VMC ANALYTIKS

Revisiting the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) Security Plan: Towards the Development of a Proposed Framework on Enhanced Safety and Security System

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Abstract

This study evaluates the New Bilibid Prison's (NBP) Security and Safety Management Program, highlighting internal and external challenges such as overcrowding, contraband smuggling, gang violence, and employee misconduct. These issues undermine the program's effectiveness and call for strategic corrective measures to foster a safer rehabilitation environment. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 300 Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) personnel across four NBP camps – Maximum, Medium, Minimum Security, and the Reception and Diagnostic Center. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis, while qualitative insights were drawn from in-depth interviews with Corrections Officers. Key indicators assessed included congestion, staff misconduct, gang activity, and technological limitations. Findings revealed that congestion, corruption, and contraband proliferation are perceived as serious threats. Implemented corrective actions include regular drug testing, personnel rotation, and technological upgrades. Despite these efforts, challenges such as understaffing and inadequate infrastructure persist. The study recommends increasing personnel, enhancing technological systems (e.g., cell phone jammers, drone detection), and strengthening ethical standards and transparency. These improvements aim to bolster institutional security and support effective rehabilitation. The research contributes to ongoing reforms in the Philippine correctional system, aligning NBP operations with international best practices.

Keywords: New Bilibid Prison (NBP), Security and Safety Management Program, prison challenges, riot, drugs, mixed methods

INTRODUCTION

Penitentiary systems are essential components of any criminal justice structure, tasked with managing incarcerated individuals, ensuring their safety, and contributing to the rehabilitation of offenders. In the Philippines, the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) oversees various prison facilities, with the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) being the largest and most significant among them. Established in 1940, the NBP plays a crucial role in managing Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL), particularly those convicted of serious crimes. Despite its central role in the country's criminal justice system, the NBP faces numerous operational and security challenges that continue to test its management capabilities.

The Philippine criminal justice system has undergone significant reforms in recent decades, shifting from a punitive approach to one that emphasizes rehabilitation and reintegration. The Bureau of Prisons was officially renamed the Bureau of Corrections in 1987, reflecting a shift in policy towards rehabilitating offenders rather than merely incarcerating them. This transformation was further strengthened by the enactment of Republic Act 10575 in 2013, which aimed to modernize the Bureau, enhance its operational effectiveness, and improve the living conditions of prisoners on death row (PDLs). However, despite these reforms, the New Bilibid Prison continues to encounter significant issues that affect both its operational efficiency and its ability to rehabilitate offenders.

Overcrowding is one of the most persistent challenges at the NBP, with the facility currently operating at 179% of its designed capacity. The surge in the PDL population has placed

considerable strain on the prison's infrastructure, healthcare services, and rehabilitation programs. This has led to poor living conditions for inmates and undermined the overall safety and security of the prison. The overcrowding situation, coupled with the prison's aging infrastructure, has contributed to increasing tension among inmates and staff, further exacerbating security challenges.

The NBP has also faced numerous security breaches, including the proliferation of contraband such as drugs, weapons, and mobile phones within the facility. These illicit items are often smuggled into the prison through various means, including the use of drones and external networks. Despite BuCor's efforts to tighten security through surveillance and physical barriers, the increasing sophistication of smuggling tactics has made it challenging to fully secure the prison. Additionally, the involvement of some corrections officers in illegal activities, such as bribery and collaboration with inmates, has further compromised the prison's security.

This study aims to assess the seriousness of the indicators reflected in the New Bilibid Prison's existing Security and Safety Management Program, evaluating both internal and external challenges faced by the facility. The study aims to identify gaps in the current security system and recommend improvements, thereby contributing to the development of a more effective framework that ensures the safety of all PDLs and correctional personnel, in line with BuCor's mission to rehabilitate and reintegrate individuals into society (BuCor Manual, 2024). By addressing these security and safety issues, the study aims to provide critical insights into how BuCor can effectively manage its resources and enhance its operational protocols to meet national and international standards.

The New Bilibid Prison, established in 1940, is the largest correctional facility in the Philippines and plays a central role in the management of PDLs, especially those convicted of serious offenses and sentenced to long prison terms. The facility is located in Muntinlupa City and houses several security zones, including the Maximum-Security Camp, the Medium-Security Camp, the Minimum-Security Camp, and the Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC). These security zones accommodate different types of PDLs, ranging from those who have committed severe crimes to those serving shorter sentences. Managing these diverse categories of inmates requires a comprehensive and dynamic approach to security, rehabilitation, and overall management.

Over the years, the NBP has faced significant challenges, most notably overcrowding. The facility was designed to hold 10,082 inmates, but it currently houses far more than its intended capacity, operating at 179% of its capacity. This overcrowding has strained the prison's resources and services, leading to poor living conditions for the inmates and placing immense pressure on correctional officers and staff. The congestion has resulted in inadequate space for inmate activities, a lack of proper medical care, and insufficient access to rehabilitation programs. This overcrowding also creates an environment of heightened tension and conflict, contributing to security issues within the prison.

Security concerns at the NBP extend beyond overcrowding. The proliferation of contraband within the facility, including illegal drugs, weapons, and communication devices, remains a persistent issue. Despite BuCor's efforts to implement security measures, such as installing fishnets around the perimeter to prevent contraband from being thrown into the prison, smuggling activities continue to be a major challenge. Drones have also been used to smuggle contraband into the prison, highlighting the sophistication of these smuggling tactics.

In addition to external security threats, the involvement of prison personnel in illicit activities has compromised the institution's integrity. Instances of bribery and corruption, where corrections officers collude with inmates to smuggle contraband or facilitate illicit activities, have been reported. These issues undermine the effectiveness of the security

management program and further threaten the safety and well-being of both PDLs and staff members.

The limited infrastructure upgrades since the 1970s further compound the NBP's challenges. The lack of modern facilities, such as new prison dormitories or enhanced security systems, has hindered the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) ability to adapt to the growing number of prisoners detained (PDLs) and the increasing complexity of security threats. As a result, the current security and safety management programs at the NBP are often hindered by these outdated systems and inadequate resources.

Given the significant challenges the NBP faces, this study aims to assess the seriousness of the indicators reflected in the New Bilibid Prison's existing Security and Safety Management Program, evaluating both internal and external challenges faced by the facility. By addressing issues such as congestion, contraband proliferation, staff corruption, and outdated infrastructure, the study seeks to provide actionable recommendations that will enhance the NBP's ability to fulfill its mandate of safeguarding PDLs and ensuring the safety of its personnel.

Theoretical Framework. This study adopts the Routine Activity Theory (RAT) by Cohen and Felson (1979), which explains crime as the convergence of three elements: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardianship. Within the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), this framework illuminates the persistent security breaches and criminal activities.

Inmates at NBP often exhibit strong motivations for illicit acts such as drug trafficking, extortion, and violence. These behaviors are driven by economic needs, personal vendettas, or gang-related pressures. Overcrowding intensifies these motivations, fostering alliances and power struggles. Rosales and Dela Cruz (2022) found that gang dominance and illegal trade flourish in such environments, increasing the prevalence of motivated offenders and enabling them to exploit systemic weaknesses.
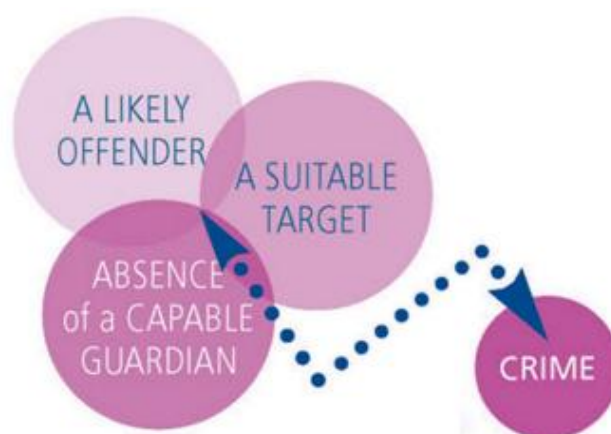

Figure 1
Routine Activity Theory (RAT) by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979)

The prison's infrastructure, staff, and inmates become suitable targets. Contraband, weapons, and vulnerable individuals are exploited, especially in overcrowded conditions. Bello and De Leon (2023) emphasized that overcrowding hampers staff monitoring, enabling smuggling and bribery. The sheer volume of inmates amplifies opportunities for criminal acts, making the prison ecosystem more susceptible to exploitation.

