Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail find meaning in their confinement as they experience aging and strive to achieve successful aging within the prison environment through a Photovoice approach.

Specifically, it sought to:

1. What does "aging" mean to the older male PDLs, as expressed through their reflections?
2. What is the participant's view of the meaning of life as expressed through their reflections?
3. What challenges do the participants experience as they age?
4. What advocacy materials can be proposed, based on the findings of the study?

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The qualitative phenomenological research design utilized to obtain information and to systematically describe the lived experiences of senior male persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) in Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail. It helps to answer what, when, where, and how questions regarding the research problem. The aim of qualitative phenomenological study is to explore and understand peoples lived experiences and the meaning they ascribe to those experiences. In this case, the study will focus on senior male PDLs trying to understand the essence of their experiences with aging, finding meaning, and attempting to age well in a penal institution.

Research Method

The research used a qualitative phenomenological method which involves gathering in-depth and complete descriptions of the participants' experiences. In order to fully understand the lived experiences of senior male PDLs at Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail, the researcher uses a different method, such as interviews to really gather information. The goal is to know how they truly feel about being confined, aging, and trying to age well while inside the prison.

Photovoice was the main method used for gathering data for this study. The participants will be able to use their drawings to show and talk about their thoughts about aging, life's purpose, and the challenges they are facing while imprisoned. In addition to Photovoice, semi structured interviews will be utilized in order for the participants to share their personal experiences and stories. They will talk about the definition of successful aging, how they find meaning and purpose in their lives, the challenges they face, and how they manage those challenges.

Additionally, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted to facilitate group interaction among the participants and exchange of thoughts. To be able to get a more understanding of the experiences and context of senior male PDLs, the researcher conducted observation of their daily activities and the prison environment.

Population of the Study

The study has one group of respondents. This group is composed of 7 senior male PDLs aged 60 and above who have already spent time in prison for 5 years and above in Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail. The number of respondents, 7, represents the total population of the study and also serves as the sample of the population.

Only these senior male PDLs aged 60 and above were included in the study as they are the ones experiencing aging within the prison environment. Other prisoners below the age of 60 or those with severe mental or physical conditions that prevent effective communication are excluded from the study. The group of older male prisoners reached 7 individuals in terms of sample respondents, which is equivalent to 100 percent of the total number of sample respondents. The data saturation approach will be utilized in cases where the same responses will be drawn out from several respondents which will qualify to represent the data needed. This technique ensures that the data collected is comprehensive and reflective of the lived experiences of senior male PDLs in Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail.

Data Gathering Tools

1. Create the data collection instruments such as Photovoice guidelines, semi-structured interview questions, and focus group discussions guides based on the statement of the problem and variables of the study. Three experts in qualitative research will then evaluate these instruments to make sure that they are comprehensive, relevant, and address all parts of the research questions. They will thoroughly examine the instruments for face and validity content. The instruments will also be put using the proper testing procedures to check their reliability.
2. Draft a letter requesting permission to conduct the study and distribute the data collection instruments to the warden along with the other Agusan del Norte Provincial Jail officials.
3. The Photovoice activities, interviews, and focus group discussions will be prepared together with the jail staff to make sure that there are enough participants interested in taking part in the data gathering events. The study will only include participants who give his approval and offer their informed consent.
4. Photovoice sessions, the participants were asked to make or create a drawing that expressed their experiences that relates to aging in confinement, sources of meaning, and challenges encountered in confinement. Artistic skill was not a

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requirement; the focus was on personal expression and storytelling. After their drawing the discussions were facilitated using the SHOWeD method, a structured questioning process designed to deepen participants' reflection and narration of their artwork:

S: What do you see here?
H: What is really happening in this picture?
O: How does this relate to our lives or the prison community?
W: Why does this situation or feeling exist?
D: What can we do about it?

These discussions took place in focus group settings, enabling participants to share insights and meanings behind their drawings.

5. The data will be coded, transcribed, and analyzed with the help of a statistician, consultant, adviser, and professor. The researcher will use a thematic analysis to identify themes and patterns that relate to research questions. And the data will be thoroughly organized to make sure accuracy and completeness.
6. The data will be presented in written and table format, taking into consideration the sub-problems and hypotheses of the research study. To make sure that everyone's thoughts and opinions are properly conveyed the results will be thorough and include real remarks from the participants.

