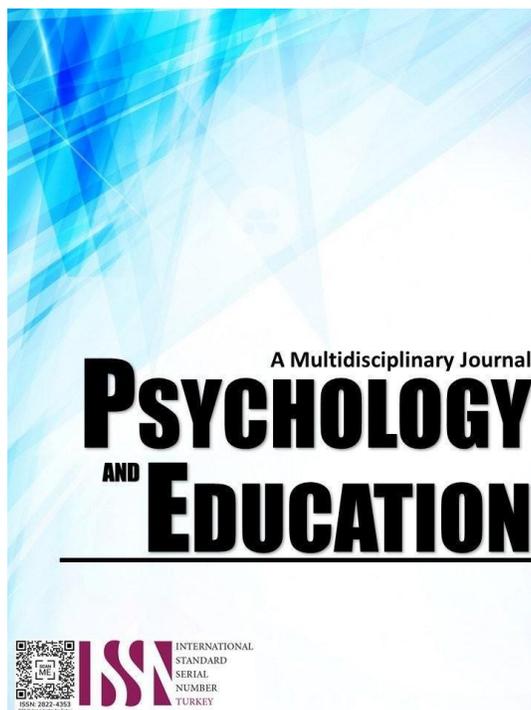


# MOTHERHOOD BEYOND BARS: EXPLORING THE NARRATIVES ON MATERNAL FULFILLMENT OF INCARCERATED MOTHERS WHILE IN CONFINEMENT



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## Motherhood Beyond Bars: Exploring the Narratives on Maternal Fulfillment of Incarcerated Mothers While in Confinement

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### Abstract

The increasing rates of maternal incarceration has led the previous studies to address the mothers' health demands, including palliative, prenatal, and reproductive care while in detention. Thus, this qualitative narrative study aimed to explore the experiences of incarcerated mothers on their maternal satisfaction during confinement. Nine (9) participants were purposely selected in this research, and data saturation was reached. These participants aged 28 to 43 years old are incarcerated mothers from BJMP Calamba City Jail – Female Dormitory, who have adopted, or biological children aged 17 or below. The researchers formulated an interview guide for the conducted semi-structured, face-to-face interview sessions. The data collected was analyzed through Riessman's Narrative Analysis, presenting three (3) comprehensive methods: thematic, structural, and performance analysis. Results revealed that six (6) main themes emerged, which are as follows: challenges of maternal physical restrictions, strength of maternal love, an incarcerated mother's redemption, mother's experience of self-loathing, maternal role realization, and maternal identity crisis. It showed the recurring patterns of negative motherhood experiences, mothers' effort to express affection, and the future plans once released, in the participants' narrative construction. Results also demonstrated that incarcerated mothers exhibited both identical and distinct behaviors in expressing their experiences; some were reserved, while others were confident. Hence, this study is significant in crafting effective interventions and improving policies to deal with psychological well-being of incarcerated mothers while being away from their children.

**Keywords:** *BJMP, incarcerated, maternal, mothers, narratives*

### Introduction

Mothers play a special and pivotal role in the family as nurturers, especially in their children (The Tatva Girl, 2021). According to Crockett et al. (2020), it is in a mother's nature to provide protection, support, and guidance to their children throughout their lives. Additionally, the amount of time a mother devotes to caring for and attending to her children directly affects their relationship and the child's overall wellness (Crockett et al., 2020; Li & Guo, 2023). However, some mothers live separately from their offspring due to voluntary choices, external circumstances, or a combination thereof. Sadly, one real-life example of this pertains to the imprisonment of mothers in the country.

The World Prison Brief database (2021) stated that 16,439 women are in conflict with the law with an equivalent of 9.8% of the entire inmate populace in the Philippines. Furthermore, in an article from the United Nations (2023), women account for 15% of the 70% of individuals confined in jail due to drug abuse. Due to rising rates of women incarceration, criminal justice specialist Raymund Narag revealed that women's correctional facilities in the nation are more congested than men's, and the majority of the detained women are mothers (Abad, 2021). Accordingly, the portrayal of motherhood within the criminal justice system, notably in prison settings, is a significant concern demanding attention.

Undeniably, imprisonment imposes constraints on individuals, impeding their ability to fulfill societal roles and consequently affecting the mother's experiences (Sandberg et al., 2021). Coinciding with the suggestion of Zhao et al. (2021), the experiences in prison are significantly associated with mothers diagnosed with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, signs of aggression, and suicidal thoughts. Moreover, the struggles of controlling criminal activities with maternal responsibilities breed confusion for incarcerated mothers, worsened by the limitations within prison cells (Sapkota et al., 2022). Relatedly, Alirezaei and Roudsari (2023) found out that detained mothers experience contrasting feelings of abandonment and affection for their offspring, resulting to uncertainty about their maternal duties in the future. Masekoameng et al. (2023) also pointed out how incarcerated women tend to feel doubts about their identities as mothers since correctional facilities do not focus on providing support on parenthood, especially in empowering the persona of women as mothers; they feel a sense of comfort if their children live with their immediate family members, signifying the importance of women staying connected with their offspring (Rose & Lebel, 2022). Other than that, stigma and discrimination against incarcerated mothers foster social isolation and hinder their capacity to maintain their maternal roles (van den Broek et al., 2021). Thus, confinement is a tough test for mothers to display motherhood.

Richards-Karamarkovich and Umamaheswar (2024) highlight the resilience of mothers who were once incarcerated in spite of the systemic injustices they experienced in prison that impacted their motherliness. Research by Saida and Poerwandari (2020) revealed that even detained mothers are with their children, there is still doubt in performing maternal duties in detention centers and recognizing themselves as "good mothers." In relation to the studies of Parry (2021), Fuentes (2022), and Banks (2022), pointed out how mothers focus on the idea of being known as "good mothers" while in confinement. Incarcerated mothers resort to adjusting to their environment and making reasonable mothering choices to attain their portrayal of an admirable mother to their children. These research and studies

do not cover the maternal fulfillment of mothers currently incarcerated yet centered on the influence of imprisonment regarding motherhood based on their respective narratives.

On the other hand, studies from Peart and Knittel (2020), Paynter et al. (2021), Augsburger et al. (2022), and Ghareghozloo et al. (2023) pointed out the significance of adequate medical care amongst incarcerated women and how pervasive the case of poor healthcare is in correctional facilities due to lack of health services. This situation suggests that facility administrators and healthcare practitioners implement interventions such as policy revisions, immediate access to clinics that detainees may access upon release and provide standard health services on reproductive health and psychosocial care. Nair et al. (2021), Hessami et al. (2022), and Hawkins (2024) emphasized in their studies how correctional facilities are not molded to tend to pregnant women, ultimately highlighting the lack of prenatal care. Moreover, Carvalho et al. (2020), Benedetti et al. (2020), and Johnson et al. (2022) noted that imprisoned women are at high risk for sexually transmitted infections caused by little understanding of STIs before confinement, along with limited medical services to treat such ailments and limited educational support to raise awareness during incarceration.

