

## Research Article

### SA LIKOD SANG REHAS: EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF PERSONS DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY (PDLs) AS THE BASIS FOR AN EXTENSION PROGRAM

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#### ABSTRACT

The purpose of research cum extension was to identify the educational needs for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). The participants were the 292 randomly selected PDLs of Iloilo District Jail - Male Dormitory. A 30-item researcher-made survey was used to gather the data. The educational needs were categorized into literacy, numeracy, entrepreneurial, and livelihood skills. Frequency count and rank were the statistical tools used. The result showed that the needs for literacy were: can read and understand simple passages in Hiligaynon, Filipino, and English; be able to write simple stories in Hiligaynon, Filipino, and English; and know how to spell words. For numeracy, the identified needs were: to answer simple math problems; know how to perform the basic operation; and know how to solve the discount that is given to the purchased products. For entrepreneurial and livelihood skills, the results were: able to create a personal budget plan; identify appropriate business or livelihood based on the actual budget plan; and come up with a personal plan on how to improve yourself and your community through simple and productive actions. Based on the result of the study, the extension program developed was Pagbulig, Pagpabakod, kag Pag uswag (3Ps) Program for PDLs. With the goal of the university to serve the least, the last, and the lost, it is recommended that the program will be implemented.

**Keywords:** Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), research cum extension, educational needs.

#### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Filipinos have high regard for education. The situation may be difficult but Filipino parents will do everything and will always find ways to send their children to school. Being a nation with more people categorized as "poor" (Samaniego, 2017), Filipinos see education as a means to escape poverty and deem education as a great social equalizer. They always believed that with good education, they could attain a higher status in society. The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority offers training to those who cannot complete formal school (TESDA, 2022), and Alternative Learning Systems, or ALS, are also an option for those who cannot complete formal education (DepEd, 2021). Section 1 of Article XIV of the 1987 Constitution of the Philippines, states that "The State shall preserve and promote the right of all citizens to an excellent education at all levels and shall take appropriate efforts to make such education accessible to all," which contains the right to education. To wit further, the constitution requires the government to ensure that this can be achieved. On the same thought, the Department of Education provides an alternative program through RA 11510 or also known as the Alternative Learning System Act, to cater to those who are incapable of attending formal education due to financial constraints, social mobility, and even physical differences (Celis and Montesa, 2021). Despite these initiatives, more than 11% of teenagers leave school before finishing the final year of junior high school (UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2020). According to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority from 2017, 3.53 million of the estimated 39.2 million Filipinos aged 6 to 24 were classified as Out of School Children and Youths, or nine (9) percent (OSCYs). Approximately 83% of the 3.53 million OSCYs are made up of individuals between

the ages of 16 and 24; 11.2 percent are between the ages of 12 and 15; and 5.7 percent are between the ages of 6 and 11 (Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), 2018).

Correctional and judicial experts have long recognized a link between low literacy, dropout rates, and crime, despite the fact that low literacy is not a direct predictor of a person's likelihood of being found guilty of a crime (Literacy Mid-south, 2016). 70% of all adult prisoners, according to the National Adult Literacy Survey from 2014, are unable to read at a fourth-grade level, leaving them unable to complete everyday duties or hold down anything except low-paying occupations. Data show that those with low incomes are the most likely to commit crimes. Romero (2016) stated that illiteracy is "heavily implicated in the crimes landing people behind prison in the first place," as legal avenues of thriving in society have become more limited. When inmates who are high school dropouts were asked about the main reason they quit school, about one-third reported they lost interest or they experienced academic difficulty, according to the Department of Justice, "The link between academic failure and delinquency, violence, and crime is welded to reading failure." Today, approximately 11 million people are imprisoned now across the globe. Currently, this number is continually increasing. Prison systems around the world are at a breaking point, unable to offer services like education to the grade demanded by international standards due to regular overcrowding in jails. But since access to education is a fundamental human right, prisoners shouldn't be denied it (UNESCO 2021). However, a minority group, challenged by their situations, the persons deprived of liberty (PDLs) are not "free" to access such provisions. They are confined in a correctional facility for a specific period either waiting for their release or under trial (BJMP Manual, 2015). The PDLs' education is as important as the education of the "free" citizens (Samaniego, 2017). Depending on the situation of the jail, their education is either provided or facilitated by the Department of Education through its volunteer or mobile teachers or by the Prison