Capable guardianship – trained and well-equipped correctional officers – is essential for security. Yet, understaffing, poor training, and corruption undermine this role. Johnson and Green (2024) observed that limited staffing and complacency hinder oversight, while Liu et al. (2022) linked overcrowding to increased security breaches due to weak surveillance and response systems.

To enhance NBP's security, all three RAT elements must be addressed. This includes reducing offender motivation, limiting criminal opportunities, and strengthening guardianship. Strategies involve target hardening, improved staff training, increased personnel, and technological interventions. Arias and Rivera (2023) highlighted tools like surveillance cameras, jammers, and scanners as effective deterrents. Ongoing training in conflict resolution and behavioral management further empowers staff to counteract offender tactics and reinforce institutional control.

Conceptual Framework. The study's conceptual framework utilizes an Independent Variable scheme which identifies the factors that influence the dependent variable. Independent variables include the demographic profile of respondents and the severity of indicators in NBP's current Security and Safety Management Program. These indicators encompass congestion, fraternization and familiarization, personnel involvement in illegal activities, proliferation of modern communication devices, riots, and drug-related incidents. Also included are internal and external challenges faced during implementation and the corrective measures undertaken. These collectively influence the dependent variable: the proposed Enhanced Safety and Security Program for NBP.
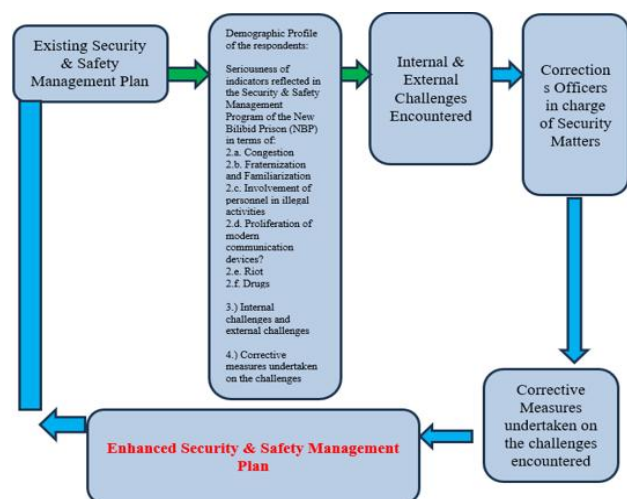

Figure 2
Research Paradigm of the Study

Descriptive research is used to analyze and interpret existing conditions. It provides factual and practical insights that help evaluate, justify, or improve current systems. This method involves comparison, contrast, and detailed recording of phenomena, especially when the facts are not fully known. It is ideal for gaining deeper understanding of institutional dynamics and operational challenges.

The study focuses on assessing the severity of existing indicators and identifying challenges in the implementation of NBP's security program. Data were gathered from BuCor Corrections Officers across the Maximum-Security Camp (MaxSeCamp), Medium Security Camp (MedSeCamp), Minimum Security Camp (MinSeCamp), and Reception Diagnostic Center (RDC). The findings aim to inform the development of an Enhanced Safety and Security System tailored to the unique needs of NBP in Muntinlupa.

The proponent believes this framework will significantly contribute to institutional reform and improved prison management.

Statement of the Problem. This study sought to assess the seriousness of the indicators reflected in the New Bilibid Prison's existing Security and Safety Management Program Plan of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) at the four (4) Correctional facilities: Maximum, Medium, and Minimum-Security Camps, including the Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC). Additionally, it aims to distinguish between the internal and external challenges encountered and the corrective measures undertaken to address these challenges as the basis for developing an Enhanced Safety and Security System for the New Bilibid Prison (NBP)-Muntinlupa. Thus, the following questions were answered:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents according to:
   1.1 Age;
   1.2 Civil Status;
   1.3 Educational attainment;
   1.4 Rank/Position; and,
   1.5 Prison security camp where currently assigned?

2. How serious are the indicators reflected in the existing security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison in terms of:
   2.1 Congestion;
   2.2 Fraternization and Familiarization;
   2.3 Involvement of personnel in illegal activities;
   2.4 Proliferation of modern communication devices;
   2.5 Riot; and,
   2.6 Drugs?

3. Are there significant differences in the assessment of the NBP personnel respondents as to the effectiveness of the Safety and Security Management Program when grouped according to their profile?

4. How do the key informants describe the challenges encountered in the implementation of the security and safety management of the New Bilibid Prison in terms of:
   4.1 internal challenges; and,
   4.2 external challenges?

5. How do the key informants describe the corrective measures undertaken to the challenges encountered by the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) in the implementation of the security and safety management program?

6. On the basis of the results of the study, what enhanced Security Program can be formulated to effectively implement the security and safety management program of the New Bilibid Prison-Muntinlupa?

Significance of the Study. This study is significant as it seeks to strengthen the safety and security framework within the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), a critical institution under the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor). By assessing the severity of indicators in the existing Security and Safety Management Program, the research aims to identify gaps and propose corrective measures that will enhance the protection and rehabilitation of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDL). The findings will guide BuCor officials in revisiting current policies and implementing improvements that ensure a safer, more humane correctional environment.

The study's mixed-methods approach will generate accurate, actionable insights, informing decisions on policy refinement and program development. It holds particular relevance for BuCor personnel, especially those stationed at Operating Prisons and Penal Farms (OPPF), by highlighting internal and external challenges in maintaining institutional security. The Doctrine Development Division can also use the results to evaluate and revise existing protocols, contributing to the formulation of an Enhanced Security Program across BuCor facilities.

For correction officers at NBP, the study offers a practical lens to understand operational challenges and improve their implementation of safety protocols. Beyond institutional impact, the research supports the academic and professional growth of the researcher, enriching his study of public administration and contributing to his career advancement.

Moreover, the study serves as a valuable reference for future researchers and educators, offering insights into prison management and policy development. Its contribution extends to the broader academic community, including school administrators, faculty, and students, by deepening understanding of correctional systems and their role in national development.

Scope and Delimitations/Limitations of the Study. The respondents in the study are New Bilibid Prison (NBP) personnel involved in security operations at MaxSeCamp, MedSeCamp, MinSeCamp, and the Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC) of the Bureau of Corrections-New Bilibid Prison (NBP). The research survey was administered to participants as the research respondents and collated, analyzed, and interpreted by the researcher.

This paper concentrated on the implementation of the existing Security and Management Program in the four (4) Major Camps of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP). Not included in the study are those personnel from the Correctional Institute for Women in Mandaluyong City; Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm in Palawan; Sablayan Prison and Penal Farm in Occidental Mindoro; Leyte Regional Prison in Abuyog, Leyte; San Ramon Prison and Penal Farm in Zamboanga City; and the Davao Prison and Penal Farm in Davao City.

Additionally, it aimed to identify the internal and external challenges encountered during the implementation of the existing Security and Management Plan of the New Bilibid Prison

(NBP). Furthermore, corrective measures taken to address the challenges encountered by the New Bilibid Prison in implementing the Security Management Program were discussed in this study.

The researcher employed a mixed-methods approach and a descriptive survey method in gathering its data. This work will cover the period from January 2025 to April 2025.

