

## NARRATIVES OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND CHANGE: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF MONTHLY REPORTING IN PROBATION REHABILITATION PATHWAYS AND SUPERVISION CHALLENGES

### *NARRATIVAS DE RESPONSABILIZAÇÃO E MUDANÇA: UMA ANÁLISE QUALITATIVA DE RELATÓRIOS MENSAIS EM PROGRAMAS DE REABILITAÇÃO EM LIBERDADE CONDICIONAL E DESAFIOS DE SUPERVISÃO*

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**Filibert Patrick F. Tad-Awan\***

\*University Of Baguio, Baguio City, Philippines

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0193-9189>

[ftad-awan@e.ubaguio.edu](mailto:ftad-awan@e.ubaguio.edu)

**Arlene R. Lapitan\***

\*University Of Baguio, Baguio City, Philippines

Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-8222-769X>

[20247219@s.ubaguio.edu](mailto:20247219@s.ubaguio.edu)

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#### **Abstract**

This study examines the lived experiences of probationers and probation officers on mandatory monthly reporting as a core supervision mechanism of probation in the Philippines. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of nine probationers and five probation officers in Isabela Province. The inquiry explored how monthly reporting influenced behavioral, psychological, and social dimensions of rehabilitation, and the challenges encountered during its implementation. Thematic analysis revealed that probationers perceive monthly reporting as a constructive process that fosters accountability, self-discipline, and reflective change, thereby supporting rehabilitation pathways. However, both probationers and probation officers identified persistent structural challenges, particularly logistical barriers and resource constraints, which undermine consistent compliance and effective supervision. These interconnected challenges were found to adversely affect monitoring efficiency and the overall rehabilitative potential of probation supervision. The findings underscore the need for adaptive supervision strategies, including more flexible and technology-enabled reporting mechanisms, strengthened collaboration with local social service agencies, and improved alignment between probationers' rehabilitative needs and available institutional support. By foregrounding experiential narratives, this study

#### **Resumo**

*Este estudo examina as experiências vividas por indivíduos em liberdade condicional e por agentes de liberdade condicional em relação à obrigatoriedade de comparecimento mensal como mecanismo central de supervisão da liberdade condicional nas Filipinas. Utilizando uma abordagem qualitativa descritiva, foram realizadas entrevistas semiestruturadas com uma amostra intencional de nove indivíduos em liberdade condicional e cinco agentes de liberdade condicional na província de Isabela. A pesquisa explorou como o comparecimento mensal influencia as dimensões comportamentais, psicológicas e sociais da reabilitação, bem como os desafios encontrados durante sua implementação. A análise temática revelou que os indivíduos em liberdade condicional percebem o comparecimento mensal como um processo construtivo que promove a responsabilização, a autodisciplina e a mudança reflexiva, apoiando, assim, os caminhos da reabilitação. No entanto, tanto os indivíduos em liberdade condicional quanto os agentes de liberdade condicional identificaram desafios estruturais persistentes, particularmente barreiras logísticas e restrições de recursos, que prejudicam a adesão consistente e a supervisão eficaz. Constatou-se que esses desafios interconectados afetam negativamente a eficiência do monitoramento e o potencial geral de reabilitação da supervisão da liberdade condicional. Os resultados destacam a necessidade de estratégias de supervisão*



contributes qualitative insights to community corrections literature and informs policy-relevant reforms in probation supervision.

**Keywords:** Monthly Reporting, Probation Supervision, Rehabilitation Pathways, Compliance, Accountability.

*adaptativas, incluindo mecanismos de relatório mais flexíveis e facilitados pela tecnologia, colaboração reforçada com agências locais de assistência social e melhor alinhamento entre as necessidades de reabilitação dos indivíduos em liberdade condicional e o apoio institucional disponível. Ao priorizar narrativas experienciais, este estudo contribui com insights qualitativos para a literatura sobre correções comunitárias e subsidia reformas relevantes para políticas de supervisão em liberdade condicional.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Relatórios Mensais. Supervisão em Liberdade Condicional. Caminhos de Reabilitação. Cumprimento das Condições. Responsabilização.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Probation is designed to facilitate the reintegration of offenders into society while maintaining public safety. Effective probation supervision contributes to lowering recidivism and supporting recovery, making it a vital component of the justice system.

Aside from crime prevention, the reform of offenders who have committed crime and their reintegration to society as law-abiding citizens are the goals of a modern and more holistic justice system. It leans on the principle that addressing crime and maintaining public safety cannot be achieved by incarceration and retribution alone, the justice system must also recognize the values of human dignity, equity, and second chances. The Philippine Parole and Probation Administration (PPA) is a key government agency in the country that commits to this mission through a range of community-based treatment programs that support individualized supervision and promote the successful reintegration of probationers into society (Philippine Information Agency, 2024).