Despite the increasing global attention on detained women, previous studies have predominantly focused on healthcare needs, prenatal care, and sexually transmitted infections. However, research rarely reflects on the narratives of incarcerated mothers who are separated from their children. Factually, limited literature and studies can be found regarding motherhood among imprisoned mothers in the Philippines. Specifically, no literature or studies have been found regarding BJMP Calamba City Jail - Female Dormitory. Additionally, there are no current figures and information available about their population and cases. Meanwhile, the Correctional Institution for Women (CIW) in Mandaluyong City provides most of the data and statistics on women incarceration rates and receives significant focus considering that it is the first women detention center founded in the country. Hence, this qualitative narrative research aimed to delve into the experiences of incarcerated mothers about their maternal fulfillment while in confinement. This study is relevant for creating better programs, effective interventions, and establishing support groups that could cater to incarcerated mothers' psychological needs, particularly to make them feel that they are still mothers despite being incarcerated.

## Research Questions

The study aimed to delve into the personal narratives of imprisoned mothers regarding their maternal satisfaction while they are inside the correctional facility. The study intended to answer this question: "What are the experiences of incarcerated mothers in their maternal fulfillment while being separated from their children during their confinement?"

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study is a qualitative study that aimed to explore the narratives of incarcerated mothers. According to the study of Tenny et al. (2022), qualitative research aids in examining certain phenomena and generating new and deeper ideas in real-world problems. This type of research does not quantify or measure the instances of a phenomenon through numerical data, but it delves deeper and analyzes the 'how' and 'why' of the subject matter. This approach is suitable for looking into the experiences of incarcerated mothers as the researchers wanted to deeply understand one's narrative. The researchers believed that there would be no numbers that would be able to explain what the incarcerated mothers have gone through and/or are going through.

The researchers also utilized narrative inquiry to analyze each account of the participants. Narrative inquiry focuses on gathering rich real-life narratives from the life experiences of the participants (DeMarco, 2020). This approach is appropriate for the study to discover new knowledge about incarcerated mothers regarding their maternal satisfaction through their narratives. This aimed to provide researchers in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences based on their perceptions. The researchers utilized the Narrative Analysis of Catherine Kohler Riessman in order to analyze the narratives collected from the participants. This data analysis technique consists of three stages: thematic analysis, structural analysis, and performance analysis since according to Riessman, stories go beyond retelling one's experiences as it reveals their perspective, aim, motive, decision, opinion, feelings, behavior, and consequences (Meraz et al., 2019; Riessman, 1993, 2008).

### Participants

To achieve data saturation, the researchers used the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Participants who met the inclusion criteria were eligible to participate in the study.

#### Inclusion Criteria:

1. Participants were currently confined in BJMP Calamba City Jail – Female Dormitory during the execution of the study.
2. They were aged between 28 and 43 years old.
3. They had offspring aged 17 or below, whether biological or adopted.

#### Exclusion Criteria:

1. Individuals were confined in other correctional institutions located in other parts of the Philippines.
2. Incarcerated women who were childless.

3. Incarcerated mothers who had adult offspring outside the correctional institution.
4. Fathers who were imprisoned.

While there was growing global attention on incarcerated women, research primarily focused on their healthcare needs and reproductive health. Surprisingly, the narratives of incarcerated mothers separated from their children received little attention in the research. Moreover, there was a significant lack of research on the motherhood experiences of jailed women in the Philippines, particularly at the BJMP Calamba City Jail – Female Dormitory.

The BJMP Calamba City Jail - Female Dormitory accommodated a substantial number of millennial mothers aged 28-43 who had children under the age of 17. These mothers, belonging to the millennial generation, valued the importance of attachment and connection with their children (Solomon, 2023).

They believed that being responsive to their child's needs was essential for building strong, healthy relationships and promoting emotional well-being. Additionally, their presence and relationship with their children were critical for the children's overall development, including socio-emotional, physical, and cognitive growth (Healthway Medical, 2023).

Research conducted at the University of Minnesota revealed that mothers were the most frequently contacted by their children, highlighting their constant responsibility (Brower, 2022). Although more fathers were incarcerated than mothers, it was argued that maternal imprisonment had a greater impact on children (Villanueva & Gayoles, 2019).

This notion was supported by John Bowlby's Attachment Theory, which suggested that children typically seek proximity to their loved ones, particularly their primary caregiver, to shield themselves from emotional and physical harm. When a child's needs were fulfilled, they were more likely to develop a sense of safety and security; conversely, if their needs were not met, this sense of security might not occur (McLeod, 2024).

**Table 1. Demographics of the PDL**

<i>PDL (Person Deprived of Liberty)</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Time Detained</i>	<i>Number of Children</i>	<i>Age of the Children</i>
PDL 1	30	6 months	3	14, 12, 7
PDL 2	34	1 year, 2 months	3	13, 4, 6 months old
PDL 3	42	7 months	5	25, 17, 15, 13, 10
PDL 4	35	1 year, 4 months	5	17, 15, 13, 10, 5
PDL 5	32	4 months	2	12, 9
PDL 6	41	5 months	5	23, 10 (deceased), 17, 15, 12
PDL 7	41	3 years	3	22, 20, 17
PDL 8	34	1 year, 3 months	2	6 months old (deceased), 13
PDL 9	39	3 months	1	15

## Instrument

The researchers used a semi-structured interview guide to gather data from the participants. This allowed researchers to explore the research questions, gain a better understanding of the topic being studied, and gain valuable insights into the participants' subjective experiences (Salomão, 2023). The researchers used the following instruments needed in the study:

**Interview Guide.** Semi-structured interviews were a method of qualitative research that allowed researchers to gain a deeper understanding of a participant's feelings and beliefs about specific topics (Heath, 2023). The researcher prepared interview guide questions, which were a list of questions or topics that they wanted to cover during the interview. However, they could also be flexible and ask follow-up questions based on the respondent's answers.

The interview guide questions consisted of three parts: eight (8) rapport-building questions, which were engaging questions designed to foster connection between the interviewer and the participants of the study; eleven (11) main questions, which focused more on the subject and required answers that were connected to it; and lastly, four (4) debriefing questions, which helped the interviewers clarify certain points with the participants.

## Procedure

The researchers collected substantial information through the following procedures:

The researchers established specific requirements for their intended participants to acquire needed information.

The researchers guaranteed that their university heads and faculty have reviewed the research inquiry and granted ethical permission to proceed to the next step.

The researchers prepared informed consent forms for potential participants explaining the research objectives and other details, providing instructions on what needs to be done, and enumerating the advantages and disadvantages of the involvement in the study.