LITERATURES

The Philippines has the most overcrowded prison system in the world. The detention centers managed by the National Police, the jail facilities overseen by the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and the Provincial government, as well as the prisons and penal farms managed by the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor), register an average overcrowding rate of approximately 300 percent. An overpopulated prison system is a natural consequence of an underdeveloped prison and correctional framework. The country ranks as the most overcrowded incarceration system in the world, with a startling, overcrowded population rate of 436%.4 (Guinigundo 2021). Although it was already heavily congested even before President Rodrigo R. Duterte's war on drugs the inmate population has increased more than 67 percent (from 120,000 to 200,000) since 2016 as a result of the drug war, one remand jail facility in Manila, for example, has reached a congestion rate of 3,600 percent of capacity; jail cells that once housed 10 inmates now squeeze in more than 200. Making matters worse, the growth in the inmate population has not been matched by the modernization of archaic facilities or increases in personnel and resources.

Demographic Profile of the Correction Officers. Research by Browning and Harriott (2022) underscores the influence of correctional officers' age on professionalism and vulnerability to fraternization, with younger officers more prone to informal relationships due to inexperience. This concern is particularly relevant at New Bilibid Prison (NBP), where Dela Cruz and Tan (2023) observe that younger officers often struggle to assert authority, increasing their susceptibility to manipulation. Henderson et al. (2023) add that civil status plays a role, noting that single and less experienced officers are more likely to form personal ties with inmates. Santos and Alvarado (2022) echo this in the Philippine context, linking personal difficulties to compromised conduct.

Educational attainment also affects resistance to fraternization. Garcia and Solis (2022) found that better-educated officers are more aware of the risks, a point reinforced by Mendoza (2023), who notes limited formal training among NBP officers. Rank and position further influence behavior; Thompson and Williams (2023) argue that senior officers are less likely to fraternize, aligning with Garcia and Magno's (2022) findings on junior officers' authority challenges at NBP.

Roberts et al. (2023) suggest that officers in high-security units are less prone to fraternization, while Perez and Ramos (2022) highlight risks in lower-security areas. Schuster and Martinez (2022) emphasize that demographic factors – age, civil status, education, and rank – can lead to security breaches. Browning and Harriott (2022) and Tan and Santos (2022) advocate for a framework that integrates these considerations to strengthen NBP's overall security strategy.

Seriousness of the Security and Safety of Correction Facilities in terms of Congestion. The Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) is mandated to ensure the safekeeping and rehabilitation of national prisoners through reform programs (BuCor Manual, 2024). Swan (2021) emphasizes that modern correctional administration centers on the offender's holistic development – educational, moral, spiritual, vocational, and recreational. However, persistent issues such as overcrowding, unsanitary conditions, and inhumane treatment undermine these goals (Prison Overcrowding, 2021; Baggio et al., 2020). Muirhead et al. (2020) found that congestion negatively affects inmates' physical and psychological well-being, while Spencer (2020) links overcrowding to increased inmate violence.

Cagande (2022) notes that many Philippine jails fail to meet UN standards due to poor nutrition and living conditions. The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) reports that some facilities hold over five times their intended capacity, constituting cruel treatment and rights violations. Despite the anti-torture law, CHR continues to receive reports of abuse among detainees (Perez & Rubio, 2020). Guda (2022) highlights the lack of new facilities, prompting authorities to seek land for expansion (Calleja, 2022). In the Bicol region alone, 18 jails house 3,032 detainees – more than double their ideal capacity (Bea et al., 2022).

Globally, overcrowding remains a critical issue. The Global Population and Prisons Trends (2024) reports that 60% of countries operate prisons at or above capacity, with 25% exceeding 150%. This is most severe in Africa and the Americas. Overcrowding leads to deteriorated nutrition, sanitation, health services, and increased disease transmission. It also compromises rehabilitation efforts and prison security. Ultimately, it constitutes a human rights and management crisis, undermining the integrity of prison systems worldwide (Global Population and Prisons Trends, 2024).

Fraternization and Familiarization. Fraternization within correctional facilities arises from interpersonal bonds between officers and inmates. Maculan and Rodelli (2023) found that while such relationships may foster teamwork, they can also compromise accountability and institutional security. At New Bilibid Prison (NBP), staff-inmate familiarity has historically eroded protocols, enabling misconduct and corruption. Penal Reform International (2023) insists for staff training to define boundaries, reinforcing professional norms as part of NBP's security framework.

The Philippine National Police Academy (2023) notes that familiarity may aid inmate management but risks misconduct when officers become personally involved. In NBP, this undermines authority and fosters corruption. The Bureau of Corrections (2024) responded by improving infrastructure to

reduce opportunities for inappropriate bonds. The International Committee of the Red Cross supports this, emphasizing that better living and working conditions enhance safety and reduce fraternization risks.

Training programs are essential to reinforce ethical conduct. The University of the Philippines College of Criminology (2023) warns that excessive familiarity undermines operations, while the Philippine National Police Academy (2023) advocates continuous professional development to foster accountability. These findings support regular training at NBP to mitigate fraternization and promote a culture of integrity.

Resistance to reform is a challenge, especially where informal power networks thrive. The Santos (2024) reports that entrenched staff relationships hinder security reforms. Overcoming this requires leadership and a cultural shift toward professionalism. Overcrowding exacerbates familiarity, as noted by the Bureau of Corrections (2022), which found that officers often form informal bonds to maintain control. Addressing overcrowding is vital to preserving authority and discipline.

Maculan and Rodelli (2023) suggest trust among officers can aid security if monitored to prevent favoritism. The University of the Philippines College of Criminology (2023) warns that personal investment in inmates' lives undermines professionalism. NBP must balance trust and professionalism to enhance security.

Staff involvement in illegal activities further threatens prison integrity. Shukla et al. (2021) found that contraband often enters facilities via staff, driven by financial incentives. In contrast, DOCR staff in the U.S. are less prone to smuggling due to better pay and benefits. York (2020) notes that inmates use wealth to gain power, often exploiting vulnerable individuals. Manguni (2020) and Shukla et al. (2021) confirm that contraband – drugs, weapons, money – is smuggled with staff complicity. Ochola (2020) adds that both inmates and officials are regularly involved in illicit trafficking.

Barrington et al. (2024) define corruption as the abuse of authority for personal gain, including smuggling, aiding escapes, and inappropriate relationships. Jones and Susan (2020) emphasize that minor boundary violations often precede serious misconduct, necessitating strict oversight. Barrington et al. (2021) argue that low pay and privatization contribute to corruption by weakening institutional loyalty and creating conditions ripe for abuse.

Staff violating contraband policies face disciplinary action, termination, or criminal charges (Shukla et al., 2021). The Department of Justice (2019) reported a Maryland officer smuggling narcotics and electronics, facing up to 20 years in prison. Barrington et al. (2021) warn that corruption undermines prison reform and enables organized crime. Following a mass escape in South Africa, two officials involved in contraband smuggling were dismissed (Chothia, 2020).

Rodriguez (2023) reveals that corrupt NBP officers collaborate with inmates to smuggle goods, recommending stricter background checks, training, and whistleblower protections. Guevara (2022) highlights systemic corruption in Philippine prisons and proposes audits, polygraph tests, and stronger disciplinary measures.

To strengthen NBP's security framework, reforms must address both structural and cultural dimensions. Infrastructure upgrades should be paired with ethical training, transparent disciplinary systems, and proactive leadership. The integration of demographic insights – such as age, rank, and civil status – into risk assessments can help identify officers vulnerable to fraternization. Moreover, reducing overcrowding and enhancing staff welfare may mitigate the financial and psychological pressures that drive misconduct.

Ultimately, the challenge lies in balancing humane inmate management with strict institutional control. By fostering professionalism, accountability, and ethical resilience, NBP can move toward a more secure and rehabilitative correctional environment.

Proliferation of modern communication devices. Cellular phones have become one of the most problematic contraband items in correctional facilities due to their capacity to facilitate unauthorized communication and criminal activity. Despite strict prohibitions, inmates continue to acquire and use cell phones to contact family, coordinate illicit operations, and even intimidate individuals outside prison walls. Chavez (2021) noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) introduced the e-Dalaw virtual visit program to support detainees' emotional well-being through remote communication, offering a legal alternative to illicit phone use.