While agencies like the PPA continue to intensify their programs, there remain issues such as ensuring consistent compliance with probation conditions, especially mandatory monthly reporting. Globally, recidivism rates among probationers show considerable variation, with an efficient review indicating two-year re-arrest rates between 26% and 60%, and reconviction rates from 20% to 63% (Yukhnenko, Sridhar, & Fazel, 2020). In the United States, evidence suggests that those who complete probation have lower recidivism rates than those on supervised release, although the risk of re-arrest remains (Baber, 2010). While national data on post-probation recidivism in the

Philippines is limited, the PPA continues to look for innovative and efficient ways to manage caseloads and reduce reoffending among its clients (Manila Bulletin, 2022). Evaluating the effectiveness of mandatory monthly reporting, a cornerstone of probation supervision, is therefore still crucial for enhancing rehabilitation results and lowering recidivism rates.

With these, the current study aims to assess the impact of mandatory monthly reporting on probation, being one of the standard conditions of probation under Philippine law, in relation to its contribution to reducing recidivism and sustaining the rehabilitation of offenders. In this study, ‘impact’ will be understood as the measurable influence of regular monthly reporting on probationers’ compliance with program requirements, incidence of recidivism, and indicators of sustained rehabilitation, such as employment, community reintegration, or behavioral improvements. By examining how regular check-ins with probation officers influence behavior change, accountability, and reintegration outcomes, the research seeks to provide evidence-based insights that can inform the improvement of community-based correctional strategies within the Philippine justice system.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

By general definition, probation is a legal sanction that is an alternative to incarceration, allowing convicted individuals to be retained in the community while undergoing monitoring and supervision. In the set period for the probation, individuals are required to adhere to specific conditions and rules stipulated by the presiding court. The main goal of probation is the guidance, support, and resource provision for individuals who have committed criminal behavior (Carlson, 2024). While the conditions imposed on probationers vary depending on their crime, they may include refraining from any criminal activities; maintaining consistent employment; avoiding alcohol and drugs; appearing in required court hearings; participating in counseling or therapy; staying away from specific areas of the community; obtaining approval before leaving the country; paying fines as ordered by the court; and by regularly meeting with probation officers as scheduled (Kuadli, 2022).

Under Philippine law, probation is governed by Presidential Decree No. 968 known as the Probation Law of 1976. It outlines the probation system and eligibility

criteria and identifies the conditions and procedures for implementation. The main determinant for eligibility is that the applicant is sentenced to imprisonment of not more than 6 years for a single offense. A secondary consideration is that the applicant must not have any prior conviction which might have led to a prison sentence. Offenses ineligible for probation includes those punishable by death or life imprisonment as well as drug-related crimes (Respicio & Co., 2024). As stipulated by the Parole and Probation Administration of the Philippines' Department of Justice, the country benefits from the institution of the Probation Law as it allows the government to spend less on incarceration. In addition, it provides the offender and his/her family with the psychological toll associated with imprisonment.

## **2.1 Factors influencing the success of probation**

The impact and effectiveness of probation in recovery success, nonetheless, is not always guaranteed as there are several determinants or factors at play. As indicated by Buckley (2023), probation is a complex process involving the utilization of several skills and qualities that are needed in working towards the outcome. In a literature review, Diaz et al. (2023) examined the effect of several factors on probation. These included probation officer behavior, officer-client relationships, caseload size, supervision intensity, monetary sanctions, probation client characteristics, and programming and services. The review yielded mixed results but the most consistent factors associated with positive impact are officer-client relationships involving trust, support, respect, and empathy, reduced caseload sizes, and cognitive behavioral therapy program. In line with this are the findings of Wodahl et al. (2022) and Wodahl and Garland (2018) which signified the positive effect of high-quality relationships between probationers and supervising officers for increasing compliance and decreasing the possibility of recidivism.

Demographics and probation characteristics were investigated for their impact on the success of probation in the United States through an analysis of 6,600 cases. Findings indicated a 70.8 percent successful outcome. This was associated with the probationer being female and of older age, Hispanic, having higher educational background, and no unpaid fines. In contrast, lack of success in probation was associated with being Black, having previous records, and convictions of property crimes. The results have implications for probation policy and practice: understanding factors linked to probation

success can inform policies, improve decision-making, and help probation officers recognize individuals at higher risk of failure. This allows for the creation of evidence-based, community-specific policies and supervision strategies (Turner et al., 2022).