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Inmates Welfare Development Division or IWD (BJMP Regional Office 6, 2022). Although, prison education is not listed as one of the many alternative learning systems in the Philippines as evidenced in the various laws creating those programs; in other ways, it qualifies as an alternative learning system as it caters to a minority group and the purpose is to enable the recipients to be incorporated back to the mainstream society and schooling if possible (Arzadon and Nato, n.d.). Since 1990, studies have found that inmates who participate in educational programs while they are behind bars are less likely to reoffend after their release. Studies in many states have shown that where convicts have obtained a suitable education, recidivism rates have decreased. Additionally, the correct kind of educational program results in reduced violence among program participants and a more supportive prison atmosphere (Vacca, 2004). Programs for education support the welfare of prisoners and the wider community. According to a US Department of Education study led by Stephen J. Steurer (2008) of the Correctional Education Association, prisoners who took classes while they were in prison—whether they were college- or high-level vocational courses—were less likely to return to prison within the first three years of their release. In Iloilo District Jail Male Dormitory at Brgy. Nanga, Pototan, Iloilo, there are roughly 1,200 PDLs and a large percentage of this population are illiterate. With the goal of the university to serve the least, last, and the lost, this research cum extension will be conducted.

## OBJECTIVES

The study will be conducted to determine the educational needs of PDLs as the basis for an extension program.

In particular, this study will look for answers to the following:

1. What are the educational needs of PDLs in terms of literacy, numeracy, and entrepreneurial and livelihood skills?
2. What extension program can be developed based on the needs of the PDLs?

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The survey method, namely cross-sectional research as a design, was used in this study. Identifying a population's characteristics is the main goal of survey research (Fraenkel *et al.*, 2012). In order to describe the views, opinions, actions, experiences, or other characteristics of the population, the researcher will typically present some kind of survey or questionnaire to a sample of people, or, in some situations, the entire population (Cresswell, 2005). As previously said, survey research can be utilized descriptively, but it can also be used to look into the correlations between different factors (Fraenkel *et al.*, 2012; McMillan, 2012). In addition, a cross-sectional survey entails analyzing the traits of numerous samples or populations evaluated at one moment in time, as well as potential discrepancies among them. In order to collect information and describe the educational needs of PDLs in the male dormitory of the Iloilo District Jail in Brgy Nanga, and Pototan, Iloilo, this study employed a survey design. Additionally, the outcomes served as the foundation for creating an extension program.

**Respondents.** According to Niles (2006), it is crucial to include a sizable number of participants in each group who were chosen at random if one wants to be sure that survey results are representative. In Iloilo District Jail at Brgy. Nanga, Pototan, Iloilo, there are 1200 PDLs in Male Dormitory. Since this is a large population, Cochran's formula is considered especially appropriate in this situation. Using a sample size calculator for Cochran's formula, this study employed 292 randomly selected PDLs.

## Data Collection Procedure.

The researchers sent a letter to the Jail Chief Superintendent of the Regional Office of the Jail Bureau asking permission to conduct a survey of PDLs in the male dormitory of IDJ-Nanga, Pototan. Also as an initial step, the researchers went and personally handed in their letter of intent and conduct a short dialogue with the jail warden. After clearance is secured to conduct a training needs assessment survey, the researchers meet, plan, and create an instrument needed for the study. After which validation and pilot testing followed. The study was conducted last July 26, 2022, among 292 PDLs. Due to health protocol, only 50 PDLs can be accommodated and the giving of assessment took several rounds to complete. It was even more challenging since the researchers has no direct contact with the PDL because there are plastic barriers as protection for both PDLs and researchers of the COVID-19 virus and for the observance of border control measures and no-contact rules of the IDJ. Jail officers on the other side are helping the PDLs accomplish the instrument while the researchers on the other side of the border are trying their best to help the PDLs in answering the instrument since there are a number of PDLs who cannot read and write.

