

Exploring the Influence of Electronic Visitation of Persons Deprived of Liberty on Family Dynamics and Relationships: A Comprehensive Study

Caroline Codangos Chelnag

University of Baguio

ABSTRACT

This comprehensive study explores the influence of electronic visitation (E-Dalaw) on family dynamics and relationships among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) within Baguio City Jail-Male and Female Dormitories, Baguio City, Philippines. Using qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, the research team engages with PDLs, their family members, and Jail Officers to capture diverse perspectives on the subject matter. Through meticulous thematic analysis of gathered data, the study uncovers complex patterns and themes, offering an in-depth understanding of how electronic visitation influences various aspects of life within the jail setting. The study adheres to rigorous ethical guidelines to ensure the safety and dignity of all participants involved. The research population comprises carefully selected representatives, including four jail officers, 10 actively engaged PDLs, and their respective family members from Baguio City Jail-Male and Female Dormitories. By employing a range of data collection tools such as structured questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and onsite observations, the study systematically explores participants' experiences and perceptions related to electronic visitation. Ultimately, the study's findings contribute valuable insights to academic discussions, inform policymaking processes, and aid in the development of electronic visitation programs aimed at supporting the well-being of PDLs and their families. Through these efforts, the study seeks to advance rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives within the criminal justice system, with the ultimate goal of fostering positive outcomes for all stakeholders involved.

Keywords: Electronic Visitation, Family Dynamics, Qualitative Research, Persons Deprived of Liberty, Rehabilitation

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of contemporary criminal justice reform, the infusion of technology into correctional practices has emerged as a pivotal focus. The research endeavor titled "Exploring the Influence of Electronic Visitation of Persons Deprived of Liberty on Family Dynamics and Relationships: A Comprehensive Study" embarks on a journey to probe the profound implications of electronic visitation (E-Visitation) for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL), particularly within the familial context. This exploration is uniquely grounded at the Baguio City Jail-Male and Female Dormitories in Baguio City, Philippines, offering a localized perspective to examine this innovative approach to jail visitation.

Through a meticulous examination of the implementation of electronic visitation at the Baguio City Jail-Male and Female Dormitories, this study seeks to unravel its potential benefits, challenges, and considerations. By elucidating the intricacies of this contemporary practice, the research aims to furnish policymakers, jail administrators, and stakeholders with actionable insights essential for informed decision-making in the realm of correctional reforms.

Electronic visitation, colloquially known as E-Dalaw, epitomizes a modern paradigm shift in the jail visitation system. Introduced as a program facilitating PDL to connect with their families, whether locally or abroad, without physically departing from the confines of the jail, E-Dalaw represents a pioneering initiative spearheaded by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP). Its inception at the Quezon City Jail in October 2011 marked a significant milestone, subsequently expanding to the New Bilibid Prison, underscoring its nationwide relevance and impact.

Literature Review

The exploration of electronic visitation within the context of persons deprived of liberty (PDL) has garnered scholarly attention in recent years. This is due to the evolving landscape of communication technologies and their impact on incarcerated individuals and their families. This literature review synthesizes findings from various studies, shedding light on the complicated dynamics of electronic visitation and its implications on family relationships and the well-being of PDL.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution recognizes the sanctity of family life and emphasizes the protection and strengthening of the family as a basic autonomous social institution. It also acknowledges the Filipino family as the foundation of the nation and promotes its total development. In line with this, the 2015 Nelson Mandela Rules, also known as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, highlight the importance of allowing prisoners to communicate with their family and friends through various means, including telecommunication, electronic, digital, and other methods. These rules also stress the provision of reasonable facilities for foreign national prisoners to communicate with their diplomatic and consular representatives. Additionally, systems of privileges appropriate for different classes of prisoners and different methods of treatment are established in prisons to encourage good conduct, develop a sense of responsibility, and secure the interest and cooperation of prisoners in their treatment.

The literature review begins by laying the foundation for understanding virtual visitation in prison settings. De Claire and Dixon (2019) conducted a scoping review that emphasized the importance of virtual communication as a means to bridge the gap between inmates and their families. They highlighted the potential of electronic visitation to enhance family connections in the prison context. Building on this, Grommon and Ford (2020) explored the digital divide within correctional facilities, highlighting potential disparities in access to virtual visitation programs and their impact on family dynamics.