## **2.2 Challenges and critiques of probation systems**

Interestingly, other studies conducted in the US showed contrasting results. In a study, by Roth and Kajeepeta (2021), data indicated that only about 60 percent of individuals undergoing probation complete it successfully. Lopoo et al. (2023) also highlighted the declining effectiveness of the program in the United States. Many people on probation face long sentences and must follow a lot of rules, which can be unclear or even contradictory. This makes it hard to comply, leading to minor violations that are not new crimes but can still result in jail or prison. Harding et al. (2022) corroborate this in their study, indicating that the current probationary and parole systems lack positive outcomes. They do not reduce crime; and on the contrary, often trap people in the justice system. The laws and guidelines governing them can also be overly punitive, causing widespread harm to individuals, families, and communities. As such, the systems ultimately fail to help people reintegrate socially and economically. With this, the researchers call for major reforms, including shifting resources away from monitoring and control toward support systems.

## **2.3 Role of supervision and regular reporting**

When His Majesty's (HM) Inspectorate of Probation examined progress over the past four years and areas for improvement in thousands of probation cases in the UK, the analysis revealed that cases with high-quality supervision had a 24 percent-point higher sentence completion rate and a 14 percent-point lower reoffending rate compared to those with inadequate supervision. This signifies that better-quality probation supervision significantly improves sentence completion rates and reduces reoffending (Webster, 2023). This was also noted in the work of Stephenson (2020). A similar perspective was shared by Rizer et al. (2020) who stipulated that probation must be implemented in alignment with societal values for them to be effective.

In another study, probation officers' perspectives on factors that contribute to the success of juvenile probation programs were investigated. Results showed that aspects of probation such as mentoring, education, and mental health treatment only contributed to the success of the probation program if family support was adequate (Schaefer et al., 2022; Settle, 2022; Robertson, 2021). In relation to the aforementioned study, the findings of Li et al. (2018) showed that the absence of a supportive external pedagogical climate or PC was the strongest factor. In detail, key reinforcing factors included strong attitudes toward agreements and conditions, high motivation for treatment, perseverance, school/work engagement, and low risks in peer relationships and education/employment.

The discussions establish that the effectiveness of probation in supporting recovery varies due to multiple influencing factors. Research highlights that strong officer-client relationships, smaller caseloads, and cognitive behavioral therapy programs contribute to better outcomes. High-quality probation supervision has been shown to improve outcomes. Additionally, research on juvenile probation emphasizes that mentoring, education, and mental health treatment are only effective when supported by strong family involvement. Factors such as motivation, adherence to conditions, engagement in school or work, and positive peer relationships also play a crucial role in successful probation outcomes.

These findings suggest that probation policies should prioritize quality supervision, reduced caseloads, and rehabilitative programs like cognitive behavioral therapy to improve success rates. Additionally, juvenile probation programs should integrate family support and emphasize personal development factors such as education, employment, and positive peer influence. Tailoring probation strategies to these key elements can enhance rehabilitation efforts and reduce recidivism. Despite the comprehensive literature on probation success factors, few studies have isolated and assessed the contribution of structured monthly reporting, which is in fact, a core compliance mechanism for rehabilitation and recidivism outcomes. This gap is critical, given its mandatory nature under PPA guidelines

## **2.4 Community-based probation programs in the Philippines**

Research conducted in the Philippines for example highlights the significance of these. As shown in the qualitative investigation conducted by Paudac et al. (2024). Results

showed that probationers in Ozamiz City's community-based correction programs experienced significant personal growth through structured activities like community service and educational lectures. These programs promoted self-discipline, positive behavior change, and better decision-making, highlighting their role in rehabilitation. By fostering community engagement, they helped individuals redefine their identities, gain acceptance, and contribute positively to society, ultimately reducing the risk of reoffending. Similar to this, a case study detailing the lived experiences of a probationer from Quirino Province also signified the positive effect of the program. In detail, the probationer indicated improved social skills, behavioral change, positive outlook, spiritual growth, and livelihood programs which led to employable technical skills as the outcomes of his probation (Mariano, 2019). Related to these findings, the study of Presado and Ballado (2019) also indicates the effectiveness of the thrusts of the parole and probation administration in Northern Samar as perceived by the probationers and parolees; specifically, therapeutic communities, restorative justice, and volunteerism were found to be effective. Similar results were cited by Chan (2021) for the parole and probation program in Iligan City.

While local literature may indicate better outcomes for the probationary program in the country compared to its Western counterparts, it should be noted that there might still be areas for improvement and enhancement that can make it more effective. As indicated by Horowitz (2020), the review of evidence on best practices aims to recommend policies and practices that improve outcomes for individuals under supervision, and even their families and communities. This can aid in the reduction of the number of people on probation and parole, as well as minimize technical revocations. A similar perspective was indicated by Moore and Kenton (2021), highlighting the significance of using evidence-based decision-making for improving probation services.

## **2.5 Policy recommendations and research gaps**

For the abovementioned reason, the researcher developed an interest in exploring other factors or circumstances that may impact the outcomes of probation. Considering the literature discussed herein, it was notable that a majority of the analysis conducted signified the importance of supervision as recommendations for improving or reforming

the programs, but none directly investigated its role and outright impact on the program itself.