The researchers formulated an interview guide, which was validated by their research adviser together with other research experts. The

formed interview guide questions avoided leading, double-barreled, and yes-or-no inquiries that limits the participants' responses.

The researchers wrote a letter of inquiry and handed it to local law enforcement authorities. Then, the list of requirements was provided to the researchers to seek clearance to conduct in-person interviews with incarcerated mothers. The researchers immediately submitted the necessary documents and waited for approval.

The researchers considered the policies while conducting the interview session inside the correctional facility. The researchers explained first the information about the study and had each participant sign the informed consent form. The researchers acted accordingly. The interview sessions were audio-recorded with permission from the local law enforcement authorities and the participants. The participants were interviewed one-by-one, while the researchers observed and took down notes to ensure that no information is overlooked.

After those interviews, the produced data were transcribed and organized. All information kept safe, secured, and confidential as only the researchers and the research adviser have access to it. Additionally, the data acquired cannot be shared to anyone, especially without the subjects' consent. The researchers also considered anonymizing the details, so these participants were unidentified. Two years after conducting this study, the researchers will delete and dispose of the entire transcription and other documents that contain personal information of the participants.

Through these key processes, the researchers were guided towards the proper and ethical conduct of the data gathering of this study.

### **Data Analysis**

This qualitative research utilized narrative analysis in analyzing the data collected through one-on-one interviews. Narrative analysis is a qualitative analysis of data that seeks to interpret individual narratives from the first-person point of view, enabling the researchers to delve into and grasp their accounts and experiences (Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023).

In this study, the researchers applied the Narrative Analysis by Catherine Kohler Riessman, which according to an article written by Meraz et al. (2019), the participants' data were subjected to these three methods:

**Thematic Analysis.** This analysis emphasized the participants' narratives regarding their maternal fulfillment while incarcerated. First, the researchers read each interview transcription multiple times that helped them familiarize themselves with the data. Then, the researchers analyzed each interview transcription and determined which conversations were significant to the main topic and focused on that, while the irrelevant ones were disregarded.

After that, the researchers collected each participant's responses from those relevant conversations and merged into lengthy paragraphs as their respective narratives. Finally, the researchers conducted a brainstorming session to come up with main themes that were appropriate for each narrative; some narratives have a common theme. In contrast to the typical thematic analysis, the researchers did not employ codes which kept the narratives intact and presented its individuality.

**Structural Analysis.** This analysis highlighted the story structures of the participants' narratives. Initially, the researchers carefully reviewed each interview transcript and identified the key elements found in the narratives, including the plot summary, introduction, problem/conflict, climax/action, resolution, characters/time/setting, and coda. Despite the repetitions, gaps, and non-sequence of events encountered in the participants' narratives, the researchers managed to carry out the process through familiarizing themselves with the data and considering the information needed in each key element.

Subsequently, the data gathered was organized into chronological order where the key elements were properly presented in tables. Thus, this assisted the researchers in clarifying vague details and revealing inconsistencies in each narrative that led to a deep understanding of participants' personal experiences and uncovered findings.

**Performance Analysis.** This analysis focused on the participants' intentions as revealed by the way they expressed their narratives. Non-verbal cues such as body language, facial expressions, gestures, and vocal tones were evaluated, as well as the information they decided to incorporate into their narratives.

Moreover, this analysis was conducted in two ways: first, the researchers documented the behavioral observations during the in-person interview sessions; and second, the researchers looked back into the interview transcripts to determine if the participants' behaviors matched with their personal narratives. Considering that, the researchers were able to analyze and understand the behaviors displayed by the participants. Additionally, this analysis facilitated validating of the emerged themes in the narratives.

For the researchers, Riessman's Narrative Analysis is well-suited in analyzing the narratives of incarcerated mothers on their maternal fulfillment while in confinement as the three systematic methods, namely thematic, structural, and performance analysis explored the narratives' content and structures, and even the participants' behaviors, which generated valuable insights that were shared to the public.

### **Ethical Consideration**

This research was guided by ethical principles that prioritized transparency, accountability, consent, confidentiality, and minimizing

harm. Adhering to these principles guided the researchers in their actions, decisions, and methodologies throughout the entire research process. The researchers believed that research should be a positive force, benefiting individuals and society as a whole. To achieve this, they were committed to openness, honesty, and fairness in our work. By following these values, they aimed to uphold the highest ethical standards in every aspect of our study, build trust, and make a positive impact.

**Selection of Participants.** Choosing participants was one of the crucial parts of this study. Individuals who were part of this research had to provide the researchers with enough information needed to raise new knowledge. In connection with this, the selection process involved identifying individuals who met the criteria for inclusion in the study and excluding those who may have biased the findings. The researchers utilized non-probability sampling in order to ensure that participants were well-fitted for the study.

**Informed Consent Form.** In collecting data, obtaining informed consent became critical, whereby researchers had to provide a comprehensive overview of the study's purpose, procedures, benefits, and potential risks. A written consent form was required; however, it needed to be well-explained by the researchers to ensure that participants grasped the content and purpose of the study before signing. Furthermore, providing the participants with a copy of the consent form was necessary since it served as evidence of the discussion and agreement.

**Voluntary Participation.** The participation of the respondents was voluntary. They were free to choose whether they wanted to take part in the study or not. The participants were made aware of their rights to participate willingly and to discontinue at any moment for any reason.

**Privacy and Confidentiality.** The right to privacy of participants was respected. Ethical guidelines and regulations were followed, including the 2012 Data Privacy Act. Confidentiality measures were implemented, such as withholding participants' names from interview transcripts. In order to protect each participant's identity, all data collected from the study was anonymized. Data collected, including participants' answers during the interview, was treated with the utmost confidentiality and stored in a secure manner to prevent unauthorized disclosure.

**Potential Risks.** Participants in the research study ran a potential risk of harm to their emotional and psychological well-being. Delving into their narratives may have caused distressing emotions; however, the study prioritized the welfare of participants, ensuring a satisfactory benefit-risk ratio. Participants were free to decide whether to opt out of the study at any time and could choose not to answer any or all the questions.

**Benefits.** Researchers also considered the potential risks and benefits of the research and weighed them against one another to determine whether it was justifiable to proceed with the study. In this research, the benefits outweighed the potential risks, and it was beneficial to forensic psychology as this information might have helped improve and develop new and well-fitted interventions for incarcerated mothers.

The participants could also have gained benefits from this study as they reflected on how their past experiences contributed to their present attitudes, behavior, and emotions. This served as an avenue for them to freely express their emotional burdens and helped them calm the tensions they felt from within. This study also helped them share their learning experiences with others and offered guidance not only for those experiencing similar situations but also for those who had not encountered the same circumstances.