## Data Gathering Instruments

The researcher-made survey instrument has two parts. The first part collected information about the demographic profile of the PDLs. Since the anonymity of the participants was preserved as part of the ethical considerations, survey control numbers were used. The second part of the instrument was a checklist composed of 30 items that identified their educational needs. Specifically, 10 items each for literacy, numeracy, and entrepreneurial and livelihood skills. PDLs were instructed to tick only five (5) items that correspond to their priority educational needs. The survey instrument also includes a space where the participants can write down educational needs that they think are important but are not listed in the checklist. The researcher-made survey instrument was in Hiligaynon to cater to the different comprehension levels of the PDLs. The research-made survey instrument was subjected to validation by a pool of experts. The instrument underwent a test of reliability for those PDLs who were not part of the study proper. Using Cronbach's alpha, the reliability coefficient revealed a value of 0.831 indicating that the instrument was reliable.

## Ethical considerations.

Based on the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) (2009), ethics will be appropriately respected in the conduct of the current study; specifically, participants in this study must "not be harmed" in any way. Additionally, ethical standards like confidentiality and privacy shall be upheld when performing ethical research. The researchers will conduct the study while adhering to the following ethical principles: (1) health protocol must be strictly followed; (2) permission to conduct the study must first be obtained from the Regional office of BJMP; (3) the participants must be informed that the study will not harm them; and (4) the researchers must uphold the participants' right to self-determination if they refuse to answer questions or feel uncomfortable; and (5) the secrecy and preservation of the participants' anonymity.

## Data analysis procedure.

With the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program, version 27, the collected data underwent the following statistical processing. *Frequency count and percentage.* This will be utilized to determine the educational needs of the PDLs

when taken as a whole and when grouped according to some categorical variables. Rank. This will be utilized to determine which educational needs of the PDLs are most prevalent.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Educational needs of PDLs in terms of Literacy Skills

The findings of the assessment of PDLs' literacy-related educational needs are shown in Table 1. The 233 or 80% of PDLs choose can read and understand simple passages in Hiligaynon, Filipino, and English making this the most important educational need. The next most prevalent skill, chosen by 191 or 65% of PDLs, is being able to write simple stories in Hiligaynon, Filipino, and English. Knowing how to spell words came in third with 189 or 64% of PDLs choosing this. The study's findings supported the claims of the Correctional

Education Association and other statisticians that 75% of adult convicts lack basic literacy skills (Henrick, 2001). According to a report by the Shannon Trust from 2022, almost 50% of the inmates in the UK are what is known as "functionally illiterate." This indicates that their reading age is 11 or less. The top three literacy needs to be served as the foundation for the researchers' extension initiatives, and they also served as the first P or *Pagbulig* in the 3Ps Program for PDLs. Several extension activities were already conducted to support the literacy of PDLs. One of which was of Alvarez and Contreras (2020) of Far Eastern University. Project HOPE, or Harnessing Offenders' Personal Empowerment, review concluded that PDL residents gain from such a community literacy program because it satisfies their educational needs and promotes knowledge development. Therefore, it is helpful for their personal empowerment to improve the reading skills program created especially for PDLs with the goal of teaching the value of learning to read and comprehend.