As per the Omnibus rules on parole and probation of the PPA (2022), probationers are mandatorily required to “report to the assigned SPPO, STPPO, PPOII or PPOI on the case at least once a month during the Period of probation at such time and place as may be specified by the Probation Office.” This requirement ensures regular monitoring and accountability, which is essential for the success of probation programs. This regular check-in additionally provides an opportunity for probation officers to assess progress, address potential issues, and offer support to help probationers meet the conditions of their probation. Moreover, the regular reporting also reinforces the probationer's commitment to rehabilitation and encourages consistent engagement with the probation system, ultimately contributing to better outcomes.

This research therefore seeks to critically examine the role of mandatory monthly reporting in the probation process and its impact on two key objectives of the justice system: reducing recidivism and supporting the long-term rehabilitation of offenders. Specifically, the study aims to determine whether consistent and structured contact with probation officers through monthly reporting contributes to improved behavioral compliance, greater accountability, and successful reintegration into the community. After all, monthly reporting functions not only as a compliance mechanism but also as a platform for ongoing support, behavioral monitoring, and trust-building between officer and client. Understanding its efficacy is essential for optimizing supervision protocols and reducing recidivism. By analyzing patterns of compliance and rehabilitation outcomes, the study intends to offer evidence-based insights that can guide policy enhancements and strengthen the implementation of community-based corrections under the Philippine Parole and Probation Administration. Ultimately, the research aspires to contribute to more effective and humane approaches in the criminal justice system by emphasizing supervision strategies that balance public safety with opportunities for personal transformation.

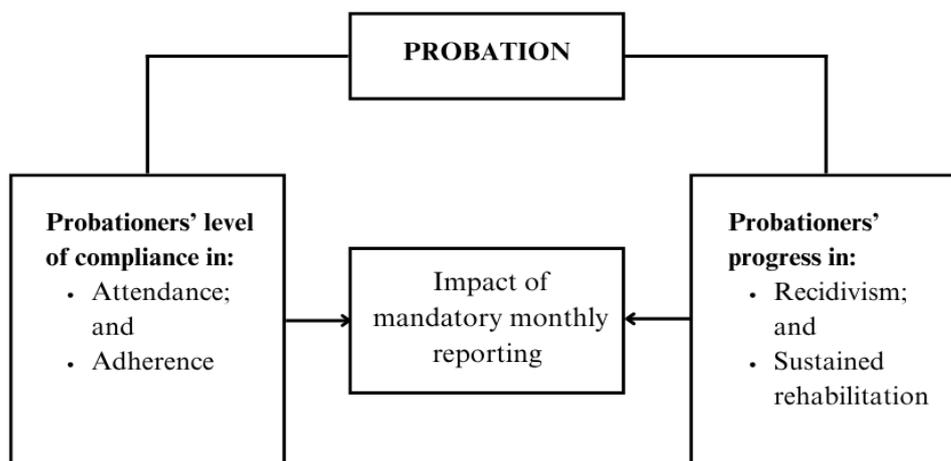
The outcome of this study will be the development of a practical training module designed specifically for probation officers. This module will be grounded in the findings of the research and will focus on enhancing the effectiveness of monthly reporting as a tool for reducing recidivism and sustaining offender rehabilitation. It will provide probation officers with evidence-based strategies, communication techniques, and

monitoring practices to better support probationers in meeting their conditions, addressing behavioral risks, and successfully reintegrating into society. By translating research insights into actionable guidance, the training module aims to strengthen the capacity of field officers and promote consistency, responsiveness, and rehabilitative intent in the implementation of probation supervision.

## 2.6 Conceptual framework

**Figure 1**

*Schematic Illustration of the Study*



The conceptual framework of this study is anchored on exploring the impact of mandatory monthly reporting as a central mechanism within the Philippine probation system. At the core of the framework is the variable 'mandatory monthly reporting,' which is a structured compliance activity required of all probationers under the Parole and Probation Administration (PPA). This is hypothesized to influence two major outcome variables: the probationers' level of compliance and their progress during and after the probation period. Compliance refers to how well probationers fulfill their obligations under supervision, measured through attendance and adherence to prescribed behaviors and schedules. Progress, on the other hand, focuses on recidivism and sustained rehabilitation, which are key indicators of the success of probation as a rehabilitative tool.

The probationers' level of compliance will be determined by analyzing attendance records and adherence reports documented by probation officers. This includes the

number of monthly reports attended, punctuality, and the fulfillment of obligations such as participation in mandated programs and avoidance of violations. Concurrent to this, the probationers' progress will be measured by their post-probation outcomes, specifically the presence or absence of recidivism, and evidence of reintegration into society as seen in stable employment, family reunification, or continued law-abiding behavior. These data will be derived from document analysis of case records, which contain detailed officer assessments and follow-up information.