According to the BuCor Manual (Bureau of Corrections, 2024), Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) demonstrating good behavior are entitled to one authorized telephone call per month. However, Bucor PIO (2024) acknowledges persistent issues with illicit cell phone use in national correctional facilities. Williams (2020) found that in Georgia prisons, contraband phones were used to orchestrate crimes during incarceration, posing serious threats to institutional security. Shukla et al. (2021) linked smuggled phones and substances to inmate and staff fatalities, with SIM cards hidden in body cavities, household items, and personal belongings.

Fitz (2020) reported that contraband phones contribute to violence, suicide attempts, escapes, and drug overdoses. In Atlanta, inmate Brian J. Wilson received an extended sentence for using a contraband phone to post on social media. U.S. Attorney Byung J. Pak emphasized that cell phones enable inmates to run illicit schemes and intimidate individuals outside prison. The Cell Phone Contraband Act of 2010 criminalizes possession and use of cell phones by federal inmates.

Villanueva (2022) highlighted the risks posed by mobile phones in New Bilibid Prison, advocating for signal-blocking technologies and stricter monitoring. Torre (2023) emphasized their role in extortion and drug trafficking. Martinez and Ramirez (2022) recommended global best practices such as signal detectors, mobile-

sniffing dogs, and consistent staff training to curb contraband phone use. These measures, combined with policy enforcement and technological innovation, are essential to maintaining prison security and preventing the misuse of mobile devices.

Riot. Another challenge was the presence of prison gang activities that have consolidated power inside the prison setting. Lessing (2020) cited that by "eliminating or subjugating rivals, [and] taking control of key aspects of prison life, (including contraband flow)." The presence of gang members in Maryland adult state prisons has created a major challenge in implementing contraband intervention policies. Recently, Rodricks (2020) explained how Maryland prison administration was putting up with staff misconduct that involved "dozens of correctional officers, and others accused of helping incarcerated gang members continue their criminal enterprises behind the walls" (Rodricks, 2020, para.1). Also, the Maryland State prison scandal that involved the Black Guerilla Family (BGF) at the Baltimore City Detention Center (BCDC) prison, was devasting to the safety of the prison facility to the extent that it led to the "shuttering of the old jail in 2015" (Rodricks, 2020, para. 1). When contraband items entering prisons are not properly controlled, prison facilities may become a breeding ground for violent crimes as well as an infectious disease. Contraband trafficking in prisons may potentially orchestrate violent crimes within the prisons, as well as the streets, especially when the offenders have gang affiliation (Agbortarh, 2021).

Drugs. Drug trafficking remains a persistent issue in correctional facilities worldwide. Walker and Green (2023) note that despite technological advancements, illegal substances continue to infiltrate prisons. They advocate for stronger collaboration between prison authorities and external law enforcement, alongside advanced detection technologies like body scanners. Chavez (2022) highlights systemic failures – such as inadequate staff training and poor monitoring – as root causes of drug-related problems. He recommends

drug-free zones and improved screening tools to mitigate these issues.

At the National Bilibid Prison (NBP), the problem is compounded by structural and cultural dysfunctions. Socially connected inmates, often labeled as "Mayores" or "VIPs," enjoy privileges that replicate societal inequalities. These include access to amenities and control over illicit activities. Gang riots, drug trade, and contract killings have been linked to these dynamics. Interventions such as lockdowns, SAF deployment, and kubol demolitions offer temporary disruption but fail to address deeper systemic issues. Operations resume once a new balance of power emerges.

Gonzalez (2022) identifies corruption among prison staff and weak monitoring systems as key enablers of drug trafficking at NBP. The study calls for a comprehensive security overhaul, including enhanced drug detection systems and more intensive personnel vetting. Manalo (2023) adds that the proliferation of drugs compromises both inmate welfare and institutional security. He calls for a multi-pronged strategy involving stricter surveillance, interdiction efforts, and policy reforms. Nearly 70% of inmates are incarcerated for drug offenses, prompting calls for reform.

Marchesi (2023) critiques the overemphasis on drug-related offenses, arguing that it diverts resources from addressing more serious crimes such as murder, child exploitation, and transnational organized crime. He supports the government's decongestion efforts and a shift in policy direction, guided by UNODC, to rebalance priorities within the justice sector.

Narag (2022) underscores NBP's overcrowding and understaffing, with over 29,000 inmates and a staff-to-inmate ratio of 1:500 – far from the 1:7 standard mandated by the BuCor Modernization Law. This imbalance fosters a criminogenic environment and limits effective supervision.

Shukla et al. (2021) detail interdiction strategies such as metal detectors, surveillance cameras, K9 units, and portable cell phone detection towers. Common contraband includes drugs,

cell phones, razor blades, and fermented food. Facility-specific factors – architecture, security level, and staff compensation – affect contraband entry points. In some cases, drones and corrupt staff are primary sources of smuggling.

Ultimately, addressing drug trafficking in prisons like NBP requires structural reform, cultural change, and sustained investment in security technologies and personnel development. Without tackling the root causes – corruption, overcrowding, and policy imbalance – interventions will remain reactive and ineffective.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This study employed a descriptive research design, serving as the conceptual blueprint for collecting, measuring, and analyzing data (Kothari, 2020). Descriptive design allows the researcher to describe, record, analyze, and report existing conditions, making it suitable for examining the current Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP). Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The qualitative approach provided in-depth insights, with data analyzed using MAX QDA and NVIVO software. Meanwhile, the quantitative approach offered summary information on various characteristics. This mixed-methods strategy – combining qualitative and quantitative techniques – was deemed appropriate and effective. As Merriam (2018) emphasized, such integration holds the greatest promise for contributing to the knowledge base and practice of education, as it focuses on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied. Greene et al. (2019) also highlighted the importance of techniques in collecting and analyzing data within mixed-methods research.

Descriptive research, as defined by Concepcion (2018), involves gathering, analyzing, classifying, and interpreting data about prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, processes, and cause-effect relationships. It often includes comparisons and contrasts to understand how individuals or systems function in the present.

To enrich the data, personal interviews and observations were conducted, though actual responses remain confidential. A summary of these findings was integrated into the discussion. Overall, the chosen design ensured that the study yielded accurate insights into the NBP's existing security framework.

Population and Sampling. This study employed purposive sampling, a non-probability technique selected based on specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives. As defined by Chandra (2020), sampling involves selecting a portion of the population that adequately represents the whole. Kothari (2020) adds that sampling design is a definite plan for obtaining a sample from a given population, guiding the technique used for selection.

For the quantitative approach, the study considered 300 BuCor personnel involved in Security Operations at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP). For the qualitative aspect, 15 Corrections Officers were selected. These respondents came from the Maximum-Security Camp, Medium Security Camp, Minimum Security Camp, and Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC). The selection was based on snowball and stratified sampling from a total of 685 employees, as recorded in the NBP Superintendent's attendance report dated January 5, 2025.

Crossman (2018) describes purposive sampling as "judgmental," "selected," or "subjective," emphasizing its use when researchers need to study a specific societal domain. This method ensures that respondents meet precise specifications and are willing to share insights relevant to the research questions.

Respondents were chosen based on the following criteria: involvement in Security

Operations, at least three years of service, and assignment to one of the four NBP security camps. Of the 348 officers at MaxSeCamp, 152 (43.2%) were selected; 67 (22.3%) from MedSeCamp; 41 (13.7%) from MinSeCamp; and 40 (13.3%) from RDC. Additionally, 5% or 15 respondents per camp participated in the qualitative interviews.

Table 1
NBP Corrections Officers assigned to Security Operations

Camp Assignment	Correction Officers assigned to Security Operations		Total	Percent	Total Respondents per Security Camp
	Male	Female			
MaxSeCamp	291	57	348	50.80%	152
MedSeCamp	130	24	154	22.48%	67
MinSeCamp	85	7	92	13.43%	41
Reception Diagnostic Center (RDC)	78	13	91	13.28%	40
Total	584	101	685	100%	300

Research Instrument and Validation. This study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire as the primary data-gathering tool, comprising both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The instrument was divided into four parts: Part I covered respondent profiles; Part II assessed the seriousness of indicators in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP); Part III examined internal and external implementation challenges; and Part IV explored corrective measures undertaken by Corrections Officers assigned to NBP's Security Operations.