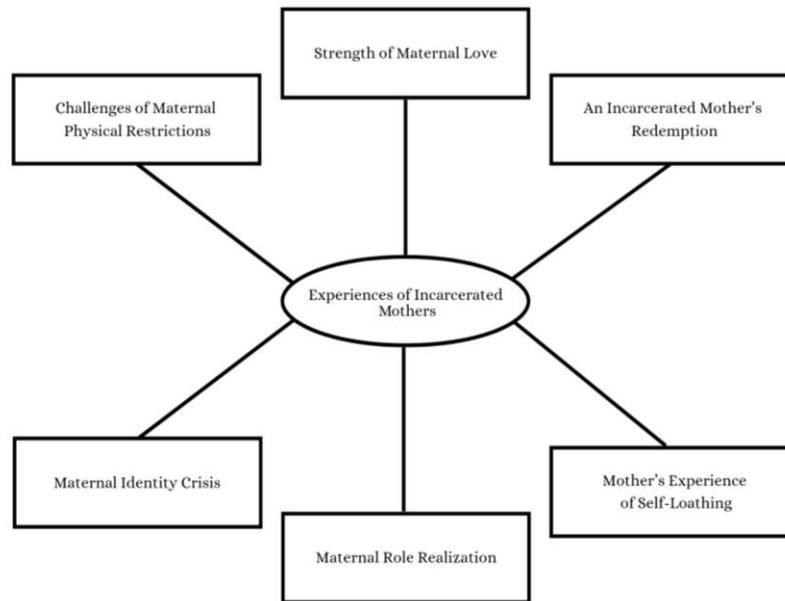
## Results and Discussion

This section presents the results, analysis, and interpretation of data gathered from the narratives of selected Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) mothers confined in BJMP Calamba City Jail Female Dormitory. After collecting the data, the researcher's applied Riessman's thematic analysis, structural analysis, and performance analysis to analyze and break down the data for deeper understanding. The researchers utilized these models of narrative analysis to probe more deeply into the details of the interviews with the (9) participants. Through this approach, the researchers were able to identify the deepest meaning and interpretation within these narratives.

### Thematic Analysis

At this level of Riessman's analysis, the story remains intact and is not divided into codes or sections. The emphasis of this model of narrative analysis is on the content of the text, focusing on what is said. Thematic analysis can be applied to various types of data and help researchers identify common themes across multiple cases. Upon analyzing the data, the narratives of the Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL) mothers were able to derived six (6) themes: (1) Challenges of Maternal Physical Restrictions, (2) Strength of Maternal Love, (3) An Incarcerated Mother's Redemption, (4) Mother's Experience of Self-Loathing, (5) Maternal Role Realization, and lastly, (6) Maternal Identity Crisis.

The figure provided above represents the research simulacrum of the study, picturing how maternal identity and fulfillment viewed by the imprisoned mothers. At the core of this illustration lies the central focus of this narrative research, which is the experiences of incarcerated mothers. Around this core, six (6) key themes have been identified as shown in the figure and elaborated in the following discussion.

Figure 1. *Research Simulacrum*

### **Challenges of Maternal Physical Restrictions**

Incarcerated mothers face significant physical limitations as a result of the tough conditions in jail, which greatly impact their ability to care for and nurture their children. These mothers express great sadness and frustration about being apart from their children, as being confined hinders them from meeting their important motherly duties and obligations. Institutional policies and physical barriers restrict their communication and interaction, causing them to miss out from their children's lives and important events. The PDLs uttered the following statements:

*"Yun nga, syempre hindi mo na magagawa yung mga pag-aalagang nagagawa mo sa anak mo. Nandito ka kasi magkahiwalay nga kayo diba, hindi nga kayo magkasama. Ayun kumbaga parang, yung gusto mong gawin, yung gusto mong iparamdam sa kanya, hindi mo na kaya iparamdam ngayon kasi magkahiwalay nga kayo. Nararamdaman ko pa rin (na isa akong bilanggo) kasi lalo na kapag oras na pauwi na sila, kumbaga parang ang sakit sakit sa akin na aalis sila na hindi nila ako kasama... Kapag uuwi na, nandon na yung sakit na nakakalungkot. Kapag yung habang papaalis na sila ta's ikaw nandito ka, maiiwanan ka nila, na sana gusto ko sa susunod pagpunta niyo rito kasama niyo na ako." - PDL 1*

*"Ano po, Ma'am. Masakit po sa akin kasi nagkahiwalay po kami ng mga anak ko. 'yun nga po hindi ko nga po nasubaybayan 'yung galaw nila. Kung ano pong nangyari sa kanila ngayon sa labas. Kung 'yung kinakasama po ba nila, kung naaalagaan po ba sila o sinasaktan. Hindi ko po sila masubaybayan. Kasi nu'ng nasa akin po sila, Ma'am, lahat po ng galaw nila alam ko po... Talagang hindi ko po sila hinihiwalay sa tabi ko. Kahit sila po ay mga bata pa po at dumalaga po. Hindi ko po talaga sila hinihiwalay sa tabi ko... Mahirap po (maging ina sa loob), Ma'am. Kasi nandito ako, hindi ko nagagampanan 'yung obligasyon ko para sa mga anak ko." - PDL 4*

*"...Gusto mo silang makasama pero hindi pwede, 'di ba? Gusto mong makita pero 'di pa rin pwede kasi may limit naman po talaga 'yung... 'pag may e-dalaw kami, may oras, 'di ba? Kahit 'di pa tapos 'yung usapan pero kailangan nating sumunod sa oras... 'Di ko na talagang magampananan ang bilang isang ina sa kanila kasi halos lahat ng obligasyon ko, 'di ko na magampanan kasi nandito ako." - PDL 6*

*"Hindi (ko) na nga (nagampananan yung tungkulin ko bilang ina), eh. Wala, eh. Wala akong alam kung paano ko mapaparamdam sa anak ko, eh. Sobrang laki ng pagkakaiba kasi dito 'yung tipong wala kang magawa, eh, para sa anak mo. Wala kang mapapatunayan sa kanya o ano, kumpara sa labas na lahat magagawa mo para sa anak mo. 'yung lahat nakahanda kang i-ano. Dito wala, nganga. Kahit nga 'yung makausap man lang hindi ko magawa, eh." - PDL 9*

The emotional distress these incarcerated mothers experienced caused by being separated from their children was clearly stated in their narratives. PDL 1 deeply regrets her failure to carry out her maternal duties while behind bars, showing how being physically away from her children increases her suffering. The strong connection between her roles as a mother and an incarcerated individual fuels up her distress as she tries to balance these identities. In the same way, PDL 4 expresses sorrow over being away from her children and not being able to see their daily activities. After being very involved in raising them before going to prison, she now feels lost and powerless, understanding that being incarcerated stops her from fulfilling her duties as a mother.