Additionally, key informant interviews will be conducted with probation officers to gain a deeper understanding of implementation practices, challenges, and policy considerations. Through this framework, the study seeks to contribute to improving probation practices by highlighting the value of structured reporting in reducing recidivism and promoting long-term behavioral change among probationers.

## **2.7 Objectives of the study**

This study aims to assess the impact of monthly reporting on probation. Specifically, it sought to know how monthly reporting facilitates behavioral, psychological, and social rehabilitation among probationers, and identify the challenges experienced by probationers and probation officers in the monthly reporting process.

## **3 METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a pure qualitative research design with a descriptive and phenomenological approach to explore the impact of monthly reporting on probationers' rehabilitation and supervision, focusing on understanding the lived experiences of 9 probationers and probation officers from the Parole and Probation Administration in Isabela, Region 2, Philippines, selected purposively for their direct involvement in probation monitoring; data were collected through validated semi-structured interviews featuring open-ended questions that encouraged detailed narratives about how monthly reporting influences behavioral, psychological, and social aspects of rehabilitation, with the researcher ensuring ethical standards such as informed consent, confidentiality, and respectful engagement, and analyzed using thematic analysis by transcribing audio-recorded interviews, coding, and identifying recurring themes, while maintaining

reflexivity and transparency to authentically represent participant perspectives and improve probation program practices.

## 4 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

These findings highlight the need for targeted strategies such as flexible reporting options, digital tools, and expanded livelihood support to strengthen probation outcomes and reduce recidivism risks.

### 4.1 Behavioral rehabilitation

Results from the thematic analysis of participants' responses to the interview revealed *Positive habit formation* and *Improved filial relations and connections* as emergent themes in probationers' behavioral rehabilitation due to their monthly reporting.

For an instance, P4 explained: *"I changed my behavior, ma'am, to avoid reverting to...misconduct, ma'am. I avoid misconduct, ma'am to avoid going back to prison."* This statement implies the fear the probationer's aversion to committing misconduct since he relates it to detention. This increased awareness was also observed by a probation officer, PO1 as follows: *"Yes, there is an increase in self-awareness, [they] became more cautious, more disciplined. Example, they did not commit any other offense during and after probation"*.

Other probationers indicated positive habit formation by adjusting their behavior and self-regulating, specifically by avoiding bad influences, either from people or vices. P6 said, *"When I wasn't reporting yet, ma'am, I was a drinker back then, yes ma'am. But not anymore, yes, ma'am. I've gone straight...only coffee-coffee no)..."* Another also talked about keeping away from individuals who can influence him negatively: *"That's it...[I] avoid...people, to change...those who can bring harm."* For P7, the constant reminders they received during monthly reports prompted him to self-regulate his behavior. He explained, *"Whenever I report, I saw how they influenced our mindset that...we must be careful, to work well, and for protection. What that means is the reminders they give here serve as protection for you to not engage in wrongdoings. So, the effect of that is we become more careful...because of what do you call those? Those reminders."*

The literature review conducted by Billore et al. (2023) cites self-regulation as an important life skill that is strongly linked not only to the achievement of goals, but also in avoiding harmful behaviors. This was the case with the probationers as per their statements in the interview, in which they indicated how they actively self-regulated to avoid reverting to old habits and past misconduct.

A secondary theme of *Improved filial relations and connections* was also identified as some probationers indicated that they developed appreciation for their families while they were reporting. P1 said: “*All I think about now is my family, ma’am. They have been so good to me despite my wrongdoings. I feel like crying whenever that crosses my mind.*” P6 also signified how he directed more focus to his family: “*All of that disappeared, I just focused on my family.*” This connects to what Ludwig et al. (2020) stipulate that mindful awareness of experience changes the reward value of habits, thus resulting to natural behavior alteration. With P1 and P6, their probation enabled them to shift their focus to their families, thus enforcing the new or renewed habit of connecting better to their family members.

All in all, increased mindfulness and awareness lead individuals to naturally make more intentional choices, superseding automatic and negative behaviors (Schuman-Olivier et al., 2020). For the probationers, this aided them in replacing their negative habits and associations.

## 4.2 Psychological rehabilitation

In terms of their psychological transformation, themes that arose from the participants’ statements included *Psychological restructuring*, *Psychological empowerment and self-efficacy*, and *Accountability and monitoring*. Of these, *Psychological restructuring* was the most dominant theme.

