

A Chance At Redemption: A Multi-Case Study Of Drug Surrenderers Becoming Productive Citizens in Society

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the real-life encounters of five drug surrenderers participating in Oplan Tokhang Drug Rehabilitation recovery programs. The primary research objective was to understand drug surrenderers' life experiences and the changes they experienced and their insights about the program. The research used standardized interview guides as its main data collection method and combined purposive and snowball sampling with a multiple-case study design structure. The research produced three essential findings based on the deep interview data. After starting the Oplan Tokhang Drug Rehabilitation program, participants developed self-discovery and redemption as their main incentives, which led to personal growth and increased self-esteem. The former inmates achieved seamless success in returning to their communities, where they repaired their connections with family members and reinvented their interactions. Participants felt deep appreciation toward the rehabilitation program because it helped them achieve new life starts and restored dignity and purpose, as well as lasting change.

Keywords: criminal justice, drug rehabilitation program, oplan tokhang, multiple cases, thematic analysis, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Drug therapy and almost all other instruments of drug policy are based on the core beliefs about drugs, according to the US Institute of Medicine (2020), for the people who use them and the methods to respond to them. These guiding principles, which are embodied in criminal, medical, and libertarian methods, have dominated public discourse and the distribution of public and private resources. Therefore, it is impossible to conduct a thorough examination of drug therapy without first comprehending these concepts: what they mean, where they originate, how they connect, and how they influence the goals and purposes of treatment. The criminal perspective concentrates on decreasing unlawful behavior, including drug crimes in general as well as related personal, property, and public disorder offenses. A general decline in the rates of criminal victimization, prosecutions, and incarcerations would be the collective counterbalance to the impacts of individual therapy (Zhou et al., 2023).

Research on the relationship between substance misuse and social stress has mostly focused on the consequences of stress exposure in adults, and more recently, in teenagers. Adolescence is the stage of life during which there is an increased sensitivity to rewards and an expression of prior experiences. Indeed, a younger age at which drug use starts is linked to early postnatal stress exposure. Drug use throughout

early adolescence significantly raises the chance of addiction throughout life. Reducing the long-term impacts of drug use requires an understanding of how developmental alterations that follow stress exposure connect with developmentally sensitive periods in children's growth. It is well recognized that most drug users have toxic stress in some form throughout their formative years. These include being the victim of physical or sexual abuse, being neglected, losing a caregiver, and growing up in a dysfunctional home where they experience drug misuse, marital violence, or a terrible natural catastrophe. The negative effects of child abuse may be avoided with cautious and timely interventions (Andersen, 2019).

National policies that are put in place to deal with drug-related or substance-abuse-related concerns vary widely around the world. Some nations have chosen to legalize drug use and view it primarily as a public health concern. However, other nations also employ punitive measures to address drug addiction (Hunt, 2020). The Philippines has seen the latter after the election of President Rodrigo R. Duterte in 2016, who is an outspoken opponent of illicit narcotics. A contentious anti-illegal drug campaign known as the "war on drugs" was launched and elevated to a top priority. Atun et al. (2019) noted that the Philippine government initiated a nationwide campaign against illegal drugs through executive policies, which were carried out by law enforcement agencies, mainly the Philippine National Police. This campaign resulted in multiple deaths from both legitimate police operations and attacks by unidentified attackers. Alongside these disputes, "Oplan Tokhang" is getting more and more popular, even earning the title of "2019 Word of the Year" from one media site.

"Oplan Tokhang" is a government law enforcement initiative, according to Eusebio (2018). The term "Oplan Tokhang" is derived from a Visayan idiom, "Toktok Hangyo," meaning "to approach and gently persuade or convince." This is in contrast to how the government's attempts to address the nation's pervasive drug-related issues have been portrayed negatively in the media. Even though a sizable number of police operations have resulted in fatalities, it's also critical to assess the outcomes and impacts of the non-violent aspects of this program, which have helped an estimated one million suspected drug pushers and users surrender voluntarily in just the first six months of operation (Marcelo et al., 2016). It is imperative to conduct a study that sheds light on the non-violent components of the controversial national program that has provided redemption for remorseful drug addicts, as there has been a great deal of research written about its negative effects, primarily centered on the number of fatalities (Eusebio, 2018). According to various demographic profiles, a locally based, community-based behavioral drug treatment program is generally effective in reducing substance use behaviors and improving life skills, coping behaviors, family support, and the well-being of illegal drug users (Calleja et al., 2020). A study done to profile voluntary surrenderees in Marikina City of "Oplan Tokhang" found that the majority of drug users who chose to give up are male, working-age individuals with a high school education who are single, unmarried, and fear death. Their main motivation for giving up and taking part in the various rehabilitation programs is to change for themselves and to protect themselves. While profiling is a crucial first step, in order to obtain firsthand data and information that can be utilized to assess and enhance such a contentious and crucial national initiative, a more thorough examination of the experiences of Oplan Tokhang surrenderees must be conducted (Estacio, 2018).

In a factorial survey, Sattler, Escande, Racine, and Goritz (2017) investigated the stigma that the general public has against those who suffer from drug addiction and discovered negative consequences arise from stigmatizing individuals who battle drug addiction. According to attribution theory, stigma was influenced by a variety of traits of those who had used drugs as well as the features of their addiction. This indicates that stigmatizing sentiments are lessened by characteristics like the sex and age of drug addicts, but they

are increased by factors like the length of addiction and social influence. Furthermore, the likelihood of someone stigmatizing another person is lower for women, younger responders, and those with greater educational attainment. People from various areas of life can become addicted to drugs. Their experience with substance misuse was caused by a variety of circumstances. For a better understanding of drug surrenderers' actual experiences, it is crucial to obtain their profile (Sattler et al., 2017).

For drug addicts, the rehabilitation process is crucial since drug addiction can lead to a variety of medical, psychological, and social issues. Tiu (2020) claims that even if drug users are aware of the negative consequences, they nevertheless exhibit increased drug tolerance, miss out on regular activities, and develop a dependence on substances that eventually lead to substance abuse. Because of these issues with their psychosocial well-being, drug abusers are therefore more vulnerable during the rehabilitation process, which presents a challenge for the community. The stress that comes from interacting with people is another important aspect that may or may not improve the chances of a drug addict making a full recovery. Drug addicts are severely impacted by unstable familial circumstances, such as strained relationships with family both before and after the course of their experience with substance abuse. In the community throughout their recovery, drug abusers are more likely to relapse if they come from a dysfunctional home. Along with animosity, they could also encounter a lack of confidence in their capacity to abstain from drugs, as well as a loss of financial and academic support. Peer bonds also play a role in the rehabilitation process of drug abusers. Drug addicts who hang out with other drug addicts are more likely to relapse into substance misuse and have a harder time recovering from their addiction (Tiu et al., 2020).

Ibitoye and Nwosu (2021) claim that although drug misuse victims give it their best effort voluntarily at first, as their addiction worsens, their capacity for self-control rapidly declines. For this reason, substance misuse affects people of all ages, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. A number of things, such as curiosity, peer pressure, the need to pass the time and avoid boredom, and an energizer or source of drive, might contribute to substance misuse. However, there are also documented side effects, such as hallucinations, sadness, and brain stimulation. Habitual drug abuse can be controlled using pharmacological or behavioral therapies. When there is inadequate tracking and monitoring of sobriety and relapse to compulsive substance misuse behavior, rehabilitation is frequently ineffective. Given that relapse is an inevitable problem in the recovery process of drug abusers, providing an optimal solution through proper monitoring is important (Ibitoye & Nwosu, 2021).

Kerrison (2018) noted that therapeutic community programming done in prisons was based on the idea that addiction to drugs is a result of a mental problem, inability to manage emotions, and poor self-reliance skills. Likewise, this can be addressed collaboratively in an environment where a strong idea of commitment to moral reform and personal responsibility is required from every participant. It was found out that many of the respondents had stressful experiences while undergoing rehabilitation. Cooperation and engagement in the community therapy significantly differed among different races. White respondents were more likely to accept being labeled as “addicts” and were vocal about having privileges and receiving support compared with Black inmates (Kerrison, 2018).