The questionnaire was administered in English and Filipino and distributed via personal interviews and electronic platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and phone. Its design was guided by the study's objectives and conceptual framework. The use of questionnaires facilitates anonymity and honest responses (Cooper & Schindler, 2022), and allows for standardized, unbiased data collection that is statistically analyzable.

Prior to distribution, the instrument underwent pre-testing with 25 Corrections Officers from other Bureau of Corrections facilities to ensure clarity and relevance. The Likert Scale was employed for rating seriousness: 4 – Most Serious (MS), 3 – Moderately Serious (MdS), 2 – Slightly Serious (SS), and 1 – Less Serious (LS). Validation and reliability were rigorously addressed. Validity, defined as the degree to which an instrument measures what it intends to (Kothari, 2021), was ensured through peer review and expert appraisal. Creswell (2020) emphasizes that validity pertains to the usefulness of data derived from the instrument. Content validity was strengthened through consultations with the research adviser (Doctor of Public Administration) and the Camp Commander of NBP MaxSeCamp. Their feedback led to revisions that enhanced clarity and alignment with the study's objectives.

Reliability, or the consistency of the instrument over time (Creswell, 2020), was tested using the split-half technique and Cronbach's Alpha. This ensured that the questionnaire produced stable and consistent results across repeated trials. Confidentiality of responses was upheld in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

Data Gathering Procedure. The researcher adopted a systematic and ethically grounded approach to data collection, ensuring methodological rigor and compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Prior to data gathering, formal approval was secured from the Office of the Superintendent of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), Bureau of Corrections. This authorization enabled access to Corrections Officers as participants.

Quantitative data were collected through the personal distribution of structured questionnaires, while qualitative insights were obtained via interviews with selected respondents. All participants were thoroughly briefed on the study's objectives, procedures, and ethical safeguards. Informed consent was obtained, and a confidentiality clause was embedded in the survey instrument to protect respondent identities and sensitive information.

The researcher emphasized that all data would be used exclusively for academic purposes and to support the enhancement of the Security and Safety Management Program at NBP. Ethical protocols included voluntary participation, the

right to withdraw at any time, and assurance that no personal identifiers would be disclosed. Upon completion of data collection, responses were organized into a data matrix and subjected to statistical treatment for accurate analysis and interpretation. All consulted literature was properly cited, ensuring scholarly integrity throughout the research process.

Statistical Treatment. To analyze the data collected, the researcher employed both descriptive and inferential statistical tools, ensuring comprehensive interpretation aligned with the study's objectives. Descriptive statistics included frequency distribution, percentage, weighted mean, and the Likert scale. Frequency and percentage were used to present the demographic profile of respondents, offering a quantitative overview of their distribution and characteristics.

The weighted mean was applied to assess responses related to the seriousness of indicators and corrective measures within the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), addressing questions two and four of the Statement of the Problem. The Likert scale, originally developed by Rensis Likert in 1932, was utilized to measure respondents' perceptions of the program's effectiveness and the severity of all the indicators.

Inferential statistics included the t-test and one-way ANOVA. The t-test, as defined by Hayes (2018), determines whether there is a statistically significant difference between the means of two groups. This was used to test hypotheses related to group classifications in questions three and five. One-way ANOVA was employed to examine differences among three or more independent groups, further addressing the same questions.

All statistical computations were processed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS version 27, ensuring accuracy and reliability in data analysis. These tools enabled the researcher to draw meaningful conclusions and support evidence-based recommendations for enhancing the NBP's Security and Safety Management Program.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents. The demographic profile of the 300 Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) personnel assigned to security operations at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) reveals a workforce predominantly composed of individuals in their prime working years. As reflected in Table 2, the largest age group is 26–30 years old (35.7%), described as young with budding careers, followed by 31–35 years old (26.3%), indicating a relatively young and active personnel base. This age distribution suggests a workforce capable of handling the physical and mental demands of correctional security duties.

Table 2
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the BuCor personnel involved in Security Operations at the New Bilibid Prison (N=300)

Category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	21–25 years old	10	3.3
	26–30 years old	107	35.7
	31–35 years old	79	26.3
	36–40 years old	48	16
	41–45 years old	28	9.3
	46–50 years old	13	4.3
	51–55 years old	7	2.3
	56 years old and above	8	2.7
Civil Status	Single	161	53.7
	Married	135	45
	Widow	2	0.7
	Separated	2	0.7
Educational Attainment	College Level	19	6.3
	College Graduate	271	90.3
	Others	10	3.3
Camp Assignment	Maximum Security Camp	152	50.7
	Medium Security Camp	67	22.3
	Minimum Security Camp	41	13.7
	Reception and Diagnostic Center	40	13.3
Rank/Position	Corrections Chief Inspector	1	0.3
	Corrections Senior Inspector	4	1.3
	Corrections Inspector	1	0.3
	Corrections Senior Officer 4	7	2.3
	Corrections Senior Officer 3	4	1.3
	Corrections Senior Officer 2	2	0.7
	Corrections Senior Officer 1	5	1.7
	Corrections Officer 3	10	3.3
	Corrections Officer 2	16	5.3
	Corrections Officer	250	83.3

In terms of civil status, a slight majority are single (53.7%), while 45% are married. This balance may reflect varying levels of personal responsibility and flexibility in work assignments, with single personnel potentially more available for shifting schedules and high-risk tasks.

Educational attainment is notably high, with 90.3% being college graduates. This reflects BuCor's emphasis on professional qualifications and suggests that personnel are equipped with the cognitive and ethical competencies required for complex correctional roles.

Camp assignment data shows that half of the respondents (50.7%) are stationed in the Maximum-Security Camp, underscoring the critical need for manpower in managing high-risk inmates. The remaining personnel are distributed across Medium Security (22.3%), Minimum Security (13.7%), and the Reception and Diagnostic Center (13.3%), indicating a balanced deployment across operational areas.

Rank distribution reveals that the majority (83.3%) hold the position of Corrections Officer, the entry-level rank. Higher ranks are sparsely represented, with only 16.7% occupying supervisory or command positions. This suggests a hierarchical structure with a broad base of operational staff and a lean leadership tier.

Overall, the profile reflects a youthful, educated, and predominantly entry-level workforce strategically deployed across NBP's security camps, aligning with institutional needs for vigilance, discipline, and operational coverage.

Seriousness of Indicators Reflected in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison. Table 3 reveals that all indicators related to congestion in the New Bilibid Prison (NBP) were rated as "Moderately Serious," with a composite mean of 2.81 and standard deviation of 1.17, indicating consistent concern among respondents. The highest-ranked indicator (mean = 2.93) underscores that congestion significantly hinders the implementation of the Security and Safety Management Program. This aligns with O'Neill and Heffernan (2022), who argue that overcrowding compromises operational efficiency and undermines security frameworks.

The second and third indicators – congestion leading to increased security problems (mean =

2.81) and violence among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) (mean = 2.80) – suggest that overcrowding exacerbates tensions and risks within the inmate population. These findings reflect the interconnected nature of prison dynamics, where spatial limitations intensify behavioral conflicts and strain institutional control.

Table 3

Mean Distribution of Indicators in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison as to Congestion, (N=300)

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION	RANK
1. PDL congestion at the NBP hinders the implementation of the Security and Management program of the NBP.	2.93	1.16	Moderately Serious	1
2. PDL congestion at the NBP can lead to violence among PDL.	2.80	1.15	Moderately Serious	3
3. PDL congestion at the NBP can lead to increase security problems among PDL.	2.81	1.16	Moderately Serious	2
4. PDL congestion at the NBP can pose treat or danger to prison staff and may lead to human rights abuses.	2.72	1.19	Moderately Serious	4
Composite Mean	2.81	1.17	Moderately Serious	

Legend: Most Serious (4)=3.51-4.0); Moderately Serious (3)=2.51-3.50); Slightly Serious (2)=1.51-2.50); Less Serious (1)=1.0-1.50)

The lowest-ranked indicator (mean = 2.72) concerns threats to prison staff and potential human rights abuses. Despite its rank, this issue remains ethically and legally significant. Akers and Sellers (2022) emphasize that overcrowding fosters staff fatigue, stress, and systemic violations of inmates' rights, challenging the moral foundations of correctional institutions.