Probation officers noted of the psychological facilitation that monthly reporting had on the probationers, specifically in helping them gain more maturity. PO2 said: “*Better behavior. More punctual, more accountable*”. A probationer, P1 also spoke of this, saying, “*I am already mature, ma’am. But I became even more so because of them. Because of them. [I became more mature] with my thinkin.*”

Another probationer also signified he started to feel regret about his past actions and had realizations: “*...because I made a mistake. As they say, regret only comes in the*

*end...Now, ma'am,.. ever since I went on probation, ma'am, that was when I started to get to know about everything, ma'am."*

The others also signified how they changed from being insubordinate to being compliant. According to P6, *"Everything has changed, ma'am. From being disobedient before, it isn't like that anymore."* This trajectory of change was expounded on by a probation officer, PO4, who recounted observing shifts in the attitude of probationers as they go through the process: *"I once had an initial intake interview with a young man convicted of Violation of RA 9165. During the initial interview and the first few months of his supervision, he was withdrawn and defensive, giving very short answers and showing little interest in conversation. Over time, after consistent counseling and reminders of his potential, I observed a change in his demeanor and overall characteristics and aura, he became more open, started discussing his difficulties at work and at home, and even asked for advice on how to manage such difficulties."* The support given by the probation program for encouraging commitment to positive change was also mentioned by another probationer. P7 said, *What I learned here is that...there are ways by which one may be assisted to not make the same mistakes from the past."*

From these statements, it can be deduced that the probationers' psychological restructuring is a give-and-take process between them and the program they are in. Paudac et al. (2024) discuss this in their study about the lived experiences of probationers. Therein, the findings suggested the capability of probationary programs to instill positive behavior and attitudes to probationers, with the support of probationary officers.

#### **4.4 Social rehabilitation**

In the social aspect, an emergent theme among the participants' responses was *Interpersonal skill development*. As rationalized by Schippers et al. (2001), delinquent adults usually exhibit a lack of social skills and knowledge of pro-social behavior. They may also have anxiety in social situations. As such, rehabilitating them in this aspect is an important component of a probationary program. Fortunately, the probationers' experiences revealed facilitation of social skills. According to P9 for example, *it's more...we learned to cohere, to relate [with others]...Because it was...it was explained to us how to connect."*

Another probationer mentioned becoming more open in communicating with family: *“It’s ok...It’s ok because I always tell my wife about everything that we learn here in reporting.”* (P5). Similar to this, P6 also talked about his newfound closeness with his family as follows: *“I became...closer to my family, ma’am.”*

Apart from *Interpersonal skill development*, a minor theme that emerged was *Civic and community engagement* in which probationers found themselves provided with opportunities to engage in civic and community activities. According to P5, *“With this probation, ma’am, I experienced joining the Brigada for the first time, for community service, ma’am. I used to be just a homebody.”*

The experiences of the probationers are reminiscent of findings from Dioces et al. (2019) which showed that probationers’ experiences with the program revolved around training on awareness, social skill improvement, maintaining healthy relationships, and counseling aside from others such as livelihood opportunities. The abovementioned results emphasize the importance of rehabilitating probationers in regaining or relearning pro-social skills, considering that they are expected to fully reintegrate to the community after their probation.

#### **4.5 Challenges encountered by probationers**

While all the probationers expressed generally positive views about monthly reporting, they nonetheless cited some challenges they encountered. Likewise, the probation officers also shared experiences with the program that speak of the same barriers. As such an emergent theme, *Logistical obstacles*, was identified.

Under logistical obstacles, probationers pointed out transportation issues as a big challenge to the regularity of their reporting. P3, for example, said, *“The municipality is [far]...yes, ma’am, like last July, I wasn’t able to attend.”* P2 also shared a similar experience: *“One time, I was in Villa Concepcion to look after my crops...I couldn’t borrow a motorcycle, and there was a schedule for reporting...[I] am always late when the schedule is for afternoon).”*

Aside from transportation issues, P3 also opened up about his difficulty in complying to the monthly reporting due to financial constraints. He explained thus: *“Reporting is twice a month, how will I comply, ma’am, where will I get the money? But*

*last July, I reported on July 10, they asked me to return on the 25<sup>th</sup>. I wasn't able to make it, ma'am because...I didn't have the means).*”

The abovementioned matches the observations of probation officers, indicating its significant effect on the success of monthly reporting. PO5 stated: *“Some have limited access to communication tools which makes it difficult for them to provide updates”* and PO1 likewise exemplified thus: *“Far flung residence of client like San Mariano, mostly they cannot be contacted through cellphones.”*

PO5 also indicated another reason for logistical constraints experienced by the probationers: *“Some clients fail to report consistently due to work conflicts, distance and or personal circumstances.”* In line with this, the scheduling conflict of probationers' job and their monthly reporting was also cited by P8 and P9 who explained, *“My work, ma'am...sometimes...I'm in another location. I can't ask for permission [to take a leave]...there in Roxas, like that)”*; *“There are...times that I'm absent, one time, but I asked for permission [from probation officer], ma'am, because of work).”*

Because of all these, probation officer, PO4 is justified in saying that a common challenge in the monthly reporting of the probationers is non-compliance or absenteeism: *“Some probationers fail to report on time, often giving excuses related to work, sickness, financial difficulties, or simply a lack of commitment. This disrupts the monitoring process and raises concerns about their accountability.”*

This type of scenario had been discussed as a barrier contributing to non-compliance and recidivism among probationers (Ayeo-Eo & Jimmy, 2025; Ponton, 2025); thus, indicating that logistical issues are a common challenge for probationers even in other countries.