PDL 6 and PDL 9 also expressed these feelings, emphasizing the major obstacles that confinement presents in carrying out their duties as mothers. PDL 6 expresses her exasperation with the restrictions set by prison rules, which make her feel unable to properly care for her children. PDL 9 acknowledges the difference between motherhood within and outside prison, finding it difficult to show her love and nurture while living in such a restricted environment. Their collective experiences demonstrate how being imprisoned deeply affects a mother's identity, highlighting the feelings of yearning, grief, and significant difficulties that come with being separated from their children.

### **Strength of Maternal Love**

This represents a mother's love showing incredible strength and adaptability when facing challenges. It shows a mother's steadfast dedication to nurturing emotional connections with her children, even in the face of difficult circumstances such as physical separation. The strength of maternal love is evident in creative ways of staying connected, an unwavering commitment to fostering optimism and security. In the end, maternal love is shown to flourish despite challenging situations. Kindly refer to the excerpt below:

*“As a mother pa rin ako ‘pag kaharap ko sila. Talagang kung ano yung pinapakita ko sa kanila noong nasa laya kami— ay nasa laya ako, gano ‘n pa rin yung pakikipag-usap ko, pakikitungo ko sa kanila through videocall. ‘Di ko pinaparamdam sa kanila ano yung... dahil sa nangyari lang sa ‘kin maninibago yung tingin ko, yung pananaw ko sa kanila, hindi. Talagang kahit yung tipong kausap ko sila, kahit parang naiiyak na ako, pinapakita ko pa rin sa kanila na malakas ako, na matapang ako. Yung kahit na minsan gusto ko nang umiyak dahil miss ko na sila, lagi kong pinaparamdam sa kanila na “Miss na miss ko na kayo. Malapit na akong umuwi.” lagi ko na lang silang ginagano ‘n. “Oh ‘wag kayong makulit diyan ha? ‘Wag kayong gagala.” Oo (nasa tabi pa rin nila ako kahit magkahiwalay). Na kahit magkalayo, yung parang... sa ‘yon, ‘pag sa videocall nasa tabi pa rin nila ako. Lagi ko pa rin silang pinapaalalahanan.” - PDL 2*

PDL 2 expressed her strong commitment to being a mother despite the difficulties of being in jail. She focuses on maintaining her identity as a mother, nurturing a strong emotional bond with her children through video calls, striving to present herself as strong despite feeling sadness and yearning. Her efforts to uplift her children's spirits shows how maternal love can persevere and endure even in emotional and challenging situations.

### **An Incarcerated Mother's Redemption**

When inside the jail, there are indeed limitations that hindered incarcerated mothers to fulfill their responsibilities and duties to their families. Consequently, despite being not able to do anything for their children, a mother can still be hopeful and envision her future with her children, including how she will make up with her shortcomings because of her current situation. The PDL uttered that:

*“Ma ‘am, hindi ko po ma-ano, eh masasabi gawa po nandito po ako sa loob, eh. Ang hirap po talagang ano—Basta ‘yung sa akin lang po, ‘yung pagmamahal hindi po maaalis kahit po nandito ako mahal na mahal ko po ‘yung mga anak ko. Kahit po anong mangyari, paglaya ko po siguro makakasama ko po at makakasama nila ako... Ito pong nagawa ko, kasalanan po ‘yung nagawa ko talaga, eh. Na ayaw ko naman pong ipamulat sa kanila, eh. Na paglaya ko po, eh, talagang sila na lang po ‘yung tututukan ko pero although po na talagang malaki po ‘yung nagawa kong kasalanan.” - PDL 3*

PDL 3 described her emotional struggles dealing with the repercussions from her previous actions, especially her two jail sentences, which hurt her relationship with her kids. Despite the obstacles—both mental and physical—that stand between them, she conveys her strong desire for a relationship and her goal to have a positive impact on their lives. The mother's thoughts show how she struggles with her identity as she deals with remorse, considers the sacrifices she has made, and looks for a chance to be forgiven. She demonstrated continuous hope for reconciliation and a brighter future.

### **Mother's Experience of Self-Loathing**

Due to the social constructs connected to motherhood, societies often expect mothers to be the family's caregiver who are always with their children, teaching and nurturing them. Because of the high pressure that these social constructs contribute and the restrictions that these incarcerated mothers experience inside the correctional institution, they began questioning their motherhood on which they experience self-hatred. The participant expressed that:

*“Ahh, parang iniisip ko minsan wala akong silbi kasi ano... bakit wala ako... hindi ko sila ano wala ako sa tabi nila... Eh dito po, eh ano hanggang tingin ka lang sa kanila, hindi mo sila maano... maalaga nang maayos. Hindi mo sila maano... minsan po natatakot ako baka may mangyari sa kanila, yun po lagi ako nag-aalala sa kanila.” – PDL 5*

PDL 5 stated that being unable to attend to her children 24/7 makes her feel worthless. Being in jail means being not able to see her children and by which she cannot calm her mind. Being absent from her children's lives makes her sad as it is completely opposite of the stereotyped characteristic of a mother.

### **Maternal Role Realization**

The incarcerated mother's manner of understanding and accepting the role of being a mother. This life-changing circumstance helps to fulfill her maternal obligations to her children and strengthen their relationship, even in detention. The PDL verbalized that:

*“Ngayon na po, ha? Nu’ng nakapag-isip-isip na po ako na dapat noon ko pa pala ginawa ‘to. Ngayon na, s’yempre naano na ako. Tatlong taon na ‘yon, natauhan na. Na hindi ko katabi ‘yung anak ko. Dito... dito nga po narealize ko [laughs]. Dito po ‘yon, ‘yung naramdaman—parang tumriple o sumampu pa yata po ‘yung pagiging ina ko, e, dito. Kasi nga dito po ako natuto, e, dito ako na... nauntog.” - PDL 7*

PDL 7 believed that her stay in the cell helped her realize her shortcomings as a mother to her children. She feels deep regret for the things she did not do for them when she was still free. Now that she understands her responsibility as a mother, she makes an effort to somehow make up for it, regardless of being imprisoned.

### **Maternal Identity Crisis**

A mother’s life in prison is challenging, especially being away from her children. Incarceration makes it difficult for mothers to fulfill their maternal responsibilities, which led to self-doubt, guilt, and an inability to identify themselves as mothers. The participant stated that:

*“Sa ngayon, hindi ko nakikita sa sarili ko (ang pagiging ina), eh... ‘yung imbis na ako ang gumawa para sa aking anak, ang akin pong tiyuhin ang nakakagawa po no’n... Wala rin po akong kaanuhan na ibigay lahat ang pangangailangan sa anak ko. Kaysa nu’ng nasa laya ako naibibigay ko po kahit papaano sa kanya.” - PDL 8*

PDL 8 revealed that she does not see herself as a mother at the moment. Since she is a detainee, her uncle took over her role as a mother to her child. No matter how hard it is, she has to accept it because she has no ability to provide for her daughter. For her, being free is more productive than being confined.