Drug use and dependence are currently seen more from a public health standpoint than as a political-legal one. Among other things, developing a cadre of experts competent in diagnosing and treating drug-dependent individuals will be necessary if the sustainable development objectives are to be met by 2030. Other nations battling the drug problem can find inspiration in the Philippine experience. A training program on drug dependence management for physicians and rehabilitation practitioners was designed

through a tripartite collaboration involving professional groups, academia, and the government. Training materials were delivered using learner-centered instructional strategies. To be accredited by the government as a rehabilitation practitioner, one must complete the program. A modified ladderized training strategy was used, giving participants an overview of the program before delving deeply into the evaluation and treatment of drug dependency. This was done in response to the belief that a two-week training program is not long enough to adequately equip doctors and rehabilitation specialists with the knowledge and abilities needed to manage drug-dependent patients. There are plans to offer an executive course for seasoned practitioners as well as a course on community-based drug dependency management (Antonio et al., 2019).

The controversial approaches used by the Philippine government to combat addiction have brought attention to the country's drug campaign. Despite the government's current efforts, drug use problems continue to plague the public. The purpose of this study was to provide recommendations for enhancing the therapeutic community (TC) in the Philippine context with the aim of tackling the issue of drug use disorder therapy. The treatment framework is that of a recovery-oriented therapeutic community (ROTC). Addiction is approached by the ROTC as a chronic sickness marked by relapses. This alternative approach to addiction treatment in the Philippines is based on the concept of recovery, the principles of effective treatment for drug use disorders, and the most current developments in technology-enhanced care (TC) best practices from across the world. The available data on the drug war in the Philippines, government tactics, the status and scientific developments of TCs, and the ensuing impact on the country's current use of evidence-based addiction therapy were all reviewed in this conceptual paper (Ramos, 2019).

In a study to evaluate a psychosocial treatment program for prisoners incarcerated for methamphetamine use, the outcomes of inmates who received the program while they were in prison, those who were released and received the treatment as part of a community-based drug recovery program, and a waitlist-control group (WC) that received no treatment were all compared. In a quasi-experimental design, pre- and post-test questionnaires were sent to three groups: post-release outpatient therapy (OP), pre-release treatment while detained (TWI), and a group dubbed WC. Surveys assessing living skills, recovery skills, and signs of substance use disorder (SUD) were sent both before and after the intervention. The findings showed that the baseline recovery abilities of TWI and OP were considerably greater than those of the WC group (Hechanova et al., 2020).

However, there was no appreciable difference in life skills between the TWI, OP, and WC groups at baseline. TWI showed significantly fewer SUD symptoms at baseline than did the WC group. As expected, the findings demonstrated that the recovery and daily living abilities of the OP and TWI groups were markedly different from those of the WC group. The SUD scores did not significantly vary for any of the groups. There were significant limitations to the study's quasi-experimental design, which precluded a randomized control trial owing to legal issues. Future research using randomized controlled trial designs may provide more detailed conclusions on the impact of the intervention. Moreover, the research design only comprised pre- and post-evaluation. Further investigation into the enduring consequences of SUD symptoms and the probability of recurrence is advised. Because there were no statistically significant variations in the results between the OP and TWI groups, drug users who are jailed before or after their release may take the program. However, it seems from the results that adopting the curriculum as a pre-release program also promotes completion. Pre-release program delivery also helps to alleviate challenges connected to attrition, such as insufficient transportation resources and schedule conflicts. The research argues that when it comes to managing drug misuse, psychosocial therapy is superior to punitive measures.

Offering interventions, especially before release, may lower the chance of recidivism by assisting participants in preparing for possible obstacles during reintegration. In a country where drug-related mortality is on the increase, the research provides an alternative and restorative justice option (Hechanova et al., 2020).

The process of drug rehabilitation is intricate. The simple objective is for drug abusers to fully recover from their addiction and avoid relapsing; nevertheless, getting there is not an easy task. It's critical to keep in mind the circumstances that led drug addicts to this point and the reasons their actions keep pushing them farther into their addiction. In the process of drug rehabilitation, conventional wisdom and best practices are crucial. These include identifying barriers to recovery like peer pressure and family dynamics, gathering a thorough medical history, and effectively monitoring drug abusers both before and after their reintegration into the community.

Manning and Greenwood (2019) define recovery as the process by which an individual learns to manage or withstand the negative consequences of trauma, drug or alcohol misuse, mental illness, or physical disease. According to research they did, two aspects that affect the rehabilitation experience of homeless persons are their feeling of mastery and the amount of choice they can afford. Based on an examination of the recovery domains of physical health, mental health symptoms, drug and alcohol use, and community integration, this research was conducted.

Deinstitutionalization of mental health treatment has been practiced for many years in Europe. Organizations that offer drug rehabilitation and mental health services have undergone changes that permit more comprehensive and integrated interventions, such as therapy conducted in the patient's home or while they are still a member of the community. The attitudes, expertise, and abilities of the personnel offering care and assistance are critical to the patients' recovery. Because persons with complex mental health needs struggle with motivation and organizational abilities, which affects their capacity to manage their daily activities, rehabilitation programs place a strong emphasis on getting people involved in activities. Given that prior research has linked physical exercise to a higher quality of life, lifestyle interventions may also favorably impact the recuperation and general well-being of patients receiving rehabilitation. It is well established that people with mental health issues, especially substance abuse, have unmet needs when it comes to their jobs and daily activities. Therefore, giving people a job of any kind—paid or unpaid—is essential because they can give their lives purpose and a sense of fulfillment. Furthermore, it fosters personal development by fostering the expansion of abilities, responsibilities, and identities (Van Der Meer, 2019).

In a study published in 2019, Yusay investigated the experiences of young Filipino families with recovering parents who lived in urban areas, turned themselves in to the police, and finished Katatagan Kontra Drogas sa Komunidad (KKDK), a community-based rehabilitation program, at the height of the Philippine government's anti-illegal drug campaign. The basis for the findings came from participant narratives regarding their upbringing with drug-abusing parents and their parents' subsequent recovery after quitting. Their firsthand narratives brought to light the importance of commonly held notions of Filipino family culture, neighborhood stigma, and the effects these events have on the lives of the young participants. When reliving their memories, the participants positioned themselves as familiar with the scenario, as someone who felt abandoned, and as someone who was unhappy and injured. After the community-based rehabilitation program ended, they spoke about how their parents' experiences with recovery had improved their family's situation. It was concluded that policymakers and those dealing with drug abuse problems, such as mental health practitioners, social workers, and psychologists, might need

to consider the stories of young people in order to improve programs and address the needs of younger people regarding the impact of parental drug use on children and families living in poverty (Yusay, 2019). Each person has a different risk of developing a substance use disorder (SUD); yet, not much research has been done on the connection between coping strategies and drug use, especially in adulthood, and family support. Research that examined the coping mechanisms and substance abuse of adult Filipino drug users discovered that family support moderated this relationship. The social impact hypothesis on drug use was used as a framework for analyzing data from 340 participants in the voluntary outpatient substance addiction treatment program *Katatagan Kontra Droga sa Komunidad*, which was hosted in two Philippine cities. Participants completed a survey assessing drug recovery skills, life skills, perceived family support, and symptoms of substance use dependence (SUD). The bulk of participants were men, and the majority of them took methamphetamine or shabu. In individuals who suffered SUD symptoms, life skills showed an inverse connection with the symptoms, according to a moderation study. Family support was shown to decrease the link between SUD symptoms and life skills, suggesting that those with poorer life skills are more in need of family assistance. The results of the research indicate that life skills and family support are important factors that affect how well mildly-risk drug users (PWUDs) in the Philippines respond to treatment. Thus, these factors must be prioritized in treatment plans and health awareness initiatives (Sy & Hechanova, 2020).

Recent studies on drug use among workers indicate that substance use behavior is influenced by both internal and external influences. However, the vast majority of studies ignore the possible relationship dynamics that may exist between mental processes and the workplace. A social cognitive strategy was used in research on workplace drug use among Filipino employees in an attempt to narrow this difference. Structural equation modeling (SEM) indicates that employee views about drinking, smoking, and/or taking illicit substances moderate the relationship between company culture and employee substance use. Other elements of the workplace have an impact on the former. The consequences for work organizations and human resource management techniques were also discussed (Tiu et al., 2019).

The quality of life and mental health of drug users in the Philippines, especially those living in disadvantaged urban areas, are very concerning due to the conditions surrounding drug use and the ongoing stringent antidrug policies. In 2018, the use of participants from a community-based rehabilitation program and underprivileged urban areas in Muntinlupa for an inquiry was seen. The purpose of the research was to assess the mental health and quality of life of substance addiction victims in the Philippines, compare them to a control group of people who had never used drugs, and find variables related to the quality of life of these victims. Psychological distress and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) were measured using the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K-6) and the Primary Care PTSD Screen for DSM-5 (PC-PTSD-5), respectively. The WHOQOL-BREF was used as a tool to assess life quality. With each WHOQOL-BREF domain acting as a dependent factor, multivariable linear regressions were used to create three predictions: variables related to QOL among PWUD, lifetime drug use interaction with each covariate, and age- and gender-adjusted QOL means (Yamada, 2021).