Data Gathering Procedure

A letter of request and consent to conduct research will be prepared. The researcher will develop Photovoice guides, semi-structured interview questions and focus group discussion guides for the inquiry data. The researcher will coordinate with jail authorities to schedule interviews and focus group discussions with the senior male PDLs. The researcher will explain the importance of the study to the participants and why their participation is needed. The researcher will then clarify some terms so that the participants can answer the questions with full knowledge about the certain topic. It is expected that the participants will give truthful answers to the questions. Each of the guide questions will be asked chronologically by the researcher throughout the data collection process. In order to get additional information, the researcher will also pay attention to the subjects' daily activities and the prison environment. By using these different methods, the study can make sure that it truly understands the experiences of the participants.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are important in conducting research to make sure the protection, well-being, and rights of persons and communities involved. The researcher will observe the following ethical considerations.

1. Informed Consent: Get participants' informed consent after making sure that they are aware of the study's goals, nature, potential risk, and benefits. Participants are not going to suffer any consequences if they want to refuse participation or withdraw at any time.
2. Voluntary Participation: Participation in the study is completely voluntary and no one will be forced or under any kind of pressure to participate. If someone decides not to participate, they won't face any issues or consequences.
3. Anonymity and Confidentiality: Unless otherwise stated and consented to by participants, their answers are kept confidential and anonymous. This includes keeping their private data and making sure it is stored safely.
4. Privacy: Participants' privacy will be respected by the researcher, which will only ask questions and collect data that is essential for the study. They won't ask questions that seem too sensitive or personal or that have nothing to do with the study. The data collected will be treated with care and shared only in ways that protect the privacy of the participation.
5. Data Protection: The researcher will use safety precautions to protect the participants' data from being lost, misused, or accessed by unauthorized persons. The study will abide by all relevant data protection laws and regulations.
6. Avoidance of Harm: The researcher will make an effort to avoid participants from harm or bad feelings. This means avoiding sensitive or distressing topics, offering options for assistance if needed, and having a talk with them to make them feel better following any potential distressing questions or actions.
7. Transparency: Participants will be given a detailed explanation by the researcher of the purpose of the study, how it will be done, and the intended use of the findings. Also, they will provide the participant's contact information and address any questions or worries they may have.
8. Fairness and Equity: The study will be thoroughly planned to make sure that no individual or group will be treated unfairly and singled out for discrimination based on what they are.
9. Use of Data: The study's data will be used solely to accomplish the intended research objectives, and the findings will be shared in an open and fair manner. The researcher commits to refraining from altering or manipulating the data to avoid producing inaccurate or false findings. All collected data, including transcripts, drawings, and recordings, will be securely stored in password-protected digital files and locked physical storage accessible only to the researcher, research adviser, and authorized members of the academic committee for a period of five years following study completion. After this retention period, all data will be securely disposed of by permanent deletion of digital files and shredding of physical documents to protect participants' confidentiality. Access to the data is strictly limited to authorized personnel involved in the research and academic review to ensure privacy and comply with ethical standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This part detailed the results of the researcher's interview regarding the experiences of senior male persons deprived of liberty at Provincial Jail Agusan del Norte. The participants' experiences were systematically studied and examined using the interview guide that was carefully prepared and served as an instrument for data collection.

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SOP1 - What does aging mean to the older male PDLs, as expressed through their reflections?

Loneliness and Emotional Isolation

For senior male persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) loneliness and the emotional isolation can create serious mental health conditions. Accompanied by being apart from their family members and to their loved ones and also the detention facility's restrictions limits interpersonal connections, which amplifies feelings of being neglected. This feeling of detachment can aggravate mental well-being issues like feeling depressed and worried, that can have a bad effect on fitness level and the general mental health.

The findings reflect the findings of Maschi et al. (2021), who contend that the confinement circumstances and a lack of social support greatly exacerbate loneliness in elderly prisoners. The mental health of older inmates is also negatively impacted by social isolation, which raises their chance of developing despair, anxiety, and other psychological issues, according to Widra (2023). The constrictive character of the jail environment frequently prevents meaningful social relationships, which exacerbates these impacts and emphasizes the urgent need for interventions that support mental health and social connectivity in correctional settings.