### **Structural Analysis**

In this analysis method, the narratives are divided into the following sections in order to examine the statements' construction and monitor the PDL's manner of answering: plot summary, which consists of a brief overview of the plot of the story; introduction, which provides the background of the story; problem/conflict that states the struggles in the story; climax/action where the conflict has been resolved; resolution, which shows the conclusion of the story; character/time/settings that indicate who are the people involved, when did it happen, and where did it occur; and lastly, coda, or the participant’s concluding remark.

#### **PDL 1**

The narrative follows an incarcerated mother who endures the pain of being separated from her children for the third time, poignantly expressing her agony with the words, “Masakit. Masakit kasi yung imbes na kasama ako nung anak ko...” Her repeated incarcerations disrupt her ability to care for her children, causing her to miss significant milestones in their lives. Feelings of helplessness intensify as court hearings are continually canceled, extending her time in jail and increasing her maternal restrictions. However, the brief visits from her eldest daughter provide a fleeting sense of connection through shared stories and motherly care. Yet once her daughter leaves, the harsh realities of incarceration return, highlighting her desperation to be with her children. Despite these challenges, she maintains her bond through thoughtful gestures like crafting birthday cards and planning future activities, which serve as coping mechanisms that reinforce her resilience. The narrative powerfully portrays the heavy burden of motherhood she bears while incarcerated, emphasizing her determination to remain strong for her children.

#### **PDL 2**

This narrative explored the strength of a mother behind bars, showing the depth of her love for her children. The participant’s narrative revealed how overwhelming and painful maternal anxiety and separation is, especially since her three children are still young who constantly need a mother’s care and attention. She carried her last pregnancy inside jail, and the loneliness deepened when she learned that she would stay there for an uncertain amount of time, not knowing when she could hold her children without restrictions. She had only expected to be there for months. She narrates how her eldest son refused to visit her, burdened by the heartache of seeing his mother imprisoned. As her other child also faces restrictions on visiting, the mother’s sadness only grows. Yet, she seeks comfort by volunteering to teach and create crafts, activities that give her a sense of purpose and help her stay connected to her kids. Throughout her journey, the mother embodies strength and boundless hope, ultimately making a powerful declaration of strength and determination to rise above her circumstances for the sake of her children.

#### **PDL 3**

The narrative follows an incarcerated mother as she went through a heavy, emotional toll of her second arrest and its impact on her children. She expressed deep remorse for her past actions and absence in her children’s lives. She yearns for reconnection, to make up for all those times she was not with her children. She was worried because one of her children was having a sensitive pregnancy and she was not there to take care of her. As her release approaches, she nurtures hope and determination to fulfill her maternal responsibilities, emphasizing her love through thoughtful gestures like crafting beaded bracelets as symbols of affection. Despite the limitations of being a mother caused by imprisonment, her thoughts and feelings about reconnecting with her children show her strong commitment to repairing and strengthening their family relationships.

#### ***PDL 4***

The narrative begins on the maternal experiences of the PDL outside the jail expressing how determined she was to perform her motherly responsibilities. For her, being financially unstable was not enough reason to neglect and not fulfill her children's wishes. The narrative heavily focuses on how she is currently struggling due to the fact that her children became separated since she was imprisoned. As she continued to tell her story, she mentioned that despite being in jail and having restrictions, she still managed to ask about her children's whereabouts. Despite having a heavy feeling about her children's separation, she remains hopeful that someday, once she returns home, they will be a complete family even without her children's father.

#### ***PDL 5***

The narrative focuses on the experience of a mother who felt embarrassed for being incarcerated. Because of her current status, she cannot help but to feel guilty that she is inside the correctional facility and not with her children. She perceived herself as a useless mother because she was not able to perform her duties as a mother. Because of these thoughts occupying her mind, there are times where she felt committing suicide. However, she also stated that whenever suicidal ideation comes to her mind, she immediately thinks about her children who have been waiting for her outside.

#### ***PDL 6***

This narrative revolves around the desire of an incarcerated mother to spend time with her four children once more. Although she was able to do this before she was detained, for her it was still not enough because she is not living with her children, and she rarely visits them as commanded by her lesbian companion to avoid getting caught by the authorities due to illegal acts. Recently, she realized that her actions will even be more limited because she is now in the female dormitory. It will be more difficult for her to be with her beloved children and to perform maternal duties since they do not pay her a visit. Thus, it is inevitable that she would often feel envious of other inmates who are visited by their families.

#### ***PDL 7***

This narrative reflects the realization of an incarcerated mother who learned to be a mother to her children during confinement. She thought about the decisions she had made before, abandoning her children to her mother and prioritizing only herself, which she now regrets. She worries about her children, realizing how important mothers are to their lives. However, her imprisonment limits what she can do as a mother, especially because of her children's infrequent visits, that is why she takes advantage of e-dalaw to lecture them.

#### ***PDL 8***

The narrative pointed out how recidivism affects mother-child relationship due to restrictions in the prison cell, leading to a mother's unfulfilled maternal roles and doubts about her maternal identity. In the case of this incarcerated mother, she lost her 6-month-old baby as a result of a medical condition while serving her first sentence, which caused her emotional suffering. She was unable to support her firstborn, so she wanted to make up for her other child who is currently battling for an illness. She yearns to reunite with her daughter and relive their special moments together, even though the child refuses to accept her as her mother as she was raised by her uncle. At this present time, she only hears from her mother and uncle about her daughter's condition as she cannot talk to the child directly because she is worried that her daughter will discover that she is back in prison, and this will cause her daughter to suddenly turn away from her.

#### ***PDL 9***

The narrative emphasizes the experience of an incarcerated mother who had been away from her children for a long time due to her and her ex-husband's conflict. The mother is a lesbian who had been forced to marry the father of her child. Due to the conflict of their interest and their sexuality, their relationship did not work; hence, the father was granted custody of their daughter because he is more financially capable than her. After some years, they finally met, and she began to experience a mother-and-daughter bonding. The participant expressed that she was extremely happy when that moment happened. However, one month had only passed since she got to meet her daughter personally when she was imprisoned again. Her worries linger in her mind thinking that her daughter might think negatively of her. Currently, she is enduring all the longing that she has for her daughter due to her present situation. All she can do is to make bracelets dedicated to her daughter and pray to God and ask for His forgiveness.

#### **Performance Analysis**

In this method of analysis, the story itself is not the only focus but also the way the participant behaved and performed while narrating. This method emphasizes the language, vocal tones, and gestures that one exhibits.

#### ***PDL 1***

The participant's eye contact was consistently maintained throughout the interview. She looked directly at the interviewers while answering the questions, showing composure. She answered the questions in a direct manner. Although her overall demeanor was calm and composed, the PDL did exhibit some fidgety behavior.