A total of 272 PWUD and 402 comparison subjects were recruited. Methamphetamine was the most common substance used by 50% of PWUD (53%). PWUD exhibited higher rates of moderate to severe psychological distress (70%) and likely PTSD (28%) as compared to the comparator group. PWUD had poorer QOL domain ratings in the physical, psychological, social, and environmental domains than the comparison group. A multivariable regression study showed a relationship between a worse quality of life and psychological distress, current drug usage, drug sales, discrimination, and single status. Increases in

individual income, home resources, social activity involvement, and use of drug use disorder services were all associated with greater QOL among PWUD. Stratified and interaction analyses comparing PWUD's QOL to that of the comparison group revealed that PWUD's QOL was more sensitive to variations in individual income. In addition to programs that emphasize abstinence, the well-being of Filipino PWUD may be improved by a comprehensive intervention that includes social inclusion, economic empowerment, and psychological distress reduction (Yamada, 2021).

Because it encompasses participation and justice concerns, the drug use epidemic is now a significant health and social issue in the Philippines. Research that looked at the actual experiences of Filipinos suffering from drug addiction and tried to pinpoint the occupational justice aspects of drug addiction was conducted to better develop substance addiction recovery programs in the Philippines. They used the Occupational Justice Health Questionnaire as a reference and a qualitative technique to conduct in-depth interviews with 24 individuals. To examine the data, an interpretive phenomenological analysis was used. The four key themes they found were living with drugs, living by regulations, living for the future, and living in the midst of the drug battle. For each topic represented a "period of participation" that revealed occupational inequities, the first enabling skill of the Participatory Occupational Justice Framework, "raise consciousness of occupational injustice," was activated. In order to enhance local drug addiction recovery programs, it is important to take a participatory approach to debating and correcting inequalities. Additionally, intentional use of political activities of daily life is one strategy that evolved from knowing the lived experiences of the participants. These tactics include emphasizing interprofessional cooperation, limiting occupational therapy services owing to a shortage of human resources that support it, and using occupation-based social engagement treatments (Tamayo, 2018).

Oplan Tokhang was initially created in the Davao City Police Office (DCPO) by Senior Supt. Ronald Dela Rosa, the then-Police City Director, with the goal of expediting the resolution of drug-related issues by going to the homes of prominent figures in the illegal drug trade and requesting that they cease their unlawful activities. By providing a list of its citizens who use drugs, the system mandates that barangay captains take the lead in the fight against illegal narcotics. The list will be checked by police intelligence teams to make sure the names on it actually belong to drug users. According to study data, during the first three months of the illegal drug operation's execution, from July to September 2016, OPLAN TOKHANG was able to produce amazing outcomes. The region's overall infestation rate was reported to be 10.76; broken down by province, Davao del Sur had the highest prevalence and Davao City had the lowest (Tamayo, 2018).

Osob and Narkotykw (2021) carried out a study using a qualitative research methodology to learn more about the experiences, reasons for wanting to alter their lives, and coping strategies of drug-user surrenderers. Eight of the ten individuals who were supposed to participate in the interview who were drug users who had given up showed up. The researchers had created the interview questionnaire themselves. Sinawilan, City of Digos. The following themes, which were derived from the participants' responses, were used to describe the results: positive experiences, negative experiences, acceptance, faith and hope, and the benefits of OPLAN Tokhang. The study's conclusions led the researchers to suggest spiritual practices and rehabilitation as a means of enlightening and helping them explore a life beyond delinquency. Offering a livelihood program can benefit their family and enable them to exist on a daily basis. Lastly, engage them in sports activities to divert and soothe the surrenderers' attention. It was also advised that drug users who turned themselves in should actively participate in these activities so they can get more knowledge and apply it to their everyday lives (Osob & Narkotykw, 2021).

During President Rodrigo Duterte's antidrug campaign in the Philippines, the first national victim-level dataset of drug-related killings was put together. The dataset includes details on 5,021 fatalities that occurred between May 10, 2016, and September 29, 2017. Based primarily on information taken from press articles, the researchers determined who, where, how, and why these deaths were occurring. Police operations accounted for more than half of the killings, with the other victims falling victim to so-called "vigilante-style" killings. The majority of those slain were low-level narcotics suspects. Approximately 40% of the homicides occurred in Metro Manila, primarily in Caloocan, Quezon City, and Manila. Cebu and Bulacan both saw high mortality tolls. Murders frequently happened in or near private residences, as well as in streets or alleys. By enlarging the project's scope, they intend to overcome the study's primary reliance on media sources (David et al., 2018).

A recent study looked at the legal responsibilities of barangay captains and mayors in the Philippines in relation to the national government's anti-illegal drug campaign, which included the police-led Project Double Barrel and Oplan Tokhang. The General Welfare Clause of the Local Government Code of 1991 and the directives from the Department of the Interior and Local Government regarding the establishment of Anti-Drug Abuse Councils (ADACs) at the barangay level were among the documents that were reviewed in order to ascertain their responsibilities. A geographical map of the drug-related homicides in Quezon City and the City of Manila's barangay and district levels may show how much local authorities may have supported or opposed the police's punishing tactics. A counter-narrative was presented by the research, which posed pointed questions about whether and to what extent local officials really engaged in gross negligence and dereliction of duty by permitting a high death toll within their jurisdictions, endangering the constituents' security, safety, and human rights (Mendoza et al. 2018).

It is a reality that drug-related crime is a societal issue that has an impact on all facets of community life as well as the country's development. In a 2019 study, Dio, Apostol, and Madrazo examined the characteristics of drug surrenderees and the crime data in the Province of Sorsogon, Philippines, during Project Double Barrel's execution. It was discovered that the majority of drug surrenderees come from marginalized groups, such as construction workers, unemployed people, and informal workers. While Project Double Barrel was being implemented across the province, there was a noticeable drop in the number of crime events. However, there is no discernible change in the crime solution efficiency (CSE) from the prior year due to limitations in the number of police officers. The two most common types of documented index crimes were theft and physical harm, whereas the majority of recorded non-index criminal instances involved car accidents and other infractions of the law on the street (Dio et al., 2019). Community-based recovery is a helpful approach to treating addiction because it offers chances to understand how addiction can be challenged and how it coexists with a healthy body and mind. Under the government program "TOKHANG," the Municipality of Lingayen in the Province of Pangasinan created a community-based rehabilitation program to address the health needs of drug surrenderees. It was designed in 2017 and put into action by the LGU's Municipal Anti-Drug Abuse Council. Since there was no discernible effect, the advocate conducted this study to evaluate its efficacy in light of potential improvements. The focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and observation techniques used in the qualitative method were combined with a theme strategy in the data analysis. After the aforementioned program was put into place, there was a noticeable improvement in the surrenderees' state of wellness. Furthermore, the program had the greatest positive impact on the community's peace and order, strong familial ties, and the health and safety of the surrenderees. However, in order to improve the program, four important areas were taken into consideration, and the backing of key stakeholders is

essential. It was observed that there was a high level of program satisfaction (Pescador, 2018). Community-based recovery is a helpful approach to treating addiction because it offers chances to understand how addiction can be challenged and how it coexists with a healthy body and mind. Under the government program "TOKHANG," the Municipality of Lingayen in the Province of Pangasinan created a community-based rehabilitation program to address the health needs of drug surrenderees. It was designed in 2017 and put into action by the LGU's Municipal Anti-Drug Abuse Council. Since there was no discernible effect, the advocate conducted this study to evaluate its efficacy in light of potential improvements. The focus group discussions, key informant interviews, and observation techniques used in the qualitative method were combined with a theme strategy in the data analysis. After the aforementioned program was put into place, there was a noticeable improvement in the surrenderees' state of wellness. Furthermore, the program had the greatest positive impact on the community's peace and order, strong familial ties, and the health and safety of the surrenderees. However, in order to improve the program, four important areas were taken into consideration, and the backing of key stakeholders is essential. It was observed that there was a high level of program satisfaction (Pescador, 2018).