**Table 1. Frequency and Rank of Educational needs of PDLs in terms of Literacy Skills**

	<i>n</i>	<i>f</i>	%	<i>Rank</i>
Makabasakgamaaintindi sang simple ngadinalansa Hiligaynon, Filipino, kag Ingles (Can read and understand simple passages in Hiligaynon, Filipino, and English)	292	233	80	1
Makasulat sang simple ngangaartikulo, sugilano/istoryasa Hiligaynon, Filipino, kag Ingles (Be able to write simple stories in Hiligaynon, Filipino, and English)	292	191	65	2
Makahibalo mag-spell sang tinaga (Know how to spell words)	292	189	64	3
Makahibalomagsunodsamgadireksyonkagpaghimu sang mgabutang (Know how to follow directions and do things)	292	162	55	4
Makahibalomagpakig-angotsanagkalain- lain ngaahensya sang gobyernopaagisapagsulat (Know how to communicate with various government agencies through writing)	292	135	46	5
Makahibalomaghambalsaatubang sang madamungatawo (public speaking)	292	127	43	6
Makahibalo sang mga simple ngapalatandaankagsimbolo (Know simple signs and symbols)	292	124	42	7
Makahibalomagbasa sang mganakapaskilngamgapahanumdom (signage)	292	121	41	8
Makatuon sang nagkalain-lain ngalengwahe (Be able to learn different languages)	292	119	41	9
Makahibalomagdihon/magsulat sang komposokagbinalaybay (Know how to compose/write poetry)	292	68	23	10

### Educational needs of PDLs in terms of Numeracy Skills

Table 2 shows the results of the evaluation of PDLs' educational needs in relation to numeracy. The 204 PDLs, or 70% of them, choose to answer simple math problems, making this the most crucial educational requirement. Knowing how to perform the basic operation was identified by 201 PDLs, or 69% of all PDLs, as the second most prevalent skill. Know how to solve the discount that is given to the purchased products came in third, with 201 or 69% of PDLs selecting this. The aforementioned results back up Beeley *et al.*, study's (2021). According to their research, 31% of the inmates tested could only distinguish whole numbers and basic 2-dimensional objects (like a circle). When convicts who were Aboriginal were studied, this number increased to more than 55%. Furthermore, the study by Rampey *et al.*, (2016) found that 52 percent of the prisoners did not achieve the fundamental level of numeracy. In other words, individuals are unable to recognize or respond to mathematical ideas or information that is present in a variety of typical circumstances, despite the fact that explicit or visual mathematical material is pervasive in their post release lives.

For the researchers' extension initiatives, the top three numeracy needs also served as the second P or *Pagpabakod* in the 3Ps Program for PDLs. Because the researchers believe that numeracy is important for PDLs to have in their post-release lives. In order to thrive in higher education and the workforce, numeracy is a crucial skill, as stated by the American Institutes for Research (AIR, 2015).

**Table 2. Frequency and Rank of Educational needs of PDLs in terms of Numeracy Skills**

	<i>n</i>	<i>f</i>	%	<i>Rank</i>
Makasabat sang simple ngamga math problems (To answer simple math problems)	292	204	70	1
Makabalo mag-add, mag-subtract, mag-multiply kag mag-divide (Know how to perform the basic operation)	292	201	69	2
Makahibalo mag-solve sang diskwentongaginahatagsamgaginabakalngaprodukto (Know how to solve the discount that is given to the purchased products)	292	149	51	3
Makabalosapaggamit sang computer (Know how to use a computer)	292	143	49	4
Makatuon sang insaktongakonbersyonsapagtakos (cm-m, inches – foot)	292	131	45	5
Makahibalomagtantya sang kadamuon sang materyalngagamitonsaisa ka proyekto (Know how to estimate the amount of material that will be used in a project)	292	120	41	6
Mahibaluan ang nagkalain-lain nga application sa computer (Learn various computer applications)	292	111	38	7
Makahibalo sang nagakalain-lain ngamakawiwili/makalilingawngamahampangsa Math (Learn about various interesting/entertaining games in Math)	292	91	31	8
Makabalomahampang sang chess (Know how to play chess)	292	88	30	9
Makaintindi sang fractions (Can understand fractions)	292	76	26	10

**Educational needs of PDLs in terms of Entrepreneurial and Livelihood Skills**

The findings of the assessment of PDLs' educational needs in terms of entrepreneurial and livelihood skills are presented in Table 3. This is the most important educational need since 192 PDLs, or 66% of them, select the category of "able to establish a personal financial plan." The second most common skill was identifying appropriate business or livelihood based on the actual budget plansince 190 PDLs, or 65% of PDLs selected this. Making a personal plan for how to better yourself and your neighborhood through easy-to-implement measures came in third, with 201 or 69% of PDLs choosing this.