### ***PDL 2***

The participant's eye contact was consistently maintained throughout the entire interview, demonstrating a level of attentiveness. However, she also appeared to be emotional while telling her story, as evident from her tone and facial expressions. Furthermore, she exhibited a range of hand gestures while responding to the interviewer's questions. These nonverbal cues served to emphasize her points and convey a sense of passion and conviction.

### ***PDL 3***

The participant's eye contact was brief, lasting only for a short period of time, and would often shift away from the interviewer's gaze as she responded to questions. She incorporated a range of physical gestures and facial expressions into her narrative. As she told her story, she did so with great enthusiasm and energy, using actions to emphasize her points. Throughout the interview, she maintained a wide smile, and her tone and facial expressions conveyed a sense of happiness and excitement. Notably, she became tearful due to happiness. Furthermore, her torso moving back and forth as she sat, indicated her high level of enthusiasm.

### ***PDL 4***

The participant cannot maintain eye contact with the interviewers. Her eyes were going in different directions during the entire interview. She cannot also maintain her attention and she is rocking her body back and forth. Moreover, the interviewers noticed that the story that the participant is sharing is inconsistent. There are lapses in her narration since what she is telling contradicts each other.

### ***PDL 5***

The participant was composed during the interview although her eye contact was inconsistent. During the interview, she touched her hair and wrist and even scratched her face. She even tapped her feet, only nodded when she agrees, and expressed hand gestures while responding. Her fingers were also interlocked. All throughout the interview, she gave brief answers.

### ***PDL 6***

The participant maintained eye contact and demonstrated expressive hand gestures along with her responses. She often looked up when thinking, while nodding and raising eyebrows attested that she agreed. Her anxiousness was observable as she frequently crossed her ankles, and tapped her feet and hands all throughout the interview. She touched her ID lace multiple times to feel relaxed. She also became emotional the moment she was being interviewed.

### ***PDL 7***

The participant maintained eye contact with the interviewers and nodded in agreement, which indicated her focus and interest. Looking to the side while thinking implies her thoughtful manner. Her nervousness appeared through tiptoeing and feet tapping, while touching the nose and face, covering mouth, and prayer-like hand position conveys the need for her to relax. Facial expressions and expressive hand gestures while responding to inquiries are also evident.

### ***PDL 8***

The participant displayed uneasiness by fidgeting, fist-clenching, prayer-like hand position, tiptoeing, crossed ankles, and frequent feet tapping on the floor during the interview session. Extra movements when she was sitting in a monoblock chair reflects an effort to calm herself down. Stuttering while answering questions was also noticeable, as well as her expressive hand gestures. Delayed emotional surge indicates that she could no longer contain her repressed sentiments.

### ***PDL 9***

The participant looked up while she was thinking. She also held or played with her eyeglasses. She smiled even if it is unnecessary or out of context. She was fidgeting, tiptoeing, and sitting upright. Additionally, she has expressive hand gestures while she was talking. She also became emotional at the latter part of the interview.

Overall, this research explores maternal fulfillment of mothers who had been separated from their offspring due to incarceration. Through semi-structured interviews, several themes emerged which are the following: challenges of maternal physical restrictions, the strength of maternal love, an incarcerated mother's redemption, mother's experience of self-loathing, maternal identity crisis, and maternal role realization.

When in jail, there are lots of restrictions that persons deprived of liberty cannot do. According to several PDLs, maternal restrictions made them suffer while they are still inside of the institution. They cannot feed their children, they cannot play with them, and, in the worst-case scenario, they cannot meet or talk to them. The BJMP Calamba City Jail - Female Dormitory offers ways how these inmates can still communicate with their loved ones which are physical visitation and online visitation that they call "e-dalaw." However, these options are not sufficient for some PDLs because despite having these choices, their role as a mother still remains unfulfilled thus they feel sad and hurt at the same time. An existing study by Sapkota et al. (2022) exhibits similar results which states that mothers express the feelings of disappointment and pain as they cannot practice their autonomy in making decisions for their children such as food selection, playing or resting time, or picking books to read together which they used to do when outside the jail. According to Page et

al. (2021), mothers who experience separation due to incarceration increase their stress because of the pain that they are going through. Furthermore, the other key point explored in this study is how incarcerated mothers are being strong despite all the challenges that they experience due to the motherly love that they have. A mother stated that she is acting strong and pretending that she is not struggling as if her current situation is not difficult enough and that is because of her love for her children. The PDL also stated that she still treats and cares for her children the same way that she is doing when she is still free. However, in contrast, the result of the study of Alirezaei and Roudsari (2023) showed different findings wherein one of the participants stated that she has no special affection for her child due to the sufferings she experienced inside the jail. In this existing study, it shows that mothers can be less affectionate to their children despite them being the one who gave birth to these individuals.

Moreover, it was also found in a participant's narrative that despite being imprisoned, determination and vision for the future is still existing in her system. The participant is ready to make her redemption and aims to fulfill her responsibilities and recover from their lapses once they have returned to her own home. In contrast, the existing study of Alirezaei and Roudsari (2023) concludes that mothers experience uncertain and mixed emotions in terms of connection and abandonment towards their children which makes them become uncertain about their future.

In addition, due to being distanced from their children, mothers inside the jail felt that they were useless and had extremely disliked their current state which affects their self-perception. They felt guilt and blamed themselves for being in jail and they believed that they were a failed mother (Cooper-Sadlo et al., 2019; Kennedy et al., 2020; Stringer, 2020). Mothers also experience anxiety, depression, and somatic symptoms because of their minimal and restricted interaction with their children due to their imprisonment. (Houck & Loper, 2002; Walsh et al., 2023). As stated in the study of Dargis and Mitchell-Somoza (2021), incarcerated parents who have minor children usually experience hallucinations, have unusual ideas, and perform self-destructive behaviors. These explains why there are times when the PDL felt the urge of committing suicide while inside the jail.

Being in jail is highly stigmatized by society. Imprisonment, in general, is perceived as a blemish on one's identity. Moreover, it becomes more intensified when a mother becomes incarcerated. As cited in the study of Shrestha et al. et al. (2019), mothers are expected to be the primary care providers of their children and they should always accompany them. Hence, failure to meet the standard regarding their maternal role negatively affects their identities as mothers (Sinai-Glazer et al., 2019). Based on the result, the participant found it difficult to perceive and identify herself as mother. For her, the maternal identity of hers only existed when she is outside the cell and free to do her responsibilities as mother.

On the other hand, contrary to the themes emerging from the narratives of other PDLs, there is one PDL who admitted that this incarceration made her realize her role and responsibilities as a mother. She stated that being imprisoned makes her feel that her motherhood becomes three or ten times intensified. This result was in accordance with the study of Cooper-Sadlo (2019) which states that the imprisonment of their participant also enables her to direct herself to self-development as she began to learn to ponder her life.