Government-produced and conveyed information is crucial, according to Vergara and Lintao (2020), because the government is established as a trustworthy and legitimate source of information. The Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB), a government organization in charge of enforcing laws regarding the use of illegal drugs in the Philippines, produced and distributed two brochures on prohibited drug awareness. The study evaluated the brochures' readability, comprehensibility, and document design. A total of 120 participants (students, working adults, jobless people, and drug users from a rehabilitation facility) completed two 10-item multiple-choice questionnaires and Likert scales in order to rate the two brochures' document design and comprehensibility using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The two existing brochures' readability levels differed greatly from the 9–10 normative values of the reading instrument used, indicating that the publications were not very readable. This was determined by analyzing the readability of the two brochures using the Coh-Metrix tool. The two pamphlets weren't very clear, according to the participant scores, which were divided into instructional and aided levels. Finally, it was discovered that the documents' designs were subpar due to a number of infractions, including tiny text sizes, pixelated images, and a disregard for color schemes. This article makes the case that in order to help the general public understand crucial information, including drug awareness, government organizations should create informational brochures that follow the guidelines of the Plain Language Movement (Vergara & Lintao, 2020).

The primary goal of the research by Carpizo and Sansano (2019) was to assess the effectiveness of the moral-recovery program implemented by various religious groups in collaboration with the Philippine National Police, the Dangerous Drugs Board (DDB) of the Philippines, local government units, non-governmental organizations, and various business sectors. To take part in the study, 131 drug surrenderees from Cavite, Philippines, were specifically chosen. Of the responses, 114 (87%) are men and 17 (13%) are women. Data were gathered through surveys and interviews to determine the influence of the program on the surrenderees' moral character. For statistical analysis, percentages and frequencies were employed. The findings demonstrated that following the three-month moral recovery program, 111 (85%) of the drug surrenderees made a commitment to give up drugs, 64 (49%) made a commitment to regularly attend church, 98 (75%) reported having a better relationship with God, and 23 (18%) reported having a healthier outlook on life and growing into more responsible family members. After completing the three-month, 12-session moral rehabilitation program, the respondents—who had previously been persuaded to take

drugs by their friends—saw a significant shift in their lives, going from using drugs to turning to God for help with their difficulties. This demonstrated how the program enhanced the drug surrenderees' lives and relationships with others and God. It was suggested that more research be done on the effects of the moral recovery program in various parts of the Philippines, as this program is required by law (Carpizo & Sansano, 2019).

The implementation of the Oplan Tokhang as a national program in the campaign against illegal drugs can best be scrutinized and evaluated through the experiences of the participants in this case, the drug surrenderees. While individual backgrounds and histories may vary with every respondent, the study will be able to gain insights as to the intricacies of getting involved with illegal drugs and how the rehabilitation program under the said program impacted their lives during and after their voluntary surrender.

The researcher has not encountered a completely similar study. It is high time that a study be conducted to take a closer look at the individual stories of redemption from addiction to illegal drugs of Oplan Tokhang surrenderees as the presidential term changed. This will bridge the gap of research literature on the plight of participants to such a controversial government-initiated program as we move forward into a different political climate where the war on drugs may no longer be given such a priority. Most of the research studies done are in the context of the controversial war on drugs, highlighting violence and abuse of power. There is a need to conduct a study about the lived experiences of surrenderees who voluntarily subjected themselves to community-based and government-initiated drug rehabilitation programs and open a broader and open-minded discussion about the topic.

The purpose of this multi-case study was to bring forward the experiences of Oplan Tokhang surrenderees, extensively describing their battle against drug addiction and how this police-led government intervention has affected their rehabilitation, including their struggles and the valuable insights that can be obtained out of these experiences.

Furthermore, this study holds global significance by addressing the critical intersection of drug policy, human rights, and the rule of law, directly aligning with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. By examining the Oplan Tokhang program through the lens of SDG 16, this research will contribute to a broader understanding of how drug rehabilitation initiatives can be implemented within a framework that upholds human rights, fosters justice, and strengthens institutions (Antonio et al., 2019).

The results of this study will be valuable to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the said program and in the identification of bottlenecks and gaps to aid in the drafting of similar national initiatives and policies. According to social control theory, taking advantage of socialization and social learning processes strengthens self-control and lessens the propensity to engage in actions that are considered antisocial or illegal. The three forms of control are as follows: (1) internal through the formation and maturity of conscience; (2) identification with those who influence behavior, such as family members who may be impacted by the person's delinquent acts; and (3) direct punishment threatened or applied for wrongful behavior and rewards for compliance (Mukula, 2019).

The researcher is interested in uncovering what motivated the participants to surrender, whether they valued positive reinforcements such as the promise of reintegration into the community and becoming productive citizens again, or was it simply out of fear and repercussion of committing a crime and the threats of death as highlighted by most news outlets.

This multi-case study on Oplan Tokhang surrenderees in community rehabilitation programs offers crucial

insights for:

- Government agencies (health, drug policy, police) to improve program effectiveness and develop better strategies.
- Local governments to tailor rehabilitation to community needs.
- NGOs/CSOs to advocate for humane drug policies and improve service delivery.
- The judicial system to inform sentencing and rehabilitation practices.
- Academia to enhance understanding of drug addiction.
- Affected communities and families to voice their experiences and advocate for better support.

METHOD

This chapter details the qualitative, multiple case study methodology used to examine Oplan Tokhang surrenderees' experiences in community-based rehabilitation.

Study Participants

In selecting the participants of this study, the basic inclusion criteria established were for them to be people from any age range, educational background, gender, or occupation who were former drug surrenderers and Oplan Tokhang participants. Since this is a multi-case study, it will include participants with unique cases and experiences of rehabilitation under the government's dangerous drug rehabilitation program.

Purposive and snowball sampling were used in this research. There is a lengthy history of development for purposeful sampling, and opinions on its complexity and simplicity are as varied as those regarding its simplicity. Purposive sampling is used to better match the sample to the goals and objectives of the study, enhancing the study's rigor and the reliability of its data and conclusions. Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are the four dimensions of this idea that have already been discussed (Campbell, 2020). However, Audemard (2020) pointed out that snowball sampling, which places a strong emphasis on the networking and referral aspects of the process, is one of the most often used sampling techniques in qualitative research. Typically, the researchers begin their work with a limited group of initial contacts, or "seeds," who meet the research requirements and are sent an invitation to participate in the study. After that, the agreeable participants are asked to suggest other connections who meet the study's eligibility requirements and who could also be willing participants. These contacts then suggest further contacts who might be interested in participating, and so on. Therefore, researchers utilize their social networks to create the first connections, and then sampling momentum grows from these connections, catching an ever-longer chain of participants (Audemard, 2020).

In order to meet the criteria of representativeness and generalizability from a limited sample of study participants, phenomenologists may interview five to twenty-five persons who have encountered the same phenomena (Creswekk, 2013; Giorgi, 2014; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2018). Sample sizes of 10–15 are sufficient, given that participants can articulate detailed accounts of the phenomenon (Speziale & Carpenter, 2011).

The locale of the study was in Region XII, also known as the SOCCSKSARGEN region. This is a region in South Central Mindanao composed of four (4) provinces and (5) cities. This region was selected not only for its accessibility but also for its current illegal-drug situation and current drug rehabilitation programs implemented.

Materials and Instrument

Data collection relied on a meticulously designed interview guide, structured to elicit in-depth narratives from participants. This guide, developed directly from the study's objectives, ensured that each question

strategically targeted key aspects of the surrenderees' experiences. To comprehensively capture their lived realities, questions were crafted to explore the immediate aftermath of surrendering, including their emotional state, social reintegration challenges, and the impact on family relationships. The journey towards rehabilitation was examined through questions detailing their engagement with community-based programs, perceived effectiveness of interventions, and personal struggles with relapse prevention. To uncover insights and realizations, participants were prompted to reflect on their evolving perspectives on drug use, their understanding of the program's role in their recovery, and the personal transformations they experienced. Validation by subject matter experts, who awarded the guide an average rating of 10, confirmed its appropriateness and comprehensiveness. This rigorous process ensured that the interviews yielded rich, nuanced data, capable of providing a holistic understanding of the surrenderees' experiences (Moser & Korstjens, 2018).

Design and Procedure

To achieve the goals of this study, a descriptive multi-case method of inquiry was utilized. In contemporary research, the multiple case study design continues to be a valuable approach for exploring complex phenomena within real-world contexts. Researchers emphasize the importance of rigorous design and execution to ensure the validity and reliability of findings.