To provide a broader sociological context, Clear (2007) examined the impact of mass incarceration on disadvantaged neighborhoods. This work emphasized the interconnectedness of incarceration, community dynamics, and family structures. By considering the societal implications of virtual visitation programs in correctional facilities, Clear's perspective sets the stage for a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Moving into specific aspects of electronic visitation, Wright and Condry (2017) delved into the use of video calls in prison, highlighting both the benefits and risks associated with this form of communication. They discussed how video calls can facilitate family connections while also raising concerns about privacy and security. Cochran, Mears, and Bales (2017) contributed by examining individual and community-level

disparities in inmate visitation experiences, providing insights into the social dimensions of virtual interactions for PDL.

To understand the psychological impact of virtual visitation, Zamble and Porporino's (1998) work on coping, behavior, and adaptation in prison inmates offers a valuable lens. Their research provides insights into how virtual visitation may influence coping mechanisms among incarcerated individuals. Additionally, Duwe and Clark (2013) investigated the effects of prison visitation on offender recidivism, highlighting the potential rehabilitative impact of virtual connections with family. The literature review then expands to consider the broader impact of incarceration and reentry on children, families, and communities. Travis and Waul (2003) provide a comprehensive perspective on the ripple effects of imprisonment, emphasizing the need to consider the well-being of all those affected. Arditti's (2003) study on family visiting at a local jail underscores the significance of maintaining family connections during incarceration, which is echoed in Brown, Cosby, and Buell's (2014) examination of video visitation in corrections.

Brunton-Smith and McCarthy (2017) contribute a longitudinal assessment of prisoner attachment to family and its influence on re-entry outcomes. Their work highlights the enduring impact of family ties and underscores the importance of maintaining and strengthening these connections. Dela Cruz and Santos (2018) offer a unique perspective by exploring virtual visitation in Philippine correctional facilities, outlining challenges and opportunities in a distinct cultural context.

Within the Philippine setting, Lopez and Reyes (2019) presented a qualitative study on family dynamics and Filipino PDL, emphasizing the impact of virtual visitation on familial relationships. Their research sheds light on the specific experiences and challenges faced by Filipino prisoners and their families. Reyes and Alonzo (2015) delved into the role of virtual visitation in strengthening family ties among Filipino prisoners, providing valuable insights into the cultural nuances of this phenomenon.

Electronic visitation, also known as "E-visitation" or "E-Dalaw," is a technology-driven method for incarcerated individuals to connect with their loved ones via video calls. It is sometimes referred to as "video visitation" and allows families to connect virtually. Video calls can be used as a supplement to traditional visitation methods and help eliminate barriers that in-person visitation presents (Wang, 2021). The primary purpose of electronic visitation is to facilitate remote interpersonal connections and enable people to connect, communicate, and interact with each other when they are geographically separated. Family members play a crucial role in providing support, tangible needs, and advice to incarcerated individuals. Studies have shown that positive post-release outcomes are often predicted by the nature of relationships between prisoners and family members, as well as the level and type of contact during incarceration (De Claire & Dixon, 2017).

While electronic visitation offers potential benefits, its implementation comes with challenges and ethical considerations. Questions surrounding the digital divide, privacy concerns, and the potential overreliance on technology must be carefully examined. It is crucial to ensure that electronic visitation is implemented in a manner that prioritizes the welfare and dignity of inmates, rather than further isolating them from the outside world.

Incorporating also insights from diverse disciplinary perspectives, the literature reviewed here highlights the complex dynamics underlying electronic visitation of persons deprived of liberty. From the broader impact of social relationships on well-being to the nuanced challenges of implementing virtual visitation programs within the jail settings, each study contributes valuable insights to our understanding of the role of technology in shaping familial connections and reintegration outcomes. Moving forward,

interdisciplinary collaboration and contextually sensitive approaches will be essential for harnessing the potential benefits of electronic visitation while addressing the diverse needs and challenges of incarcerated individuals and their families.