In general, most of them may struggle and may find difficulty in identifying themselves as mothers but they can still feel the ownership to their children that they are the ones who gave birth to these individuals and still feel that they are their own children. The themes that emerged from this study and the experiences of the participants are in contrast with the study of O'Malley et al. (2023) where participants perceived their incarceration a factor that makes them lose their children. A participant from the stated study even claimed that even though she gave birth to her offspring, she feels like they do not belong to her anymore due to her custodial sentence. Another participant also expressed her experience of being forgetful of what their children likes and dislikes as a result of having less contact and interaction with them. On the other hand, this study is aligned to the result of study of Stringer (2020) as incarcerated mothers experiences pain due to their separation with their children and feeling guilt and shame as well for causing pain to their offspring and for being a "bad" mother. In order to fight against pain and longing that they are encountering caused by their situation, participants also used their children as their source or strength. These findings are similar to the results of this study as participants of both studies exhibits the characteristics of embarrassment and suffering and have the same source of motivation to conquer every day's challenges, which is their children.

In addition, the researchers analyzed the structure of every narratives of the PDLs which emphasizes how the story has been told. Upon observation, most of the participants highly focus on their negative experiences regarding their motherhood while inside the correctional institution. Despite encountering different problems while inside the jail, the PDLs showed patterns of construction of narratives. Majority of the PDLs exerted their feelings in doing crafts for their children such as making bracelets out of beads, bayong or bags, and even writing them letter. They express their love for their children in that simple but impactful way. Moreover, the researchers also observed the PDLs' performances while interviewing them. The incarcerated mothers also behaved differently, some can maintain eye contacts while others cannot. Some sit still while others rock their body. Most importantly, it is observed by the researchers that one of the participants shared an inconsistent narrative.

In terms of theoretical implication, using the lens of Ambiguous Loss Theory of Pauline Boss, which states that there are two types of loss: physical ambiguous loss or having a moment wherein they are physically absent but are psychologically present, and psychological ambiguous loss or being in situation wherein they are psychologically absent despite being physically present (Mooney, 2023), the study revealed that participants experiences physical ambiguous loss but not psychological ambiguous loss. According to the PDL

mothers, they have maintained their affection and longingness to their children despite being away. This was aligned to the existing study of Alirezaei and Roudsari (2023) which cited that some of the incarcerated mothers face deep worries and anxiety regarding their separation from their children which leads them to being sleep deprived due to constantly thinking about them. Additionally, the participants also verbalized that they do not encounter psychological ambiguous loss since whenever they are together with their children through the short span of physical visitation or they are talking to each other through e-dalaw, they minds are only focused to their children cherishing their moments despite of being distanced for a period of time.

Consequently, these findings provide a significant contribution in understanding the maternal fulfillment and motherhood experiences of incarcerated women inside the correctional facility. It shows the difficulties that mothers encountered while being confined and away from their children. On the other hand, despite the results gathered, the proponents of this study still acknowledge its limitations. The researchers cannot exclude the fact that the participants gathered came from a similar institution hence incarcerated mothers from other institutions may have different experiences.

The result of this study can strongly influence the culture that the society has and even contribute to the field of Psychology. Genuinely, this advocates for a social change, particularly how society should treat detained individuals fairly. This encourages positive behavior such as being empathetic and understanding towards these people. These findings can help eradicate the stereotypes and stigma embedded in the incarcerated mothers. This study could also be an eye-opening for the public that despite their current situation, they are still longing for their children.

Furthermore, this study can also be significant to the development of Penal Psychology in the Philippines. This field of Psychology is necessary in order to protect and foster the mental health of the incarcerated individuals. Adding Penal Psychology may help in improving intervention approaches not only for incarcerated mothers but also for other detainees with different situations with their children and families outside detention. The study also gave importance to the psychological effects on incarcerated mothers, highlighting the need to better understand how being imprisoned influences their maternal identity and mental well-being, especially their emotions. It emphasizes the significance of implementing psychological methods to acknowledge the experiences by these women. Furthermore, the narratives of these incarcerated mothers also showed the psychological impact of their imprisonment on their children, highlighting the needs to aid the mental well-being of both mothers and children. Understanding the experiences of imprisoned mothers can guide effective psychological approaches and offer frameworks for assisting other marginalized populations in facing similar difficulties.

This research can also make a great impact for both incarcerated mothers and their families. By bravely sharing their own narratives, incarcerated mothers can stand up for themselves, giving the society a glimpse of their realities, experiences, and directly saying what should be improved to fairly advocate for their needs as an incarcerated mother. This self-expression does not only empower the mothers, and to lessen, in some way, the heavy burdens they carry, but it also fosters a deeper understanding of their challenges and acknowledgement of their sense of self beyond imprisonment. Furthermore, this research can also help the families of PDLs to understand the perspective of the mothers, to enhance the bond between them, and maintain communication, and provide consistent visits that can give motivation and a sense of connection between them. This can help reduce their emotional load and strengthen the significance of family bonds while in jail.

Lastly, the results of this study can give guidance for future studies about impacts of imprisonment in maternal well-being and family relationships. Future researchers are urged to widen the study by researching and exploring more perspectives of the children or their spouse still in related with mothers' incarceration; this may provide a more thorough understanding of the family dynamics under the strain of incarceration.

## Conclusions

The study analyzed the narratives of incarcerated mothers on their maternal fulfillment while being separated from their children during confinement. The application of Riessman's Narrative Analysis provided a holistic understanding and obtained a greater insight from the participants' respective experiences. The study concluded that the participants are experiencing struggles in performing maternal roles due to the limitations inside the correctional facility, leading them to yearn for a meaningful maternal experience. It also pointed out the coping strategies employed by imprisoned mothers to manage their stress and longing for their children during detention, which presented resilience among them in wanting to fulfill their maternal duties despite having unresolved conflicts. Moreover, participants displayed different comfort levels during the interview sessions, ranging from uneasiness to confidence in sharing their narratives. The challenges, coping strategies, and emotional and behavioral responses regarding the participants' maternal satisfaction are emphasized in Riessman's Narrative Analysis methods. These findings presented the consequences of either physical or emotional disconnection among incarcerated mothers who are separated from their children. This necessitates the quality of parenting programs, psychological interventions, jail visitation policies, outreach programs, and recreational and reflection activities to improve the well-being of incarcerated mothers, increase their self-esteem, raise their maternal fulfillment, and develop their relationships with their children.

This study also acknowledged the limitation of the data gathered by the researchers. Since the participants came from one locale, which is the BJMP Calamba City Jail-Female Dormitory. The results could not generalize the experiences of other incarcerated mothers as they may have different experiences because they are confined in different institutions and may have different family dynamics.

Additionally, this study does not cover incarcerated fathers, childless women separated from their families, or the insights of children on their incarcerated parents.

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