Physical Decline and Health Challenges

Physical deterioration is a significant aspect of aging in jail facilities, often intensified by inadequate treatment, challenging lifestyles, and the emotional effect of imprisonment. The physical declination not just impacts physiological performance but it will also impact physical condition, as vulnerability can amplify feelings of powerlessness and dependence.

According to Berg et al. (2021), insufficient access to healthcare in jails exacerbates chronic problems prevalent in this demographic, while Kaiksow and Lobczowski (2023) report accelerated aging and higher health vulnerabilities among incarcerated older persons.

The Passage of Time and Psychological Impact

The slow ticking of time in jail can create a psychological stress which can amplify feelings of hopelessness and powerlessness. The absence of purposeful undertakings and confusion about the forthcoming can give additional mental emotional distress and make the experience of aging in imprisonment distinctively challenging.

According to Maschi et al. (2021) and Völlm and Dening (2017), elderly prisoners' psychological anguish is exacerbated by their view of their prison time.

Family as a Source of Joy and Meaning

Family relationships stay as a vital source of encouragement and drive for aging persons deprived of liberty (PDLs). In spite of being separated, the missing for family, children, and grandchildren gives emotional strength and a feeling of meaning that aids the PDLs to withstand the challenges of confinement.

Moran and Jewkes (2021) and De Los Santos et al. (2019) stress the importance of tight family ties in promoting emotional well-being and successful aging in populations with incarcerated relatives.

Acceptance and Spiritual Coping

Faith and acceptance are important for senior male persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) because it helps them to deal with the challenges they experienced inside the jail facility. Their faith can give them comfort, hope, and resilience even if they are experiencing different challenges while aging in confinement. By believing in God, they find meaning and strength in their life even though they are facing so many challenges while they are confined.

According to Maschi and Kaye (2019), spirituality is a crucial protective element that promotes mental health in older people who are incarcerated. The importance of faith in building psychological resilience in jail is also highlighted by Yates and Gillespie (2021).

SOP 2: What are the participants' views of the meaning of life as expressed through their reflections?

Faith as the Foundation of Meaning

For many senior male PDLs, faith became the foundation of life's meaning and purpose. Despite the challenges of aging in confinement, their faith provides resilience, hope, and direction. Through faith, it helps them to feel more at peace when they're going through hard times.

This is consistent with the findings of Yates and Gillespie (2021), who discovered that prayer and spirituality are essential coping strategies for elderly prisoners, assisting them in preserving psychological resilience. The protective function of faith in promoting the mental health of older inmates is also emphasized by Maschi and Kaye (2019).

Family as Life's Purpose

Family gives them strength and purpose as they age in jail. Despite being separated from their family, thinking about their loved ones helps senior male PDLs stay strong emotionally and gives them hope to face prison challenges.

According to Moran and Jewkes (2021) and De Los Santos et al. (2019), preserving family ties is essential for jailed persons' emotional support and effective aging.

Altruism and Helping Others

Despite being confined, some of the senior male PDLs find meaning in life by helping others or by doing good. By helping others gives them a positive self-image and improves their mental health.

According to Ridley and Waldegrave (2025), altruistic actions help inmates cope better and feel more purposeful, which strengthens their positive self-concepts.

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Faith, family, and altruism are foundational pillars that provide senior male persons deprived of liberty with meaning, hope, and resilience as they face the challenges of aging in confinement. Faith, deeply expressed through prayer and spiritual symbols such as rosaries and crosses, offers comfort and a sense of purpose. Participants depict faith as a protective and sustaining force that fosters psychological strength and acceptance.

SOP 3: What challenges do the participants experience as they age?

Health Issues and Inadequate Medical Care

Aging PDLs often have serious health issues, but they don't always get the medical care they need. This makes their physical suffering worse and lowers their quality of life.

Mental Anguish and Family Separation

Being away from their family causes them a lot of emotional pain. Many senior male PDLs fear of dying alone in a jail facility without their family, causing them emotional pain and mental anguish.