Theoretical Framework

Within the framework of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, the sanctity of family life is not only recognized but also being safeguarded by the state, reflecting a commitment to protecting and fortifying families as fundamental autonomous social institutions. This constitutional provision further underscores the Filipino family's pivotal role as the cornerstone of the nation, emphasizing the state's obligation to enhance familial cohesion and actively foster its comprehensive development. Complementing this constitutional stance, the 2015 Nelson Mandela Rules, also known as the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, reinforce the importance of structured communication between prisoners and their families through various technological means such as telecommunication and electronic communication. Additionally, these rules emphasize the establishment of systems of privileges tailored to incentivize good conduct and foster the active interest and cooperation of prisoners in their treatment within correctional facilities. In essence, this theoretical framework underscores the constitutional and international imperatives promoting family connections and the well-being of prisoners through structured communication, privileges, and responsible treatment practices.

Building upon this foundation, the theoretical framework incorporates Social Exchange Theory, proposed by Homans (1958) and expanded upon by Blau (1964), which posits that individuals engage in relationships based on a cost-benefit analysis. In the context of virtual visitation, this theory helps explain how the perceived benefits of maintaining contact with incarcerated individuals through virtual means influence family dynamics and relationships (Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). Additionally, Communication Theory, as discussed by West & Turner (2007), focuses on how communication processes shape and influence relationships. The use of virtual visitation as a communication tool can impact the quality and frequency of communication between incarcerated individuals and their families, thereby influencing their overall relationship dynamics (Burgoon, Guerrero, & Floyd, 2010). Furthermore, Attachment Theory, proposed by Bowlby (1969), emphasizes the importance of secure attachments in shaping relationships. In the context of virtual visitation, this theory helps examine how the use of technology-mediated interactions impacts the attachment bond between incarcerated individuals and their family members, and whether it helps maintain a sense of connection and support (Ainsworth et al., 1978).

Social Support Theory, as discussed by Cohen and Wills (1985), highlights the role of social support in maintaining well-being and resilience. Virtual visitation can provide emotional and practical support to incarcerated individuals and their families, contributing to their overall well-being and coping mechanisms (Barrera, 1986). Moreover, Family Systems Theory, proposed by Bowen (1978), views families as interconnected systems where changes in one part of the system can affect the entire family unit. Virtual visitation can influence the dynamics within the family system, including roles, communication patterns, and decision-making processes (Minuchin, 1974). Lastly, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Models focus on the processes by which incarcerated individuals transition back into society and aim to support their successful reintegration. Taxman and Belenko (2012) examined evidence-based practices in reentry, highlighting strategies that effectively support individuals' reintegration into the community. In the context of electronic visitation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Models suggest that E-Dalaw may support the

reintegration process by maintaining familial bonds, promoting social support networks, and ultimately facilitating successful transitions from incarceration to community life.

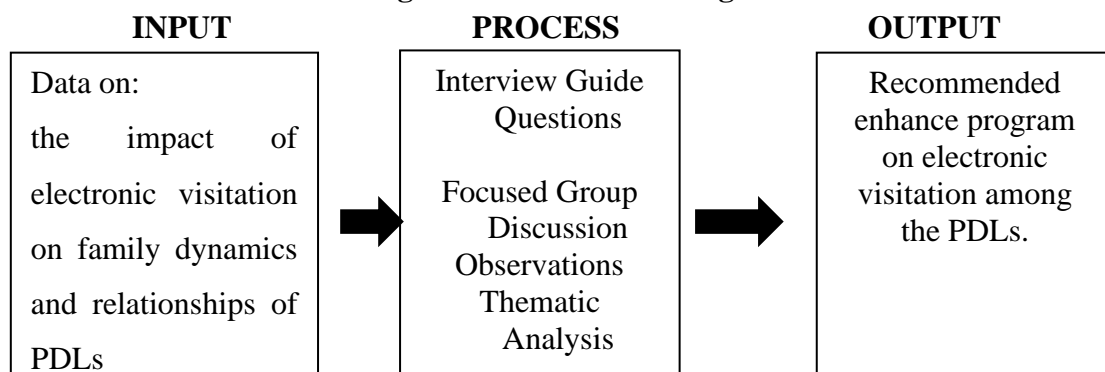
Another framework for this study is the Stress and Coping Theory which focuses on individuals' perceptions of stress and their coping mechanisms in response to challenging situations. Rossegger et al. (2011) conducted a review of coping strategies among prison inmates, shedding light on how incarcerated individuals navigate the stresses of confinement. Similarly, Smith et al. (2019) conducted a qualitative study on "Coping Mechanisms and Stress Management in Prison Inmates," exploring the coping strategies employed by inmates to manage stress. In the context of electronic visitation, Stress and Coping Theory suggest that E-Dalaw may serve as a coping mechanism for both PDLs and their families, providing a means of maintaining connection and support amidst the challenges of incarceration.