#### **4.6 Challenges encountered by probation officers**

Apart from the challenges faced by probationers, the probation officers also revealed their own difficulties in implementing and supervising the monthly reporting of the probationers for the program. Analysis of their statements specified *Resource constraints* as an emergent theme. Particular theme clusters include personnel and infrastructure shortage, as well as inadequacy of social support network.

For personnel and infrastructure shortage, officers indicated the lack of manpower and adequate facilities as an obstacle in the effective implementation of probationers'

monthly reporting. According to PO4, *“Having high caseloads with limited manpower greatly affects the service we can give, when one officer handles many clients, it reduces the time and attention that can be given to each client during monthly reports. This makes individualized supervision and counseling more difficult.”* The same perspective was also cited by PO5 who stated: *“Limited manpower and high caseload often reduce the amount of time that can be devoted to individualized monitoring and treatment.”*

When Fenellere et al. (2025) examined the experiences of parole and probation officers in a Philippine province, one main theme that was identified is *Disparity between employee and workload*. Similar to this finding, interview results with the probation officers in the current study show their inadequacy in completely catering to the needs of probationers due to their limited number.

Aside from the aforementioned, a minor theme cluster identified was inadequacy of social support network. As cited by PO4, *“Another limitation is the lack of resources and rehabilitation programs in some communities. While we can identify the needs of probationers, there are instances where referral options are scarce or inaccessible. This gap hinders full reintegration of our clients into their communities.”* This statement connects to some of the statements of the probationers about their concerns of reintegrating to their communities, specifically in acquiring work. As cited by P9, *“...for me, it’s the...job application, in starting out...because...we are not...we are always discriminated in terms of the police clearance...maybe it’s been about 20 times that I have applied [for a job]...before...someone...someone took a chance to trust me.”*

This problem has already been documented by previous studies; hence the introduction of community-based reentry programs for ex-offenders (Ivery, 2020). However, as shown in the responses of both probationers and probation officers, these ventures may not be working as effectively as expected for the probationers, especially in terms of their livelihood concerns.

#### **4.7 Strategies for enhancing monthly reporting practices for improved rehabilitation**

As the challenges in the conduct of probationers’ monthly reporting has been identified, the following have been formulated as strategies that may be implemented to improve the rehabilitation process.

#### 4.7.1 Logistic improvement and support

This was the most dominant challenge identified by both probationers and probation officers. As such, the study participants also cited some suggestions which they believe can address this issue. Adaptability of communication channels for inclusivity was proposed, especially since some probationers lack the technological resource to keep up with announcements and other reporting concerns. P2 observed: *“In terms of communication...there are those who...some of our fellow probationers, it’s like...like the one I drove over somewhere...in Pinoma. He didn’t have a cellphone, something like that, ma’am, that’s why they can’t attend...they don’t know [the schedule] because it’s all through [phone communication]...maybe, barangay officials can be contacted [to tell him the schedule].”*

As such, an increased flexibility in monthly reporting scheduling and location is recommended. The following may be considered for this:

##### 1. Establishment of satellite reporting locations

Temporary reporting stations in municipalities and barangays can be established through partnerships with LGUs. These reporting stations do not need to be operational on a daily basis, but only on specific reporting schedules of probationers. This alleviates issues of transportation, budget, and scheduling conflicts.

To note, other countries have already leveraged decentralized reporting for probationers. In New South Wales for example, a Remote Service Delivery Team (RSDT) is employed to provide remote supervision for probationers in distant locations to address geographical barriers (Corrective Services NSW, 2025). Similarly, Thailand established community justice centers for localized and flexible catering of supervision and rehabilitation of ex-offenders in the grassroots level (Thailand Institute of Justice, 2015; Kittayarak, 2010).

Feedback from these undertakings has been positive, indicating how the restructuring of service delivery can address challenges in logistics such as the ones identified in the current study.

##### 2. Video-conferencing and digital service linkages

Technology can also aid reporting, specifically by enabling digital check-ins through platforms such as Zoom or Google Meet. While it is true that some

probationers lack the technological resource to do this on their own, partnerships with LGUs can address this concern. Barangays can allocate infrastructure (internet access, computers, etc.) during monthly reports for probationers within specific premises. Even the submission of documents for the reports may be facilitated digitally.