Overall, the data indicates that PDL congestion is a pervasive issue with multifaceted implications for prison management. While some concerns are ranked lower, all indicators reflect a shared recognition of the need for structural reforms. The findings suggest that correctional officers acknowledge these challenges yet remain committed to their duties, as outlined in their Position Description Form (PDF), reinforcing the urgency of addressing overcrowding in policy and practice.

Table 4 presents the seriousness of indicators related to fraternization and familiarization between Corrections Officers and Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) at the New Bilibid

Prison (NBP), with all indicators rated as "Slightly Serious" (composite mean = 2.05; SD = 1.13). The highest-ranked concern (mean = 2.17) involves officers identifying with PDL gangs through tattoos or markings, signaling a breach of professional boundaries that may compromise institutional authority. Gover et al. (2022) emphasize that such associations erode objectivity and empower inmate factions, thereby destabilizing prison discipline.

Table 4
Mean Distribution of Indicators in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison as to Fraternization and Familiarization, (N=300)

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION	RANK
1. Corrections Officers stand as principal sponsors in the wedding of PDL or as witnesses during the baptism of PDL children.	2.09	1.10	Slightly Serious	2
2. Corrections Officer associated with the PDL.	2.01	1.10	Slightly Serious	3
3. Corrections Officer accepts donations or giving solicitation letters to PDL.	1.92	1.16	Slightly Serious	4
4. Corrections Officer closely identifying with PDL gangs by sporting tattoos and other markings.	2.17	1.17	Slightly Serious	1
Composite Mean	2.05	1.13	Slightly Serious	

Legend: Most Serious (4)=3.51-4.0); Moderately Serious (3)=2.51-3.50); Slightly Serious (2)=1.51-2.50); Less Serious (1)=1.0-1.50)

Other indicators—officers acting as sponsors or witnesses in PDL life events (mean = 2.09), associating with PDLs (mean = 2.01), and accepting donations or soliciting support (mean = 1.92) – reflect varying degrees of personal involvement that blur professional lines. While these behaviors are not deemed highly serious, they nonetheless warrant scrutiny. Martin and Lawrence (2023) caution that even seemingly benign interactions can gradually weaken professional boundaries, creating conditions ripe for future security breaches.

The data suggest that while fraternization is not perceived as a major threat, it remains a latent risk to the integrity of prison operations. The slight seriousness rating may reflect a normalization of certain behaviors or differing views on acceptable conduct. Nonetheless, the presence of these indicators calls for proactive measures to reinforce ethical standards and prevent escalation. As the findings imply, maintaining clear boundaries is essential to uphold the corrections officers' oath.

Table 5 examines the seriousness of indicators related to personnel involvement in illegal activities at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), with all indicators rated as "Slightly Serious" (composite mean = 2.04; SD = 1.28). The highest-ranked concern (mean = 2.09) involves corrections officers tolerating illegal activities of Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs), which poses a direct threat to institutional security. McPherson (2022) warns that such tolerance enables manipulation by inmates and fosters environments conducive to drug trafficking, smuggling, and other illicit operations.

Table 5
Mean Distribution of Indicators in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison as to Involvement of Personnel in Illegal Activities, (N=300)

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION	RANK
1. Corrections Officer tolerating illegal activities of PDL that poses a threat to the security and safety of the prison facility.	2.09	1.28	Slightly Serious	1
2. Corrections Officers asking favor such as borrowing of money to a certain PDL.	2.01	1.28	Slightly Serious	3
3. Corrections Officers and other BuCor employees that act as drug mule for convicted pushers and/or users.	2.07	1.31	Slightly Serious	2
4. Corrections Officer violating provisions of BuCor Manual on boundaries with PDL by aiding PDL to escape.	1.98	1.27	Slightly Serious	4
Composite Mean	2.04	1.28	Slightly Serious	

Legend: Most Serious (4)=3.51-4.0); Moderately Serious (3)=2.51-3.50); Slightly Serious (2)=1.51-2.50); Less Serious (1)=1.0-1.50)

The second-ranked indicator (mean = 2.07) pertains to officers and Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) employees acting as drug mules for convicted pushers and users. This behavior, while not perceived as highly serious, undermines the integrity of prison operations and reflects systemic vulnerabilities. The third indicator (mean = 2.01) involves officers soliciting favors, such as borrowing money from PDLs, which blurs ethical boundaries and may lead to compromised authority.

The lowest-ranked concern (mean = 1.98) involves aiding PDLs in escape attempts, a clear violation of the BuCor Manual. Despite its rank, Wong and Hall (2023) argue that such breaches, though less frequent, carry severe consequences for institutional safety and public trust.

Overall, the findings suggest that while these behaviors are not viewed as highly serious, they represent latent threats to prison governance. The slight seriousness rating may reflect normalization or underreporting, but the ethical implications remain profound. Strengthening supervision, ethical training, and accountability mechanisms is essential to safeguard the integrity of correctional institutions.

Table 6
Mean Distribution of Indicators in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison as to Proliferation of Modern Communication Devices, (N=300)

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION	RANK
1. Corrections Officers facilitate the entry of Cell phones and other means of communication devices that cause illegal business transactions outside the penitentiary camp.	2.15	1.31	Slightly Serious	1.5
2. Corrections Officers tolerate the use of cell phones and other means of communication devices used by convicted kidnappers to abduct victims for ransom with their cohorts outside prison walls.	2.09	1.32	Slightly Serious	3
3. Corrections Officers who endure PDL use cell phones and other modern means of communication devices may be used by the PDL to harass, scare, or assassinate employees who are not cooperative or oppose their activities.	2.15	1.33	Slightly Serious	1.5
Composite Mean	2.13	1.32	Slightly Serious	

Legend: Most Serious (4)=3.51–4.0); Moderately Serious (3)=2.51–3.50); Slightly Serious (2)=1.51–2.50); Less Serious (1)=1.0–1.50)

Table 6 evaluates the seriousness of indicators related to the proliferation of modern communication devices within the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), with all indicators rated as "Slightly Serious" (composite mean = 2.13; SD = 1.32). The highest-ranked concerns (mean = 2.15) involve corrections officers facilitating the entry of cell phones and tolerating their use by Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) to conduct illegal business transactions or harass prison staff. These behaviors, while not deemed highly serious, pose latent threats to institutional security and staff safety. O'Connor and Jones (2023) emphasize that cell phones are instrumental in sustaining criminal networks inside prisons, enabling extortion, drug trafficking, and coordinated violence beyond prison walls.

The lowest-ranked indicator (mean = 2.09) pertains to officers tolerating the use of communication devices by convicted kidnappers to orchestrate ransom operations.

Although ranked third, this issue implicates public safety and highlights the porous boundaries between incarceration and external criminal activity. The standard deviation across indicators suggests moderate variability in perceptions, indicating that some respondents may view these risks as pressing than others.

Despite the "Slightly Serious" rating, the findings underscore the ethical and operational implications of unauthorized device use. The presence of such devices facilitates coercion, undermines staff authority, and compromises institutional integrity. These concerns call for enhanced surveillance, stricter enforcement of contraband policies, and reinforced ethical training for corrections officers. Addressing these vulnerabilities is essential to uphold the security mandates of the NBP and protect both internal and external stakeholders.