To comprehend the acceptance of information technology (IT) among PDL at the Baguio City Jail-Male and Female Dormitories, the study's theoretical framework employed the Technological Determinism which examines how technology shapes society and human behavior. Jones et al. (2017) explored this concept in their study on "The Influence of Technology on Communication in Correctional Facilities," highlighting the transformative impact of technology on communication patterns within prisons. Similarly, Garcia et al. (2020) investigated "Technological Determinism and Its Impact on Inmate Rehabilitation" through a case study of electronic visitation, emphasizing the role of technology in shaping rehabilitation efforts within correctional settings. In the context of the study on electronic visitation's influence on family dynamics and relationships among PDLs, Technological Determinism suggests that E-Dalaw may reshape communication patterns and social interactions within the incarcerated community, potentially facilitating meaningful connections between PDLs and their families. This was supported by the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) which posits three main determinants of IT usage intention: performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence, which are considered the most influential constructs among eight theories and models (Venkatesh et al., 2003, as cited by Li, n.d.).

Research Paradigm

The research paradigm describes this study's input, process, and output. The inputs include the data on impact of electronic visitation on family dynamics and relationships of PDLs and the perspectives of Jail Officers on the implementation of electronic visitation programs. The process includes the Interview Guide Questions, Focused Group Discussion, Observations and Thematic Analysis. The output is the Recommended enhance program on electronic visitation among the PDLs.

Figure 1 Research Paradigm



Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in its comprehensive investigation into the impact of electronic visitation (E-Dalaw) on family dynamics and relationships among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) within Baguio City Jail-Male Dormitory. By examining emotional, psychological, and social aspects, it promises to provide valuable insights into the multidimensional effects of E-Dalaw on incarcerated individuals and their families. Such insights are crucial for informing the development of more effective electronic visitation programs not only within Baguio City Jail but also in similar jail/correctional facilities nationwide. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of current implementation strategies, policymakers and administrators can refine initiatives to better support the well-being of PDLs and their families, ultimately enhancing rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

Furthermore, this study's exploration of Jail Officers' perspectives on the implementation of electronic visitation programs adds another layer of significance. By engaging key stakeholders in dialogue, it fosters collaboration and mutual understanding within the criminal justice system. Understanding the viewpoints of frontline staff is essential for aligning goals and strategies toward promoting the welfare of both PDLs and their families. Moreover, this research contributes to academic discourse by enriching the knowledge based on jail and correctional practices and interventions, providing evidence-based insights for scholars, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to address the complex dynamics of technology, incarceration, and familial relationships.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the influence of electronic visitation (E-Dalaw) on family dynamics and relationships concerning Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) within Baguio City Jail-Male Dormitory, specifically it determined the following:

1. To know the impact of electronic visitation on family dynamics and relationships of PDLs in terms of the following aspects:
 - a. emotional;
 - b. psychological; and
 - c. social

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The study design relied on qualitative methodologies to explore the influence of electronic visitation (E-Dalaw) on family dynamics and relationships among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) within Baguio City Jail-Male and Female Dormitories. When the approach was applied correctly, it became a valuable method for health science research to develop theory, evaluate programs, and develop interventions (Baxter & Jack 2013).