According to Gordon (2025), the difficulties in probation case management, required check-ins, and paper-based management may be solved by shifting traditional manual practices to technology-driven approaches.

This was also suggested by a probation officer, PO4 as follows: *“I believe that one of the initiatives that the Central Office are preparing is the digital record-keeping systems that could be enhanced to streamline documentation. This would reduce administrative burden, allow officers to spend more quality time with probationers, and make tracking progress more efficient.”* PO5 also went along the same lines, recommending the *“use of digital reporting tools or mobile applications [that] could help the efficiency and record-keeping.”*

#### 4.7.2 Targeted practical and financial support

Both probationers and probation officers noted the limitations of the support systems in place at present. Probation officer PO5 for an instance stated, *“Probationers/ Parolees need strong support systems and livelihood opportunities to help them become productive members of society”*; and PO4 specified thus: *“Stable employment and livelihood opportunities are crucial as many of the clients re-offend due to financial struggles, so access to skills training, job placement programs, or small livelihood assistance would give them a sense of stability and purpose.”*

A probationer, P3, was also very specific with his suggestions. He said, *“Just additions on...livelihood programs, especially for those who are incapable, they should be included in TUPAD, or any of that sort...or TESDA. There are programs like those, ma’am. Although of course, there are some who hadn’t discovered their talents yet...but they can be...those under probation...that can help them in their livelihood.”*

For this concern, the following are suggested as possible strategies:

1. Transportation vouchers or subsidies

This may be a temporary and short-term support for those who lack the financial resources to comply to monthly reporting.

## 2. Streamlining of social services partnerships

At present, the Parole and Probation Administration (PPA) is already connected to agencies and groups that provide social services to probationers. But as stated, there are some concerns that the services are either limited or even untapped.

- a. Inter-agency meetings and workshops may be conducted to streamline the implementation of these undertakings.
- b. Information sharing is also recommended given that some of the probationers seem to lack knowledge about the services provided to them.
- c. Decentralization of service delivery may also be done such as barangay caravans or satellite reporting locations.
- d. Skill training may also be tailored to provide relevance to probationers' capabilities and job market demands.

## 4.8 Theoretical implications

The findings of the study extend theoretical understanding of community-based corrections by demonstrating that structured monthly reporting serves as a key mechanism for fostering behavioral self-regulation, psychological restructuring, and social rehabilitation among probationers. Mandatory reporting promotes accountability routines and repeated officer–client interactions, which in turn strengthen self-awareness, pro-social behavior, and cognitive shifts necessary for long-term desistance. These results reinforce and refine existing supervision-quality frameworks by showing that frequency and consistency of contact operate not only as compliance tools but also as catalysts of internal change, thereby positioning monthly reporting as a pivotal theoretical element in models linking supportive supervision to reduced recidivism and improved rehabilitation trajectories.

## 4.9 Practical implications

Practically, the study underscores the urgent need for probation agencies to address structural and logistical barriers that hinder effective monthly reporting.

Recommendations include adopting flexible and technology-enabled reporting options, decentralizing service delivery through satellite or barangay reporting stations, and establishing digital check-in and record systems to reduce access barriers. The findings also highlight the importance of strengthening manpower, enhancing inter-agency coordination, and expanding livelihood, skills training, and psychosocial support programs to assist probationers in overcoming financial, transportation, and employment-related obstacles. Implementing these improvements can increase compliance, reduce absenteeism, support more effective monitoring by probation officers, and ultimately enhance the overall rehabilitative impact of the Philippine probation system.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussions, it may be concluded that a majority of the probationers have a positive perception of their experiences in complying to monthly reports, albeit they also identified challenges they encountered. The main driver of non-compliance and absenteeism were logistical issues such as transportation difficulties, financial constraints, and scheduling conflicts. Similar themes from the probation officers' statements corroborate said claims, indicating that these are significant barriers that affect the probation monitoring process.

In the case of the probation officers, resource constraints have been found to be barriers to effective supervision. A majority of the officers indicated that they face substantial difficulties in supervising their caseworks as there was a disparity between their number and that of the probationers. This limits the support and attention they can provide to each individual case, hindering the effectiveness of their monitoring.

As such an integrated approach is needed to address these interconnected challenges such as the strategies formulated above.

Strategic and evidence-based improvements are suggested to address the logistical and resource issues identified. Flexible and technology enabled systems, as well as formalized and streamlined partnerships with pertinent agencies in the community are highly recommended to provide both probationers and probation officers the support to effectively comply to the processes of the probationary program. As such, the strategies formulated in the discussion are proposed.

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All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

### **Data availability**

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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