Table 7
Mean Distribution of Indicators in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison as to Riot, (N=300)

INDICATORS	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION	RANK
1. Corrections Officers that in favor to as specific group of PDL inside the NBP.	2.10	1.22	Slightly Serious	2
2. Corrections Officers that will be the source of contraband, such as improvised deadly weapons inside NBP.	2.12	1.28	Slightly Serious	1
3. Corrections Officers acts as adviser of a certain group of PDL such as (pangkat) or gang.	2.02	1.24	Slightly Serious	3
Composite Mean	2.08	1.24	Slightly Serious	

Legend: Most Serious (4)=3.51–4.0); Moderately Serious (3)=2.51–3.50); Slightly Serious (2)=1.51–2.50); Less Serious (1)=1.0–1.5

Table 7 assesses the seriousness of indicators related to riot risks within the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), with all indicators rated as "Slightly Serious" (composite mean = 2.08; SD = 1.24). The highest-ranked concern (mean = 2.12) involves corrections officers serving as sources of contraband, particularly improvised deadly weapons. Barnes (2022) underscores that contraband smuggling by prison staff directly correlates with increased prison violence, including riots, as weapons intensify inmate conflicts and undermine institutional control.

Favoritism toward specific inmate groups (mean = 2.10) ranks second, suggesting that

perceived partiality can exacerbate tensions among Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). Such behavior may foster resentment, disrupt group dynamics, and contribute to factionalism. The lowest-ranked indicator (mean = 2.02) involves officers acting as advisers to inmate gangs (pangkat), a role that blurs professional boundaries and risks legitimizing gang influence. King and Thompson (2023) argue that officer involvement in gang politics entrenches inmate divisions and increases the likelihood of violent confrontations.

Although all indicators are rated "Slightly Serious," they collectively point to latent vulnerabilities in prison governance. The data suggest that while these behaviors are not perceived as immediate threats, they contribute to an unstable environment that could escalate into riots if left unchecked. The standard deviation indicates moderate variability in perceptions, reflecting differing views on the severity of officer involvement. Strengthening oversight, enforcing ethical boundaries, and curbing contraband entry are essential to mitigate riot risks and uphold the integrity of the NBP's security and safety management program.

Significant Differences in the Seriousness of Indicators Reflected in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison based on Respondents' Profile. The ANOVA results reveal statistically significant differences in the perceived seriousness of indicators in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), based on five respondent profile variables: age, civil status, educational attainment, camp assignment, and rank/position.

Age significantly influenced perceptions across all indicators (F = 81.26, Sig = 0.00). Older officers tended to rate congestion, illegal activities, and riot risks more seriously, reflecting accumulated experience and exposure to systemic challenges. Tan et al. (2023) found that older personnel are more critical of overcrowding and security inefficiencies, while Garcia and Torres (2022)

noted that age correlates with heightened awareness of institutional vulnerabilities. Wilson et al. (2024) further emphasized generational differences in assessing technological threats, with older officers expressing greater concern over communication device misuse.

Table 8
ANOVA Test on the Seriousness of Indicators Reflected in the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison as to Respondents' Profile

Indicator	Age (F, Sig, Interpretation)	Civil Status (F, Sig, Interpretation)	Educational Attainment (F, Sig, Interpretation)	Camp Assignment (F, Sig, Interpretation)	Rank/Position (F, Sig, Interpretation)
Congestion	34.03, 0.00, Significant	25.98, 0.00, Significant	36.79, 0.00, Significant	24.20, 0.00, Significant	32.15, 0.00, Significant
Fraternization & Familiarization	10.10, 0.00, Significant	23.66, 0.00, Significant	28.16, 0.00, Significant	16.24, 0.00, Significant	7.00, 0.00, Significant
Illegal Activities	55.82, 0.00, Significant	30.17, 0.00, Significant	20.54, 0.00, Significant	16.15, 0.00, Significant	4.96, 0.00, Significant
Communication Devices	64.77, 0.00, Significant	22.25, 0.00, Significant	19.24, 0.00, Significant	11.83, 0.00, Significant	5.60, 0.00, Significant
Riot	62.29, 0.00, Significant	347.43, 0.00, Significant	22.19, 0.00, Significant	21.36, 0.00, Significant	5.90, 0.00, Significant
Drugs	42.48, 0.00, Significant	30.15, 0.00, Significant	19.79, 0.00, Significant	18.05, 0.00, Significant	4.91, 0.00, Significant
Overall Program Assessment	81.26, 0.00, Significant	15.59, 0.00, Significant	24.32, 0.00, Significant	16.02, 0.00, Significant	8.13, 0.00, Significant

Civil status also showed significant effects (F = 15.59, Sig = 0.00), though its influence was more nuanced. Tan et al. (2023) and Garcia and Santiago (2024) argued that civil status has limited impact on officers' professional assessments, with institutional factors – such as training and leadership – playing a more decisive role. Wilcox and Cooper (2022) reinforced this, suggesting that civil status may affect stress levels but not operational judgment.

Educational attainment emerged as a strong determinant of perception (F = 24.32, Sig = 0.00). Officers with higher education levels rated indicators like contraband, gang activity, and drug proliferation more seriously. Turner et al. (2023) and O'Reilly and Brown (2024) found that education enhances critical thinking and risk awareness, enabling officers to identify systemic threats more effectively. Thomas and Harris (2022) added that educated personnel advocate for long-term reforms over superficial fixes.

Camp assignment significantly shaped perceptions (F = 16.02, Sig = 0.00), with officers in high-security or specialized units expressing greater concern over riot risks and

illegal activities. Schultz et al. (2024) and O'Reilly & Brown (2023) observed that assignment context influences exposure to inmate behavior and operational stressors, thereby affecting risk assessment.

Rank/position also yielded significant differences (F = 8.13, Sig = 0.00). Higher-ranking officers were more critical of systemic issues like overcrowding and contraband, while lower-ranking personnel focused on immediate operational concerns. Villanueva and Albay (2023) and Chavez et al. (2022) emphasized that rank correlates with strategic oversight and reform advocacy. O'Reilly & Brown (2024) noted that senior officers are more proactive in addressing organized crime and long-term safety threats.

In sum, all five profile variables significantly affect how BuCor personnel perceive the seriousness of security indicators. These findings underscore the need for differentiated training, policy design, and management strategies that account for demographic and positional diversity within correctional institutions. Tailoring interventions to these profiles can enhance the responsiveness and effectiveness of prison safety programs.

Challenges Encountered in the Implementation of the Security and Safety Management Program of the New Bilibid Prison.

Internal Challenges. The internal challenges in implementing the Security and Safety Management Program at NBP center on four critical themes: understaffing, employee involvement in contraband, lack of technology, and staff affiliation with gangs. The severe shortage of personnel – with ratios reaching 1:30 instead of the ideal 1:6 – leads to delayed responses, increased riot risks, and compromised legal representation for Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). This aligns with Cohen & Taylor (2022), who emphasized that staffing deficits reduce officers' capacity to monitor behavior and enforce rules effectively. Employee complicity in contraband smuggling – including cell phones, cigarettes, and tech

devices – was cited as a major breach of trust. Some staff reportedly act as sellers or facilitators of these items. Crawley (2021) found similar patterns of collusion between officers and inmates, which erode institutional discipline and security. The lack of modern technology and equipment, such as scanners and metal detectors, further weakens security protocols. Respondents noted that only the Maximum Security Camp has scanners, and procurement delays exacerbate the problem. Kauffman (2023) stressed that technological investments are essential for effective prison management and contraband detection. Lastly, employee connections with PDL gangs – including roles as advisers – embolden gang operations and undermine rule enforcement. Crewe et al. (2022) warned that staff-gang affiliations escalate violence and disrupt institutional control. These issues demand urgent reforms in staffing, technology, and internal monitoring to uphold BuCor's twin mandates of safekeeping and reformation.