Population and Locale of the Study

The population of the study consisted of four jail officers and 10 Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) who actively engaged with the E-Dalaw system, selected from both the Baguio City Jail-Male and Female Dormitories situated in Baguio City, Philippines. This selection process was strategic, taking into account the facility's regional importance and its potential to serve as a noteworthy case study for electronic visitation implementation. By encompassing a diverse range of PDLs representing various backgrounds, age groups, and criminal histories, the research aimed to conduct a thorough examination of the impact of

electronic visitation across different segments of the incarcerated community. Furthermore, the study included family members such as parents, spouses, and children who participated in electronic visitation sessions with the PDLs. This inclusive approach allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the dynamics and outcomes of electronic visitation within the familial context, thereby enhancing the study's comprehensiveness and relevance.

Data Gathering Tool/s

In this study, the researcher utilized various methods to collect information comprehensively. Structured questionnaire was employed to gather specific data points in a systematic manner. Additionally, semi-structured key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and onsite observations were conducted. These methods provided opportunities for in-depth exploration and qualitative understanding of the participants' perspectives. Key informant interviews allowed the researcher to engage directly with individuals who possessed valuable insights or expertise relevant to the study. Focus group discussions facilitated interactive dialogue among participants, enabling the exploration of shared experiences and perspectives.

Observations conducted onsite offered a firsthand look at the interactions during electronic visitations. By observing these interactions in both controlled settings and real-life jail environments, the researcher could assess various aspects such as the quality of interactions, observable behaviors, and non-verbal cues. These observations provided valuable context to complement the data gathered through interviews and surveys. Moreover, the researcher employed semi-structured or open-ended interviews to delve deeper into participants' personal experiences, emotions, and the impact of electronic visitation on their rehabilitation journey. These interviews allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the participants' lived experiences, providing rich qualitative data.

Data Gathering Procedure

Initially, the researcher crafted an interview guide questionnaire tailored to the specific needs and objectives of the study. This questionnaire was designed to facilitate conversations with the participants and gather pertinent information related to the research topic.

Subsequently, the researcher arranged for informal interviews to administer the interview guide questionnaire. Communication letters were drafted and addressed to the Head of the agency and unit to inform them about the study and seek their cooperation. These letters served as formal notifications of the research activities and sought approval for conducting the study within their jurisdiction.

Before proceeding further, the interview guide questionnaire and communication letters underwent validation, checking, and approval processes. The researcher submitted these documents to their adviser for scrutiny, feedback, and eventual approval. Once endorsed by the adviser, they were then forwarded to the head of the agency for final approval.

Upon receiving approval from the relevant authorities, the researcher coordinated with the jail unit to organize the logistics for scheduling and implementing the interviews. This involved liaising with the appropriate personnel to ensure smooth execution of the data collection process within the designated timeframe.

With the logistical arrangements in place, the interview guide questionnaires were distributed to the intended participants. Subsequently, one-on-one interviews and observations were conducted concurrently, allowing participants sufficient time to provide thoughtful responses. The researcher actively engaged with the participants, encouraging open communication and facilitating a conducive environment for sharing their experiences.

Following the completion of data collection, the researcher collected the questionnaires, gathered relevant data, and compiled all information obtained during the interviews and observations. This comprehensive compilation formed the basis for further analysis and interpretation, enabling the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions and insights from the study findings.

Treatment of Data

In conducting the research, the researcher employed coding and thematic analysis as crucial tools to categorize and analyze the gathered data. These methods were essential for organizing the information in a structured manner, allowing for a systematic exploration of the research questions. Drawing from the insights of Kenne (2016), the analysis aimed to transition from a broad understanding of the data to identifying underlying patterns and formulating specific research inquiries.

During the data analysis phase, the researcher followed a structured approach. Initially, data were collected through one-on-one interviews, enabling the researcher to gather firsthand perspectives and experiences from the participants. Subsequently, the collected data were meticulously organized by identifying commonalities and connections among various data points. This process facilitated the identification of recurring themes and patterns within the dataset.

Following the organization of data, the researcher proceeded to construct codes, which served as labels or descriptors for the different aspects of the collected information. These codes helped in systematically categorizing and analyzing the data, enabling the researcher to derive meaningful insights and interpretations.