Finally, these top three skills identified comprise the last P or Pag us wag (3Ps) Program for PDLs. It is important that the PDLs should undergo the first two skills namely literacy and numeracy because whatever they can learn from those programs will help them in their entrepreneurial and livelihood skills. From the study of Cai *et al.*, (2019), inmates who participated in vocational programs demonstrated higher literacy and numeracy developed some job skills, and most important of all, used more cognitive skills in their everyday life during incarceration. Finally, the use of talents, whether in the labor market or in other non-market contexts like volunteer work, home production, or even leisure pursuits, is what gives them worth (OECD, 2013, p. 36). Therefore, it is crucial that the PDLs.

**Table 3. Frequency and Rank of Educational needs of PDLs in terms of Entrepreneurial and Livelihood Skills**

	<i>n</i>	<i>f</i>	%	<i>Rank</i>
Makadihonkagmakaplastar sang personal nga budget plan (Able to create a personal budget plan)	292	192	66	1
Makapaino-ino sang nagakadapatnganegosyoukonpalangabuhian base sagindihonnga budget plan (Identify appropriate business or livelihood based on the actual budget plan)	292	190	65	2
Makaimbento sang personal ngaplano kung paanomapauswag ang kaugalingonkagkomunidadpaagisa simple kagproduktibongahilikuton (come up with a personal plan on how to improve yourself and your community through simple and productive actions)	292	182	62	3
Makahibalo sang paggastoskagpagtipig sang kwarta (Know how to spend and save money)	292	176	60	4
Makahibalo mag tukod sang negosyosasulodsngpresuhan (Know how to set up a business within the prison)	292	172	59	5
Makahibalosapaggamit sang oras para sangaproduktibongamgahilikutonkagmgaaktibidades (Know how to use time for productive activities)	292	171	59	6
Makaplano sang simple ngapalangabuhiankagpalangitan-an (Be able to plan for a livelihood)	292	167	57	7
Mahibaluan ang obligasyonsngkomunidadesapagbuligasapalangabuhian (Be aware of the community's obligation to help with livelihood)	292	164	56	8
Mahibaluan ang kung ano ang nagakabagayngapalangita-an sakomunidad (To establish the most important livelihood activities in the community)	292	154	53	9
Makahibalo mag lantaw sang gin dulongpagpagkagubasapalangabuhi-an tungodsamgakalidad (To assess overall impact of the disaster on livelihood activities in the community)	292	108	37	10

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The ability to participate in many elements of daily life depends on one's reading and numeracy abilities. People who struggle with reading and numeracy may find it challenging to carry out basic tasks like paying bills, obtaining a job, accessing government assistance and services, and establishing a livelihood in the community. Traditional educational programs did not successfully impart useful literacy and numeracy skills on a large number of PDLs. Numerous studies have demonstrated the significance of education in determining a prisoner's probability of re-offending.

Although it is not the Department of Education's primary responsibility to educate PDLs, doing so is a productive way for PDLs to spend their time while incarcerated and a proactive strategy for the Department to lower the likelihood that PDLs will commit crimes again. The Department does a fantastic job of identifying the literacy and numeracy needs of inmates and offering through the ALS program the relevant courses that are tailored to fulfill those needs.

The Department might do more to address some of the issues that may make it difficult for PDLs to enroll in classes. This is where the College of Education at West Visayas State University will step in. Links to community corrections and adult education providers could help in further evaluating the PDLs' reading and numeracy, developing programs to maintain improvements after release, and lowering the likelihood that someone will return to prison. Faculty extension of the university is proposing an extension program entitled "Pagbulig, Pagpabakod, kag Pag uswag (3Ps) Extension Program for PDLs and are looking forward to the changes that will take place because the university strives to assist the least, the last, and the lost. Even little changes can have a significant impact on a PDL's life after release. The sole purpose of this study is to evaluate PDLs' educational needs; the impact will not be examined. It is recommended that additional research teams investigate the outcomes of the extension program that we shall offer.

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