External Challenges. The qualitative data reveal four major external challenges undermining prison security at NBP: employee involvement in illicit financial transactions, visitor smuggling of contraband, drone-based deliveries, and the absence of signal jammers. Employees reportedly act as couriers of money via PayMaya and GCash, facilitating illegal transactions between Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) and external contacts. These digital exchanges bypass traditional monitoring systems and enable bribery, contraband purchases, and money laundering. Jones and McGrath (2021) emphasize that such practices reflect systemic corruption, where staff exploit institutional access for personal gain. Visitors, particularly family members, are frequently cited as conduits for drugs, tobacco, and other contraband. Despite frisking and scanners, items are smuggled through concealed body cavities. Bottoms (2020) notes that external actors (like relatives) play a critical role in sustaining prison-based criminal networks, complicating internal control efforts. Drone use presents an emerging threat, with contraband dropped directly into prison grounds.

The lack of drone detection systems leaves NBP vulnerable to aerial smuggling. Davis and Lanza (2021) warn that drones circumvent traditional barriers and require specialized countermeasures to ensure perimeter security. Finally, the absence of signal jammers allows PDLs to maintain contact with external criminal networks, coordinating illicit activities from within. Sampson (2019) found that unregulated mobile communication in prisons facilitates extortion, trafficking, and gang operations. Collectively, these challenges highlight the porous boundaries between NBP and the outside world. Addressing them requires technological upgrades, stricter visitor protocols, and enhanced staff accountability to restore institutional integrity.

Corrective Measures Undertaken to Address the Challenges Encountered by the New Bilibid Prison in the Implementation of the Security and Safety Management Program. The corrective measures implemented at NBP reflect a multi-pronged strategy to address both internal and external challenges in the Security and Safety Management Program. A central theme is the consistent submission of information and spot reports to higher authorities for proper disposition and the filing of administrative or criminal cases. This procedural accountability ensures that breaches are documented and acted upon promptly, reinforcing institutional oversight.

To combat drug-related issues, respondents recommended random drug testing for both PDLs and personnel suspected of contraband involvement. This aligns with preventive strategies aimed at curbing substance abuse and corruption within correctional facilities. The inclusion of employees in drug testing protocols reflects a shift toward internal accountability and transparency.

Personnel rotation was also cited as a key measure to prevent familiarization between officers and inmates, which can lead to compromised authority and collusion. Adjustments to visitation schedules, particularly in the Medium Security Camp, were introduced to reduce contraband smuggling

risks during inmate visits. These measures reflect proactive efforts to disrupt patterns of misconduct and reinforce professional boundaries.

The conduct of regular greyhound operations – targeted searches for improvised weapons and contraband – was emphasized as a critical intervention. These operations help maintain order and prevent riot escalation. Constant dialogue with PDL leaders was also highlighted as a preventive measure, fostering cooperation and mitigating tensions that could lead to violence.

Ethical reorientation seminars for government employees were recommended to reinforce values such as integrity, responsibility, and professionalism. These seminars aim to cultivate a culture of ethical conduct and reduce internal corruption. As Kauffman (2023) notes, values formation is essential in sustaining institutional integrity and staff morale.

A notable initiative is the "BURATATAK" program, designed to dismantle gang affiliations and promote a gang-free environment within NBP. This program focuses on rehabilitation and the reduction of organized criminal influence among PDLs. Crewe et al. (2022) support such interventions, emphasizing that gang disengagement programs are vital to restoring order and reducing violence in prisons. However, the program faces challenges, including resistance from gang members and resource limitations, such as understaffing and lack of technology.

To address financial misconduct, one respondent proposed designating authorized personnel to oversee GCash transactions, ensuring that PDLs' digital financial activities remain within regulated limits. This measure aims to prevent illicit transfers and reinforce fiscal transparency.

Collectively, these corrective actions – ranging from administrative protocols and operational reforms to ethical training and gang prevention – demonstrate a comprehensive response to the complex security landscape at NBP. While

these measures have shown promise, their long-term success depends on sustained institutional support, technological upgrades, and continuous evaluation. The integration of these strategies reflects a commitment to uphold BuCor's twin mandates of safekeeping and reformation, ensuring a safer and more accountable correctional environment.

Proposed Enhanced Safety and Security Program for the New Bilibid Prison (NBP).

Purpose. This Safety and Security Plan is designed to mitigate the risks associated with drugs, congestion, riots, cellphone misuse, and illegal activities by employees within the 4 Camps of the New Bilibid Prison. The plan provides strategies, policies, and procedures to ensure a safe, secure, and productive work environment, safeguarding the well-being of all employees and protecting organizational assets.

Scope. This plan applies to all internal and external stakeholders of the New Bilibid Prison and covers all camps of the NBP. The objectives of this plan are to:

1. Preventing drug use and substance abuse within the New Bilibid Prison (NBP).

2. Manage congestion effectively.

3. Prevent or control riots and violent disturbances in the New Bilibid Prison.

4. Regulate cellphone use to prevent distractions, security breaches, and safety hazards within the New Bilibid Prison.

5. Address and mitigate illegal activities by employees, including fraud, violence, or harassment.

Responsibilities. The following are the key positions of personnel who will implement the proposed program:

1. Management. Ensure the implementation of this plan, allocate necessary resources, and see adherence to safety/security protocols.

2. Human Resources (HR). Handle employee relations concerning illegal activities, and other Human Resource-related issues and concerns; Provide training and support in managing these risks.

3. Safety Officer. Monitor the workplace for hazards and risks, implement safety protocols, and oversee emergency preparedness procedures.

(Note: For the full copy of the proposed program, request can be forwarded to the author.)

DISCUSSION

This study examined the implementation of the Security and Safety Management Program at the New Bilibid Prison (NBP), focusing on key indicators such as congestion, fraternization, illegal activities, contraband, and personnel conduct. The findings reveal that while most issues were rated as "Slightly Serious," congestion stood out as a "Moderately Serious" concern, underscoring its central role in undermining prison operations.

The predominance of younger personnel, particularly those holding the rank of Corrections Officer 1, suggests a workforce largely composed of frontliners who directly engage with Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs). This demographic profile may influence perceptions of risk and adherence to protocols, especially in high-pressure environments like the Maximum-Security Camp, where most respondents are assigned.

Congestion emerged as the most pressing issue, with respondents acknowledging its adverse impact on both security and rehabilitation efforts. Overcrowding not only strains resources but also fosters conditions conducive to unrest and human rights violations. This aligns with prior studies indicating that prison congestion correlates with increased violence, reduced access to services, and diminished staff morale. The administration's corrective measures – such as transferring PDLs to other penal colonies and

advocating for regionalization – are promising but require sustained policy support and infrastructure investment.

Fraternization and familiarization between Corrections Officers and PDLs were perceived as less severe but still noteworthy. Indicators such as officers sporting gang-related tattoos or accepting donations suggest blurred boundaries that could compromise institutional integrity. While most personnel are viewed as upholding their oath of office, the presence of such behaviors warrants ongoing vigilance and ethical reinforcement through training and reorientation programs.

The involvement of personnel in illegal activities, including tolerating contraband and facilitating its entry, was also flagged. Although rated as "Slightly Serious," these actions pose significant risks to prison stability. The use of modern communication devices by PDLs – often enabled by complicit staff – can lead to external criminal coordination, harassment, or even targeted violence. The deployment of body scanners and other technologies has helped mitigate these risks, but gaps remain in detection and accountability.

External challenges, particularly contraband smuggling by visitors, further complicate the security landscape. The strategic placement of scanners at entry points has improved control, yet the ingenuity of smuggling methods calls for continuous technological upgrades and procedural refinement.

Corrective measures such as spot reporting, personnel rotation, and the BuraTaTak anti-gang initiative reflect BuCor's commitment to institutional reform. However, the effectiveness of these interventions hinges on consistent enforcement, adequate staffing, and a culture of transparency.

Conclusion and Recommendation. In conclusion, while the Security and Safety Management Program at NBP faces persistent challenges, most are manageable through targeted and sustained interventions. Congestion remains the pivotal issue, influencing other security concerns and requiring urgent, multi-sectoral solutions.

It is recommended that BuCor intensify its efforts to decongest facilities through legislative support, infrastructure expansion, and regionalization. Moreover, continuous training, ethical reinforcement, and technological upgrades should be prioritized to strengthen personnel integrity and operational efficiency.

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