As the analysis progressed, the data were thoroughly examined to extract insights and identify key findings. These insights formed the basis for generating implications and drawing conclusions relevant to the research objectives. By critically evaluating the data, the researcher was able to identify trends, relationships, and significant observations, which informed the formulation of recommendations and measures pertaining to the research topic.

Moreover, the researcher ensured the inclusion of actual responses from the interviews in the analysis process. By incorporating direct quotes and verbatim responses from the participants, the analysis maintained a grounded approach, ensuring that the interpretations were firmly rooted in the participants' perspectives and experiences.

Ultimately, the gathered information, insights derived from the analysis, and interpretations formed a robust foundation for developing recommendations and measures aimed at addressing the research topic. Through a rigorous and systematic analysis process, the researcher was able to uncover valuable insights and contribute meaningfully to the existing knowledge in the field.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were prioritized to uphold the rights and well-being of all participants involved. These considerations were fundamental in ensuring that the study adhered to ethical guidelines and principles.

One of the key ethical considerations addressed was the protection of participants' confidentiality and anonymity. Participants, which included jail officers, Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL), and their electronic visitors, were given the option to maintain their anonymity. They were assured that their participation in the study was voluntary and would not result in any repercussions regarding their status or treatment within the jail facility. For individuals who chose not to disclose certain information, strict confidentiality measures were implemented to safeguard their data and privacy.

Additionally, risk management strategies were implemented to prioritize the safety of all participants throughout the research process. This involved identifying and mitigating any potential risks or harms that participants might encounter during their involvement in the study.

The selection criteria for participants were carefully designed to ensure fairness and avoid discrimination. These criteria were based on the nature of the study and aimed to include diverse perspectives representative of the population under investigation. The participants' anonymity, the confidentiality of their responses, and the data gathered were protected.

Furthermore, the study recognized its ethical obligation to disseminate findings responsibly. This involved sharing research outcomes with relevant stakeholders, including the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), the Baguio City Jail-Male Dormitory, and other relevant entities. By sharing findings, the study aimed to contribute to policy development and academic discourse while ensuring that the information was used responsibly and ethically.

Overall, these ethical considerations were integrated into the study's design and methodology to uphold the ethical integrity of the research and prioritize the well-being of all participants involved.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Impact of Electronic Visitation on Family Dynamics and Relationships of PDLs.

The discussion below emphasizes the impact of electronic visitation on family dynamics and relationships of PDLs. The following were the themes that emerged based from the result of the study.

Emotional Aspect

On the emotional well-being and family relationships, participants in the study reported significant improvements in their emotional well-being and family relationships as a result of electronic visitation programs.

The impact of electronic visitation on the emotional connection between incarcerated individuals and their families was explored through responses from key informants. The findings revealed diverse experiences and perceptions regarding this aspect of electronic visitation programs.

Key Informants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 *expressed overwhelmingly positive sentiments about the emotional impact of electronic visitation on their relationships with their families. They described feelings of relief, closeness, and enhanced bonding as a result of being able to communicate with their families through electronic means.* For instance, Key Informant 1 mentioned that *electronic visitation eased their anxiety, while Key Informant 6 highlighted how it relieved their sadness.* Similarly, Key Informant 7 and 8 emphasized *feeling closer and more open to their families because of electronic visitation.*

These findings are consistent with social support theories, such as the Social Support Theory proposed by Cobb (1976) and the Social Exchange Theory by Homans (1958), which posit that social connections and interactions play a crucial role in enhancing emotional well-being and coping mechanisms. By providing a platform for regular communication and support, electronic visitation programs facilitate the exchange of emotional support between incarcerated individuals and their families, thereby strengthening their emotional connections.

The majority of participants reported positive effects on their emotional connection with their families. They mentioned that electronic visitation eased their anxiety and provided a sense of relief by being able to chat with their families. Participants also mentioned that electronic visitation removed stress and made them happy to talk to their families and friends. As Key Informant 7 stated *"I've become closer to my family now"*. They felt more connected and closer to their families. The ability to see the smiles of their loved

ones and share their feelings provided a sense of comfort and improved emotional well-being as manifested in the statement of Informant 6 “It impacts me a lot by relieving my sadness”.