According to Widra (2023), social isolation in prison raises the risk of mental health issues like anxiety and sadness. Family separation is also associated with higher psychological suffering among older prisoners, according to Maschi et al. (2021).

Institutional Limitations and Restricted Mobility

Aging PDLs struggle with limited movement and lack of freedom, which amplifies their physical and mental health.

Widra (2023) and Chan (2024) talk about how jail rules and infrastructure frequently don't meet the demands of senior citizens, which results in a decline in their autonomy and quality of life.

SOP 4: What advocacy materials can be proposed, based on the findings of the study?

1. Project Title: Art Behind Bars – Selected Drawings of Senior Male Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs)
2. Name of the Proponent: Kelvin M. Cepe
3. Timeframe: 6 Months
4. Project Beneficiaries:
   - Senior male Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), aged 60 and above, participating in art workshops within jail facilities.
   - Jail staff and administration engaged in program implementation.
   - Broader community including families, policymakers, and prison reform advocates.
5. Total Budgetary Requirement: 110,000
6. Project Rationale: The "Art Behind Bars" project addresses the unique challenges faced by senior male persons deprived of liberty (PDLs), including physical decline, social isolation, and family separation, which often go unrecognized and underserved. By using art as a medium for expression, this initiative empowers aging inmates to share their personal stories and experiences, fostering public understanding and empathy while advocating for improved jail conditions and rehabilitative support. Targeting senior male PDLs, jail staff, and the broader community, the project aligns with the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology's mission to provide humane safekeeping and developmental opportunities for PDLs, thereby enhancing public safety and contributing to a just and prosperous Philippines. Anticipated benefits include enhanced mental well-being for participants, increased public awareness, stronger advocacy for policy reforms, and strengthened community partnerships to support reintegration. Overall, this project offers a meaningful, humanizing platform that highlights the needs and resilience of aging inmates, encouraging systemic improvements and social engagement.
7. Project Goal:
   - Enhance well-being and social integration of senior male PDLs through art-based storytelling, raising awareness and fostering advocacy.
8. Project Objectives:
   - Provide artistic platforms for senior PDLs to share their stories.
   - Increase public understanding of incarceration challenges faced by aging inmates.
   - Promote policy advocacy for improved jail conditions and mental health services.
   - Stimulate community engagement to support reintegration.
9. Project Components:

1.Art Exhibit/Gallery Installation

- Display original drawings and artworks created by senior male Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) during art therapy and rehabilitation sessions.
- Organize the exhibit thematically (e.g., Life in Confinement, Family and Separation, Health and Aging, Hope and Resilience).
- Include artist narratives through captions or audio recordings to provide personal context.

2.Games for Socialization

- Facilitate interactive games and group activities within the facility designed to encourage peer bonding, reduce isolation, and promote mental well-being among senior PDLs.

3. Family Day

- Organize special visitation or communication events to strengthen family ties by allowing inmates to connect meaningfully with their loved ones through calls, video chats, or supervised visits.

4. Interactive Engagement for Visitors

- Provide spaces at the exhibit for visitors to leave messages, reflections, or support notes for the senior PDLs, encouraging two-way empathy and connection between the community and inmates.

5. Public Programs and Advocacy Events

- Host opening ceremonies, guided tours, workshops, and panel discussions to raise awareness, educate attendees, and advocate for improved policies supporting aging incarcerated populations.

10. Implementation Strategy:
    - Partner with jail authorities, NGOs, artists, and therapists.
    - Secure informed consent ensuring anonymity.
    - Curate artworks with input from participants and facilitators.
    - Select an accessible venue or digital platform.
    - Develop educational materials on photovoice and incarceration context.

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● Train staff and volunteers for exhibit facilitation.