A key aspect of modern multiple case study research is the emphasis on cross-case analysis. As Hunziker & Blankenagel (2021) point out, the strength of this design lies in its ability to move beyond individual case descriptions to identify patterns and variations across multiple cases. This allows for the development of more robust theories and a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms at play.

Furthermore, contemporary applications of multiple case studies often involve the integration of diverse data sources and analytical techniques. Researchers are increasingly utilizing qualitative data analysis software to manage and analyze large volumes of qualitative data, as well as incorporating mixed-methods approaches to combine qualitative and quantitative findings (Hunziker & Blankenagel, 2021).

To achieve the objectives of this study, which is to shed light on the lived experiences of drug surrenderees who underwent the rehabilitation programs under the Oplan Tokhang, the researcher used appropriate and effective data collection methods, including in-depth interviews (IDI), focus group discussions (FGD), reviews of public records, and note-taking. These qualitative methods are valuable tools in implementation research because they assist in providing answers to complex questions, including how and why efforts to implement best practices may be effective or not (Hamilton, 2019). The pre-data gathering activities that were done include collecting baseline data and relevant information that will aid in the formulation of the interview guide and questionnaires that will be used in the actual conduct of interviews and FGDs. With these references as a basis, the interview guide, FGD flow, and survey questionnaires will be prepared. It will then be submitted for correction and approval to ensure validity and effectivity as data-gathering tools. Permits were secured for the conduct of the interview. Through purposive and snowball sampling, the respondents will be identified.

A letter of invitation was sent to them to confirm their participation. Interviews and focus group discussions were scheduled at least one or two weeks earlier in order to provide ample time for participants and ensure their attendance. It was held in places such as quiet offices or public places with minimal noise and distraction to ensure smooth conduct of interviews and distraction. With the consent of the respondents, a recording of the interview and FGD was made in order to make sure that all responses elicited will be documented. A transcript of the interview and focus group discussion was made based on the recordings. This was then used as a basis for data analysis. In case clarification and verification are

necessary, a follow-up interview shall be done. In addition, information gathered, which may require validation from experts, was submitted to appropriate subject-matter experts. Analysis of data for this study was patterned after the step-by-step approach for qualitative data analysis published by Akinyode and Khan (2018). They noted that in the past decade, as qualitative techniques became popular, their employment depended on the concept and objectives of the research as well as the types of information needed to achieve the goals of the study. Citing Attride-Stirling, who divided the procedure on qualitative analysis into three stages, namely, reduction of the text, exploration of the text, and integration of the exploration. These stages involve an abstract level of analysis.

They further expanded the procedure for a more comprehensive and thorough analysis of qualitative data into five steps, including data logging, anecdotes, vignettes, data coding, and thematic networks. The practice of recording raw data from a focus group discussion, personal interview, observation, or other qualitative data-gathering method in a record sheet—also referred to as data documentation—is called data logging. The process of streamlining data logs to get a full understanding of the data gathered is called anecdotes. It is completed right after following the interview or survey. It is written in the narrative style. It is the order that the transformation actions occurred chronologically. This helps the researcher develop the topics and elicit emotions. Anecdotes are prepared by condensing the interviewee's narrative description of the topic into a chronological sequence. This will support the themes' development (Akinyode & Khan, 2018).

In qualitative research, the word "vignettes" is useful for describing narrative stories or story investigations on the interpretation of individuals, situations, or information that the researcher provides. Vignettes that establish the study's credibility center on the detailed descriptions of the environment, participants, and themes of qualitative research. It goes beyond anecdotes and reorganizes the many facets of the subject to distill the knowledge that must be acquired over time into a succinct presentation. Information: The process of breaking apart and categorizing text to create extensive themes and explanations within the data is called coding. It is the procedure by which the researcher compiles or categorizes information pertaining to a certain concept or issue. With the use of a coding system, it attempts to limit the amount of data by organizing the information transcript into digestible and significant transcript chunks. In order to make it easier to organize and compare data from different sources, coding aids in the classification of data into groups or topics. Instead of resolving conflicting answers for a problem, the goal of a thematic network is to examine the knowledge of the subject or the denotation of a concept. Creswell (2013) distinguished between main and minor themes as well as common, surprising, and difficult to categorize. The terms "ordinary" and "unexpected" refer to themes that a researcher could expect to uncover; "unexpected" and "surprising" themes are those that are unexpected, and "hard-to-classify" themes are those that contain concepts that are difficult to categorize or that overlap with many themes (Creswell, 2013).

Additionally, by upholding strict ethical guidelines and guaranteeing the validity and reliability of the research procedure, the researchers have shown their credibility in carrying out the study. Credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability are all components of trustworthiness in qualitative research. The researchers used triangulation techniques to improve dependability and reduce investigator bias. Every possible respondent was approached separately to get their permission to participate in the research, according strictly to the purposive sampling method. Respondents were allowed to accept or reject the offer without any restrictions or repercussions since participation was entirely optional. The researcher respected the respondents' liberty in choosing whether or not to participate in the study and made sure they were fully aware of its goals and advantages (Gunawan, 2015).

Given the delicate nature of incorporating vulnerable individuals like drug surrenderees, ethical issues were crucial to the study. The research was conducted with strict adherence to the ethical criteria provided by Fouka and Mantzorou (2011). These rules included the concepts of beneficence, informed consent, and respect for confidentiality and anonymity. Every responder was free to choose whether or not to participate. In order to ensure a courteous recruiting method where respondents were free to participate without any compulsion or repercussions, the researcher contacted each of them personally. Respondent anonymity was guaranteed by the rigorous secrecy of the interview questionnaire and the collection of no identifying information. Respondents' personal and professional information was kept private and safe. All data, including audio recordings, were erased to preserve privacy when the research was over. (Arifin, 2018).

Before engaging the target respondents, the study obtained approval from the appropriate authorities to further assure ethical compliance. Respondents received comprehensive information on their responsibilities, the goal of the research, and its possible advantages. All participants were guaranteed clarity and accessibility since the questionnaire was simple to interpret and devoid of technical jargon. Additionally, participants were told that they may leave the research at any moment without facing any consequences. Furthermore, the research design was set up to provide a relaxed and secure setting for interviews, reducing any possible pain or anxiety (Arifin, 2018).

Transparency and participant well-being were given top priority in this research, which was carried out strictly in accordance with ethical standards and approved by the UM Ethics Review Committee under Certification No. 2024-352. In order to educate policy and enhance recovery programs, the study sought to give a comprehensive picture of drug surrenderees' experiences using protocols intended to uphold rights and rapidly resolve issues. Refreshments and assistance were provided to participants without affecting their answers, and all information was handled in confidence, anonymized for reporting, and presented truthfully. In order to provide a reliable and solid analysis of the surrenderees' trip, the researcher, who was dedicated to ethical behavior and openness, secured the required certifications, guaranteed originality, and adhered to citation standards (Banks & Brydon-Miller, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The descriptive results and anecdotes from this qualitative research on the experiences of five (5) distinct drug surrenderees in the Oplan Tokhang Drug Rehabilitation Program are presented in this part. In particular, it talks about the experiences, insights, and realizations of five drug surrenderees who came from various locations in the SOCCSKSARGEN or Region 12 area. To ensure their privacy, the participants are specifically coded as DS1, DS2, DS3, DS4, and DS5. Their experiences and the impact of the aforementioned government-implemented drug rehabilitation program on their path to becoming contributing members of society were made clear by this multi-case study.

Case A—Code Name: “Phoenix Reyes” from South Cotabato

Phoenix Reyes the 41-year-old male participant and barangay *kagawad*, described his past drug use. This includes working as a pusher, runner, and user for five years, from 2011 to 2016, starting at age 28. He attributed his early involvement in these activities to the dissolution of his marriage.

Experiences in the Oplan Tokhang Program

The first drug surrenderee reported voluntarily surrendering upon learning about Oplan Tokhang from friends in his barangay. He stated that he saw this as an opportunity for change and expressed remorse for the impact of his addiction on his child:

“At that time, there was a barangay called Oplan Tokhang, and I was the one who surrendered to the police so that I could change accordingly. Then, I realized that I wanted to change and feel sorry for my child.” (DS1_SQ1.1.1)

Given his family's declining health, he explained the feeling of urgency behind his choice. He described his surrender as a spiritual experience and expressed similar sentiments of optimism.