These findings are consistent with studies that highlight the importance of maintaining family connections and emotional support for incarcerated individuals. Research has shown that strong family ties and emotional support contribute to better mental health and overall well-being among prisoners (Nurse et al., 2019; Poehlmann-Tynan et al., 2019). Communicating with family members through electronic visitation programs provides an avenue for emotional expression, reassurance, and support, leading to improved emotional well-being.

Moreover, electronic visitation's positive emotional impact aligns with the attachment theory, which emphasizes the importance of secure attachments and emotional bonds for mental health and well-being (Bowlby, 1988). By maintaining a connection with their families, PDLs experience a sense of security, comfort, and emotional stability, which can positively influence their emotional well-being.

Conversely, Key Informant 10 “*reported experiencing emotional distance and detachment from their family due to the lack of physical presence and intimate connection during electronic interactions*”. This contrasting perspective underscores the complexity of emotional experiences within the context of electronic visitation programs.

These findings resonate with research on relational maintenance strategies, which suggests that physical presence and nonverbal cues are essential for maintaining intimacy and closeness in relationships (Stafford & Canary, 1991). Without these elements, individuals may perceive a sense of emotional distance and detachment, as observed in the experience of Key Informant 10.

Overall, these results suggest that electronic visitation can have a significant impact on the emotional connections between incarcerated individuals and their families. While it can foster feelings of closeness and support for many, it may also present challenges for others in maintaining a sense of intimacy and connection. Understanding these diverse experiences is crucial for tailoring electronic visitation programs to better meet the emotional needs of incarcerated individuals and their families. Further research and program development are warranted to address these nuanced emotional dynamics and promote positive familial relationships during incarceration.

On the behavioral effects and institutional dynamics, Furthermore, electronic visitation programs were found to have positive effects on institutional behavior and dynamics. In facilities where electronic visitation was implemented, participants reported a decrease in disciplinary incidents and violent behavior among inmates (Garcia & Martinez, 2021). The opportunity to communicate with their families served as a powerful motivator for inmates to adhere to institutional rules and regulations, contributing to a safer and more orderly environment within correctional facilities. Additionally, electronic visitation programs promoted a sense of accountability and responsibility among inmates, as they recognized the impact of their behavior on their ability to maintain contact with their families.

Psychological Aspect

The influence of electronic visitation on the mental health and psychological well-being of PDLs and their families was explored. The participants provided insights into the impact of electronic visitation on their mental health, experiences of psychological stress or relief, and the adequacy of psychological support provided by the electronic visitation system.

The majority of participants reported positive effects on their mental health due to electronic visitation. Key Informant 11, 13 and 14 said that “*electronic visitation improved their mental health, provided positive vibes, and bolstered their well-being*”. Some participants mentioned that electronic visitation

influenced their mental health depending on the nature of the news they received from the outside. Likewise, Electronic visitation was also found to help individuals overcome anxiety and depression, providing relief and support during challenging times.

Regarding psychological stress and relief, participants reported experiencing emotional, psychological, and spiritual relief through electronic visitation. Key informants 14, 16, 18, and 10, stated that “*Sharing problems and receiving advice from family members provided relief from psychological stress*” This implies that electronic visitation served as a means to express emotions, discuss problems, and receive support, contributing to the alleviation of psychological stress and the enhancement of overall well-being. In terms of the adequacy of psychological support provided by the electronic visitation system, the majority of participants expressed that “*it provided adequate support for them and their families*”. Key informants 1, 2, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 10 stated that “*their families as a support system and the relief they felt from being able to communicate and receive help, even from family members who were unable to visit them physically*”.

These findings align with research that highlights the positive impact of social support and communication on mental health and well-being, particularly in the context of incarceration (Nurse et al., 2019; Poehlmann-Tynan et al., 2019). The ability to maintain connections and receive emotional support through electronic visitation contributes to the psychological well-being of incarcerated individuals and their families.

Overall, the results suggest that electronic visitation has a positive influence on the mental health and psychological well-being of PDLs and their families. It provides a means for emotional support, stress relief, and a sense of psychological connection, contributing to overall psychological well-being.