11. Project Sustainability:
    ● Collaborate with DSWD and OSCA for psychosocial and elder care integration.
    ● Build internal jail capacity to continue art therapy and advocacy efforts.
    ●Engage community coalitions for ongoing support and reintegration.
12. Monitoring and Evaluation: Collect visitor feedback through surveys and comment boxes.
    ● Conduct pre- and post-engagement assessments of participant empowerment and well-being.
    ● Track visitor numbers, media impressions, and policy advocacy outcomes.
    ● Provide reports to stakeholders for improvement and future planning.
13. Detailed Budgetary Requirement:
    ● Personnel (facilitators, coordinators) — 50,000
    ● Art Materials and Supplies — 15,000
    ● Venue Rental and Setup — 20,000
    ● Marketing, Media, and Outreach — 10,000
    ● Monitoring and Evaluation — 5,000
    ● Miscellaneous and Contingency — 10,000
    Total Budget Requirement: ₱110,000

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Aging in jail is extremely tough for senior male PDLs. They often feel lonely, isolated, and experience physical decline. Being away from family and having limited social interactions worsens their emotional pain, while health issues and the slow passage of time increase their psychological distress. However, having family connections and spiritual beliefs provide crucial emotional support, helping them cope with the difficulties of aging in confinement.

For senior male PDLs, the meaning of life comes mainly from their faith and family. Their spiritual beliefs give them hope and mental strength to deal with the hardships of jail life. Family is also a key source of happiness and motivation. Additionally, some PDLs find purpose by helping others, even while in confinement. These factors are important for maintaining mental well-being and coping with the challenges of aging in confinement.

Aging in confinement is made worse by serious health problems, poor medical care, and jail rules that limit movement and freedom. Being separated from family and feeling isolated also hurts senior male PDLs emotionally, affecting their mental health. To solve these problems, we need to take a complete approach that considers both physical and emotional needs, addressing the many challenges that make life harder for aging PDLs.

The "Art Behind Bars" exhibit is a unique and effective way to advocate for aging PDLs. By showcasing their artwork and stories, the exhibit helps people understand and care about their struggles. It raises public awareness, encourages discussions about policies, and pushes for better jail conditions and support services for aging PDLs. This approach not only empowers the senior male PDLs but also connects the jail community with society, promoting long-term advocacy and positive change.

Recommendations

1. To help senior male persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) deal with loneliness and isolation, the jail facility should create programs that encourage social interaction, such as peer support groups and more flexible family visitation policies. The facility should also prioritize healthcare, providing thorough assessments and age-appropriate medical care to manage physical decline and chronic health issues. Additionally, spiritual care and counseling services should be integrated into jail health programs to support mental well-being and help senior PDLs cope with the challenges of aging in confinement, ultimately improving their overall quality of life.
2. The jail facility should support activities that help senior male PDLs find meaning and purpose. Jails should also help PDLs stay connected with their families through regular visits, counseling, and communication support. Additionally, jails should offer opportunities for PDLs to help others, such as mentoring or community service, to help them feel positive and fulfilled, which is important for their mental well-being and successful aging in confinement.
3. To help senior male PDLs with health issues and jail limitations, jails need to improve their healthcare system. This includes providing consistent access to necessary medicines and treatments suitable for senior male PDLs. Jails should also adapt their facilities to accommodate mobility needs, reducing physical strain. Additionally, mental health services should be expanded to support prisoners dealing with emotional distress from family separation and isolation, offering services like grief counseling and therapy. By addressing these physical, emotional, and institutional challenges together, prisons can better support the complex needs of their aging PDLs.
4. The "Art Behind Bars" exhibit should be used to amplify the voices of senior male PDLs and raise public awareness about their experiences. This exhibit can help people understand and empathize with senior PDLs, inspiring policymakers to support reforms that improve jail conditions, mental health services, and rehabilitation programs. By engaging the public through art, discussions, and workshops, we can bridge the gap between PDLs and society, promoting continued advocacy and change that respects the dignity and well-being of senior male PDLs.

Additional Recommendation

Future studies should look into how specific programs, such as peer support, religious activities, and recreational programs, can improve the physical, mental, and social health of senior male PDLs. Using a mixed-method of research will provide a complete understanding of how these programs help senior male PDLs age healthily in confinement. Additionally, studying the experiences of senior male PDLs after they are released will help identify

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ways to improve their reintegration into society and address ongoing healthcare challenges.

It is also important for future research to address the limitations encountered in this study, such as the small sample size and the focus on a single correctional facility, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Expanding future research to include larger populations across multiple prisons will strengthen validity and applicability. Overcoming recruitment challenges through stronger institutional partnerships and ensuring comprehensive ethical protocols could enhance participant engagement and data richness.

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