“I told myself that this wasn't right because my family was falling apart, and even my child might drift away from me. So, I decided to find a way to restore my family to how it used to be, and I told to my friends that we just pray because there's really nothing better to do than to pray and ask for help from the Lord.” (DS1_SQ1.1.3)

Journey towards becoming productive citizens in society

Phoenix Reyes spoke of a turbulent time when he used drugs, which caused his excessive rage to severely damage his ties with his family. He deliberately cut off contact with drug users after attending Oplan Tokhang, substituted alcohol for his addiction, and finally looked for more healthful diversions. He found strength in family support and credited his successful change to a profound concern for his child's future as well as a drive for personal development. His family relationships significantly improved as a consequence of this change, and he used his newfound sobriety to help others who were battling addiction. “As of now, my relationship with my child has improved, ma'am, and my family loves me very much because they can see that I have truly changed. No one can help you but your family; if you get sick or encounter problems, only your family will be there to help you.” (DS1_SQ2.1.1)

As a current barangay kagawad, he actively participates in community service with the goal of showcasing his recovery and guiding young people away from drug use by teaching sports, all while promoting the motto "Yes to Sports, No to Drugs." He highlighted Oplan Tokhang's significance in helping him undergo personal transformation and acknowledged that it had given him crucial assistance. Motivated by a desire to save others from making the same errors he did, he continues to concentrate on his child's future and giving back to his community.

“Here I am now, ma'am, serving in our barangay, and I am one of the sports coordinators, helping the youth stay away from drugs. I want the goal of the youth to be 'Yes to Sports, No to Drugs' because that's my platform. I'm here to guide them toward doing well because I don't want them to go through what I went through before.” (DS1_SQ2.1.5)

Insights and Realizations of Oplan Tokhang

Through Oplan Tokhang, this surrenderee gained important knowledge and understanding about drug use, accountability, and reintegration into society. He described a significant change in viewpoint that was influenced by both his own experiences and the teachings learned from the program. He verbalized:

“What they taught us during the Oplan Tokhang program made us realize and told us to truly change...” (DS1_SQ3.1.1)

Emphasizing how the program helped him start his transition. He stressed how harmful drug use is, cautioning young people that it might lead to "prison or the cemetery," and how hard it is to win back the respect that has been lost.

He spoke about how his active addiction marked a turning point amid a time of extreme paranoia and mental anguish. He stated:

“I realized my mind was starting to break down, and that's when I thought I needed to change.” (DS1_SQ3.1.2)

He attributed his ability to overcome these challenges to faith and prayer and the realization that life and opportunities should not be wasted. By advising others and emphasizing the value of family support and the government's role in rehabilitation, he actively put these principles into practice. Because he thought that a respectable job would deter recurrence, he promoted livelihood initiatives and employment prospects for those who had surrendered. In the end, he gave thanks to Oplan Tokhang for giving him a fresh outlook on life and a renewed commitment to his family's welfare and his child's education.

Case B—Code Name: “Echo Dela Cruz” from Sultan Kudarat

Echo Dela Cruz in the following case, a 39-year-old man, had a complicated past that was entwined with both drug-related and law enforcement operations. In addition to working as a chef and "striker" at the Lambayong Municipal Police Station, he acknowledged using narcotics, running, and distributing drugs. His participation lasted for 14 years, from 2008 to 2022, starting when he was 23 years old. Like the preceding participant, he too ascribed his early drug use to the emotional upheaval that followed a divorce.

Experiences in the Oplan Tokhang Program

This participant, a 39-year-old man, freely enrolled in the Oplan Tokhang program because he wanted to change himself and take care of his family. He said,

“I joined Oplan Tokhang because I wanted to change my life and help my family” (DS2_Q1.1.1)

Demonstrating his self-motivated decision. He said,

"No one invited me to join this program, I joined Oplan Tokhang voluntarily to teach myself the proper respect for my family, especially for my child." (DS2_SQ1.1.2)

Proving his commitment to repairing his family relationship. He expressed gratitude to former President Duterte and the program for providing a path to rehabilitation.

Regarding his first emotions, he said,

"My emotions were fine when I joined the program because I voluntarily joined, and I felt good about it." (DS2_SQ1.1.3)

He found an organized learning atmosphere and camaraderie throughout his involvement, with few hurdles. He said verbally,

"I didn't feel any challenges, ma'am; instead, I felt relieved. I made a lot of friends, and we were happy to be part of this program." (DS2_SQ1.1.4)

Additionally, he conveyed gratitude for the money and material assistance, saying,

"The support given to us by the program was good, and we were able to use it for our families. We were given rice, canned goods, and noodles. The government also provided us with financial assistance, so I am very grateful to those who continue to support us, the drug surrenderees." (DS2_SQ1.1.5)

Journey towards becoming productive citizens in society

Significant personal growth and a strong desire to make a constructive contribution to society were hallmarks of the participant's path to becoming a productive citizen. He verbalized,

"Everything is fine now, ma'am. My life and my family have become better." (DS2_SQ2.1.1)

Demonstrating how the training has improved his connections and personal life. He said,

"My child was really the one who gave me the motivation, and that's why I pushed myself to change for my child, my parents, and my siblings because I was so ashamed of everything I had done before." (DS2_SQ2.1.2)

As he put it,

"My greatest dream, ma'am, is to help my child finish his studies and provide him with a good life." (DS2_SQ2.1.3)

He described a significant turning point in his life, stating,

"My life has changed a lot from before to now, ma'am. I used to be very troublesome and a problem in society, but now I am able to help the community." (DS2_SQ2.1.4)

He saw himself helping his community by continued service at the Lambayong Municipal Police Station, where he felt accepted and supported. He verbalized,

"I can say that I am now able to help, ma'am, because I am on the right path and I am also helping here at the Lambayong Municipal Police Station and its personnel. They were also one of the inspirations for me to change my life." (DS2_SQ2.1.5)

Insights and Realizations of Oplan Tokhang

The participant's thoughts on Oplan Tokhang brought to light important revelations and insights about his social reintegration and personal development.

"When they helped us change and lead us onto the right path in life," he said (DS2_SQ3.1.1), recognizing the program's critical role in his recovery. Additionally, he said,

"I feel good seeing my friends changing their lives and being transformed by the program," (DS2_SQ3.1.2)

Highlighting the advantages for his classmates.

According to him,

"The program has truly helped me a lot, and now I am working as a cook at the Police Station and getting paid for it." He credited the program with helping him improve personally and get his present job. (DS2_SQ3.1.3)

He emphasized the value of mentoring and guidance by saying,

"I have learned a lot, ma'am, from the program given to us because we are being taught the right path." (DS2_SQ3.1.4)

As he put it,

"When I finally stopped using drugs, my thinking became clearer, and my behavior, which was once very insensitive and selfish, changed." He emphasized the program's ability to modify his outlook on life. (DS2_SQ3.1.6)

He spoke in favor of ongoing assistance for those who had surrendered, saying,

"What I can say to the implementers of Oplan Tokhang is to continue helping and supporting the drug surrenderees even if they have already graduated from the program and provide them with rations." (DS2_SQ3.1.9)

He also strongly cautioned the young people, telling them to put their education before using drugs.

Case C—Code Name: “Summit Bautista” from General Santos City

In the third case, Summit Bautista is a 53-year-old man who had gone from being a drug user to a prominent member of the local anti-drug movement and offered a unique viewpoint. He now serves as the Focal Person for the Barangay Anti-Drug Abuse Council (BADAC). His personal experience includes a 25-year battle with drug usage, which began when he was 20 years old and lasted from 1991 to 2016. He ascribed his early participation to peer pressure, particularly "barkada" or buddy group dynamics.

Experiences in the Oplan Tokhang Program

The 53-year-old male participant described his first experience with Oplan Tokhang and the Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Program (CBDRP) that followed. He said that his first motivation for joining the program was compliance, saying,

"When I joined, I initially felt that it was only for compliance. ‘I’ll just complete this and then I’ll go back

to using again,' I was thinking. (DS3_SQ3.1.3)

He took notice of how the program had changed over time, noting that it was now more structured and beneficial.

He explained his involvement in persuading other drug users to join the CBDRP, emphasizing how his common experiences allowed him to relate to them. He verbalized,

"There were many of us, but my drug friends only joined the CBDRP later when I became the facilitator. Because I knew how to handle them, how to lead them, especially if they felt uneasy because we had the same heart." (DS3_SQ1.1.2)

He also acknowledged the initial challenges he faced but asserted that his perspective shifted as he gained experience and began assisting others. He expressed gratitude for the program's support, emphasizing the importance of acceptance and the availability of alternative activities to divert surrenderees' focus.