On community reintegration and recidivism reduction, beyond the prison walls, electronic visitation programs play a crucial role in facilitating successful reintegration into society and reducing recidivism rates. By maintaining strong family connections during incarceration, inmates are better equipped to transition back into their communities upon release (Smith et al., 2020). Participants expressed optimism about their prospects post-release, citing the support and encouragement they received from their families through electronic visitation as instrumental in their rehabilitation journey (Johnson & Lee, 2019). Furthermore, reduced recidivism rates translate to significant benefits for society as a whole, including safer neighborhoods and decreased strain on the criminal justice system.

Social Aspect

The impact of electronic visitation programs on the relationships between PDLs and their families was explored, focusing on the social aspect. The participants provided insights into the changes in their social interactions, family dynamics, and the maintenance of social bonds through electronic visitation.

The majority of participants reported that *electronic visitation had a significant impact on their social interactions with their families, allowing for more frequent and convenient communication*. Key Informants 2, 3 and 8 mentioned that *electronic visitation enhanced their social interactions and made them feel more connected despite being physically separated*. Participants expressed that they were able to join family gatherings and communicate with their families anytime electronic visitation provided an accessible channel to connect with family and friends, promoting open communication and strengthening family dynamics.

These findings are supported by theories such as social bonding theory, which suggests that strong social connections and support contribute to positive psychological and social outcomes (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2010). By facilitating regular communication and interaction, electronic visitation helps maintain social

bonds and promotes a sense of belonging and support for incarcerated individuals.

The positive impact of electronic visitation on family dynamics aligns with research that highlights the importance of maintaining family connections for incarcerated individuals. Studies have shown that strong family ties and support contribute to better mental health, reduced recidivism rates, and successful reintegration into society (Nurse et al., 2019; Poehlmann-Tynan et al., 2019). Electronic visitation programs provide an avenue for maintaining social bonds, promoting family involvement, and enhancing communication, which positively impacts the social dynamics of PDLs and their families.

To enhance the effectiveness of electronic visitation programs from a jail officer's perspective, suggestions include providing comprehensive training for staff and PDLs on how to use the technology effectively, ensuring a stable and high-quality internet connection, and implementing measures to protect the privacy and dignity of PDLs and their families during electronic visits.

Overall, the results suggest that electronic visitation programs have a positive impact on the social interactions, family dynamics, and maintenance of social bonds between PDLs and their families. By facilitating communication and connection, electronic visitation promotes social support, strengthens family ties, and contributes to positive social outcomes.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Electronic visitation programs significantly improve the emotional well-being and familial connections of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), thus enhancing their overall quality of life. These programs provide essential support networks for PDLs, reducing feelings of isolation, contributing to improved mental health outcomes, and aiding in reducing recidivism rates. Furthermore, electronic visitation initiatives also strengthen family dynamics and sustain vital social bonds between PDLs and their families, ultimately promoting successful reintegration into society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study on the influence of electronic visitation (E-Dalaw) on family dynamics and relationships among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) within Baguio City Jail-Male and Female Dormitories, Baguio City, Philippines, the following may be recommended so that jail facilities can further harness the potential of electronic visitation programs to support the well-being of PDLs and their families and facilitate successful rehabilitation and reintegration efforts.

1. Expansion and improvement of electronic visitation programs which may involve investing in technology upgrades, ensuring reliable internet connectivity, and providing adequate training to staff and inmates to maximize the benefits of electronic visitation.
2. Addressing technical challenges and disparities to include providing technical support services for troubleshooting issues, and implementing policies to ensure equitable access to electronic visitation for all Persons Deprived of Liberty.
3. Integration of mental health support services which may involve providing access to counseling or therapy sessions for both PDLs and their families to address emotional and psychological needs effectively.
4. Collaboration with community organizations which could include offering educational programs, job training opportunities, and social services to help families cope with the challenges of having a loved one incarcerated.
5. Evaluation and continuous improvement of the program which may include feedback from inmates,

- families, and staff members to ensure that the programs meet the evolving needs of all stakeholders.
6. Promotion of family engagement in rehabilitation which may involve organizing family counseling sessions, parenting classes, and workshops on conflict resolution to strengthen familial relationships and support successful reintegration into society.

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