Journey towards becoming productive citizens in society

The participant's path to becoming a contributing member of society was characterized by a strong dedication to community service and a progressive reintegration. According to him,

"Actually, ma'am, 2 years, 3 years, or even 4 years are still not enough for them to fully trust me, which makes it difficult." He recognized the residual repercussions of his history. (DS3_SQ2.1.1)

He did, however, highlight the CBDRP's ability to change his family connections, saying,

"But when I joined the CBDRP, it helped a lot, and my relationship with my family became 100% better." (DS3_SQ2.1.1)

He highlighted his participation in many anti-drug programs, such as PDEA orientations and the DARE Program, and conveyed a feeling of success in his position as a BADAC Focal Person.

He said,

"As of now, ma'am, I can call it a big accomplishment because as a BADAC facilitator, I've been able to conduct orientations under PDEA." (DS3_SQ2.1.2)

Along with expressing satisfaction with his present situation and highlighting his children's accomplishments, he also described a change in his priorities in life, saying,

"Even without money, it's okay." I'm happy with whatever is there." (DS3_SQ2.1.3)

He spoke about a pivotal moment in the execution of Oplan Tokhang, admitting that the prejudice he encountered and the psychological toll of public scrutiny were what eventually spurred his transformation.

He concluded by affirming that he is helping the community by helping other drug surrenderees, saying,

"I can say that I am now helping the community because I am a BADAC Focal Person, and I have already assisted many drug surrenderees in changing their lives." (DS3_SQ2.1.5)

Insights and Realizations of Oplan Tokhang

This participant's observations on Oplan Tokhang demonstrated a thorough comprehension of the program's transformational potential in addition to a practical approach to recovery.

He said,

"It is indeed influential because we, as drug addicts, share a common goal; we have one heart and one mindset." (DS3_SQ3.1.2)

Highlighting the mutual understanding and shared experience that made transformation possible. He acknowledged his function as a motivating force, saying,

"If he could do it, why can't we?" and pointing out that his accomplishments inspired others. (DS3_SQ3.1.2)

He said,

"It's a big help, ma'am, because you know how to break it down or open the book," emphasizing the program's capacity to provide structure and direction. People are sometimes content because, if you are acquainted with the program, you know how to help them, where to direct them, and how to encourage them." (DS3_SQ3.1.5)

He added that his own metamorphosis was a major life lesson, saying,

"My life lesson, ma'am, is to correct my mistakes because I used drugs for almost 25 years." (DS3_SQ3.1.8)

Then, expressing worry about the ongoing drug presence in his town and asking for more police and PDEA cooperation to completely eliminate it, he argued for ongoing support and resources, especially for individuals who are reluctant to participate in the program.

Case D—Code Name: “Horizon Castillo” from Sarangani Province

The subsequent participant, a 34-year-old male, had a complicated profile, juggling physical jobs and academic endeavors while managing a history of drug use. A van loader at Century Corporation and a second-year Pastoral Theology student, he has previously worked as a pusher, runner, and drug user. He started doing these things when he was sixteen years old, and he did them for eleven years, from 2006 to 2017. Like earlier participants, he attributed his beginning engagement to marital separation and social pressure ("barkada").

Experiences in the Oplan Tokhang Program

This participant entered the Oplan Tokhang program after being informed by his Purok Chairman that his name was on the drug list. He said,

"When my friends surrendered, I joined them because it was true that I was using and selling drugs, and I wanted to clear my name." (DS4_SQ1.1.1)

Showing a desire for rehabilitation and responsibility.

"Of course, ma'am, at first, I was really scared because I thought I might end up in jail," he said, expressing his first feelings of anxiety." (DS4_SQ1.1.3)

But eventually acknowledged the program's goal of promoting constructive change.

The main issue, according to him, is work-related issues brought on by the required CBDRP sessions. He highlighted a crucial point in a pastor's lecture and conveyed his sincere thanks for the spiritual assistance he got.

"If your kids celebrate their birthday, you have more drinks on the table than food," he said, and I thought, "I agree, that's true." (DS4_SQ1.1.5)

He became a Christian as a result of this insight and the one-on-one Bible study that followed.

Journey towards becoming productive citizens in society

The participant's journey towards becoming a productive citizen was characterized by significant personal transformation and a desire to inspire change in others.

He said,

"They were first concerned about what would happen to me, ma'am. However, they eventually got content as the program really transformed me." (DS4_SQ2.1.1)

Emphasizing his family's initial concern and their later acceptance of his development.

He also said,

"My testimony, ma'am, is for people to hear who I am now, who I was before, and what I went through while I was using narcotics. This, in my opinion, may motivate and inspire those who use drugs to give up." (DS4_SQ2.1.2)

Highlighting his dedication to inspiring others with his experience.

He expressed a desire to work overseas in order to fulfill his dreams of starting a company and committing himself to ministry.

He stated,

"Someday, I want to have enough capital because I really want to start even a small business and be able to do full-time work in the ministry." (DS4_SQ2.1.3)

He attributed many positive changes in his life to the Oplan Tokhang program, citing its role in his rehabilitation and the removal of his name from the drug list. He described his contribution to the community as twofold: his personal transformation, which reduced community problems, and his ability to inspire change in others through his testimony. He verbalized,

"I can say that I have helped the community because I have changed, and I have reduced the community's problems." (DS4_SQ2.1.5)

Insights and Realizations of Oplan Tokhang

According to the participant's comments on Oplan Tokhang, the lessons learned from the program and his newly discovered spiritual foundation caused a major change in his perspective.

He said,

"I learned from the lessons provided to us by the program, and I better understand why the use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited and what its effects can be on our health and lives." (DS4_SQ3.1.1)

Emphasizing the educational value of the program. Along with stressing the need to avoid unwanted influences, he said,

"That is something the pastor always told us to really avoid: bad company." (DS4_SQ3.1.1)

He said,

"My spiritual aspect has grown, ma'am, and I have become closer to the Lord," attributing his personal progress to his spiritual enlightenment. Thanks to the Holy Spirit, this has played a big role in my transformation." (DS4_SQ3.1.3)

He put his teachings into practice by warning people about the harmful effects of drug usage and offering advice against it.

He said,

"I have shared with my peers that they should not follow in my footsteps regarding my past experiences with drugs, as it can lead to significant losses and truly ruin their lives." (DS4_SQ3.1.4)

He spoke about how his outlook on life drastically changed from one that was centered on instant satisfaction and illegal activity to one that was focused on a solid future that included ministry and business endeavors. He advocated for frequent home visits and employment options for surrenderees, expressing a want for continued assistance. He verbalized,

"I also hope that jobs can be provided for drug surrenderees who are unemployed so that they can have a source of income." (DS4_SQ3.1.9)

Finally, he issued a strong admonition against relapse, urging complete abstinence from drugs.

Case E—Code Name: "Hope Salazar" from North Cotabato

The next participant, a 40-year-old male, held a position within his local government as a Barangay Subpoena Server, yet his past revealed a 14-year period of drug use. This engagement lasted from 2002 to 2016 and started when the individual was 22 years old. Like several other interviews, he attributed his early drug usage mostly to social pressure, particularly from his "barkada" or group of friends.

Experiences in the Oplan Tokhang Program

After learning that his name was on the narcotics list by phone call from the Kabacan Police Station, this 40-year-old male participant joined the Oplan Tokhang program. He said,

"When I received a call from the officer of Kabacan Police Station and was told that my name was on the drug list, right after I voluntarily went to the police station and surrendered." (DS5_SQ1.1.1)

He said,

"Before, ma'am, I was ashamed because the truth came out that I was using illegal drugs, but it's okay," describing his first feelings as a mixture of relief and embarrassment. I had the opportunity to improve my life, at least thanks to that sort of program." (DS5_SQ1.1.3)

He cited few difficulties throughout his involvement, highlighting his dedication to recovery and giving the program and the previous government of President Duterte credit for helping him change. He said,

"I didn't have a hard time, ma'am, since I don't seek drugs if I don't have any. Actually, it was fortunate that former President Duterte was in office at the time since his government significantly altered my life." (DS5_SQ1.1.4)

He expressed gratitude for the financial and livelihood support provided, highlighting the program's role in teaching him financial management and providing him with income-generating opportunities. He stated that

"The support given to us was really huge, ma'am, because I learned how to save money, manage my finances, and set aside savings." (DS5_SQ1.1.5)

Journey towards becoming productive citizens in society

Rebuilding trust and a renewed dedication to his community were hallmarks of the participant's path to becoming a productive citizen.

"My life has changed significantly, ma'am," he said. Previously, my sisters, who were overseas, had lost faith in me." (DS5_SQ2.1.1)

Demonstrating how his drug usage had harmed his ties with his family. He did, however, also highlight the benefits of his recovery, saying,

"But now, I've regained my sister's trust." She has been sending me money after I established a bank account." (DS5_SQ2.1.1)

"What motivated me was my job in the government, where I was given another chance despite being labeled a drug surrenderee," he said, attributing his drive to make a good contribution to his position at the local government unit." (DS5_SQ2.1.2)

He expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work, emphasizing his dedication to his duties. He verbalized,

"I make sure to show the person who gave me the chance to work again at the municipal office that I am serious and dedicated to my job."

He envisioned a stable future centered around his employment and his child's education. He also described a significant turning point in his life, stating,

"There has been a significant change, ma'am, because my mind is no longer distracted." (DS5_SQ2.1.4)

He emphasized the regained trust of his family and community. Finally, he detailed his ongoing contribution to the community through his role in the Municipal Anti-Drug Abuse Council (MADAC), stating that,

"Through my service to our town, I showcase my best at work, and the Barangay Council members and the Barangay Captain can see how I perform my duties." (DS5_SQ2.1.5)

Insights and Realizations of Oplan Tokhang

The participant's personal development and desire to help others avoid drug usage were the main themes of his insights and realizations after taking part in Oplan Tokhang. He said,

"Regarding the CBDRP, and during our seminars before, we also had a spiritual seminar where pastors helped us realize that what we were doing was wrong and that we needed to change." (DS5_SQ3.1.1)

Emphasizing the program's all-encompassing approach to recovery. He also highlighted the useful abilities he acquired, stating,

"They taught us techniques that I applied to myself, such as when we are extremely angry, we should just inhale and exhale until we cool down." (DS5_SQ3.1.1)

He attributed his personal growth to the program's lessons, focusing on his child as his primary motivation. He stated,

"Everything I learned and was taught during the program; I applied to myself to change my life and give it value. I focused, and the number one mindset for me is my child." (DS5_SQ3.1.3)

He actively applied these lessons by counseling others, using humor and personal experience to encourage them to surrender. He verbalized,

"I also shared with my acquaintances who use drugs what I learned from the program and encouraged them to surrender to the Barangay. Sometimes, I joke with them, saying, 'Do you want to change your birthday or do you want BPAT to come and get you?'" (DS5_SQ3.1.4)

He spoke about how his outlook on life had significantly improved, mentioning more mental clarity and financial security.

"Actually, ma'am, Oplan Tokhang has really brought about positive changes because it has transformed the lives of many drug surrenderees, including mine," he said, underscoring the program's beneficial effects on his profession. I've been able to concentrate better and demonstrate to my employer my commitment and reliability." (DS5_SQ3.1.7)

Lastly, he urged program implementers to keep up their efforts to promote long-lasting transformation by promoting ongoing outreach and support for drug users.

Cross-Case Analysis

A cross-case analysis of the five participant interviews is presented in this section, highlighting both similar and different experiences with regard to their participation in Oplan Tokhang. We want to provide a thorough grasp of the program's effects, the participants' paths to reintegration, and the most important lessons they learned throughout their recovery by looking for trends in these disparate stories. The common lived experiences, the steps taken to become contributing members of society, and the epiphanies that influenced their views on drug use, law enforcement, and community service will all be included in this examination.

Table 1 presents the comparison in the responses of the drug surrenderees to questions related to the lived experiences as participants in the Oplan Tokhang drug rehabilitation program

Table 1. Experiences of Drug Surrenderees in the Oplan Tokhang Program

Phoenix Reyes (South Cotabato)	Echo Dela Cruz (Sultan Kudarat)	Summit Bautista (General Santos)	Horizon Castillo (Sarangani)	Hope Salazar (North Cotabato)
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Entry into Program	Voluntary surrender, peer influence	Voluntary, personal desire to change	Surrender after community involvement	Informed by Purok Chairman, peer surrender	Police call, voluntary surrender
Initial Emotions	Fear, desire for family restoration	Relief, desire to fix life	Compliance, then acceptance	Fear, apprehension	Shame, acceptance
Challenges	Emotional struggles, balancing life	Minimal, positive experience	Program adjustments, initial mistrust	Work-related conflicts	Minimal, positive experience
Support Received	Spiritual guidance, community support	Material support, financial assistance	Community support, program structure	Spiritual guidance, pastoral support	Financial and livelihood assistance
Program Impact	Life transformation, family healing	Positive life changes, employment	Community reintegration, leadership role	Spiritual transformation, life change	Financial stability, life improvement

The lived experience of Oplan Tokhang participants is shown in all five case studies as a complicated and multidimensional journey characterized by humiliation, fear, and ultimately acceptance. Participants often joined the program as a result of personal aspirations for significant change, including the reunion of their families, or as a result of external pressures like police calls or community influence. The early phases of involvement were always marked by emotional upheaval. The pain of social humiliation and fear of legal repercussions was very real. But when they became more involved with the program, participants often found a vital feeling of support and camaraderie. Their transformational journeys were greatly aided by the program's organized approach, which often included lectures, spiritual counseling, and practical help. As seen in Table 2, the path to becoming productive citizens was a major subject, with a recurring focus on the transformational potential of community and family. All of the participants emphasized how crucial it is to regain the confidence of family members, whose relationships have often been seriously damaged by previous drug use. Their determination to change was fueled by a strong motivation: the desire to provide their kids a better future.

There were many ways to have a constructive impact on society, such as volunteering in the community, finding steady work, and mentoring others. The structure and assistance provided by the Oplan Tokhang program were crucial in helping participants develop a sense of accountability and purpose, stabilize their lives, and become good role models.

Table 2. Journey of Drug Surrenderees towards becoming productive citizens in the society

	Phoenix Reyes (South Cotabato)	Echo Dela Cruz (Sultan Kudarat)	Summit Bautista (General Santos)	Horizon Castillo (Sarangani)	Hope Salazar (North Cotabato)
Impact on Family/Relationships	Rebuilt family trust, improved relationships	Improved family relationships	Gradual trust rebuilding	Rebuilt family relationship, regained respect	Rebuilt family trust, improved relationship
Motivation for Positive Contribution	Community service, mentorship	Desire to provide for family	Community leadership, anti-drug advocacy	Testimony, spiritual influence	Employment, community service
Future Vision	Community service, family support	Family well-being, stable life	Community contribution, personal stability	Business and ministry, family support	Employment stability, child's education
Significant Moments/Turning Points	Spiritual awakening, commitment to change	Realizing impact on family, personal change	Program acceptance, community role	Spiritual awakening, program completion	Mind clarity, regaining trust
Contribution to Community	Youth mentorship, community leadership	Employment, positive example	BADAC role, community outreach	Sharing testimony, church activities	Government service, MADAC involvement

The participants consistently reported acquiring important insights regarding the harmful nature of drug use and the need for personal reform, as seen in Table 3. This shift was made possible by the Oplan Tokhang program's multidimensional strategy, which blended spiritual direction with useful counsel. The participants understood that avoiding harmful influences and accepting personal responsibility were essential components of their recovery. Many shared their personal stories as warnings because they had a great desire to save others from falling victim to the dangers of drug addiction. Participants argued for ongoing assistance for surrenderees, highlighting the program's widespread importance as a means of achieving redemption and the persistent power of community and religion in promoting long-lasting transformation.

Table 3. Insights and Realizations of Oplan Tokhang Drug Surrenderees

	Phoenix Reyes (South Cotabato)	Echo Dela Cruz (Sultan Kudarat)	Summit Bautista (General Santos)	Horizon Castillo (Sarangani)	Hope Salazar (North Cotabato)
Key Lessons Learned	Personal responsibility, avoiding negative influences	Program's practical advice, spiritual guidance	Community guidance, personal responsibility	Avoid bad company, spiritual guidance	Financial management, emotional control
Influence on Perspective	Anti-drug advocacy, community role	Positive example, community involvement	Advocacy for change, community support	Spiritual growth, community involvement	Community service, personal responsibility
Personal Growth and Development	Spiritual growth, positive outlook	Employment, personal stability	Leadership, community role	Spiritual transformation, mindset change	Financial stability, emotional balance
Application of Lessons	Mentorship, community outreach	Counseling, positive influence	Guiding others, sharing experiences	Counseling peers, sharing experiences	Counseling peers, encouraging surrender
Changes in Life Perspective	Family focus, positive future	Clear thinking, positive behavior	Community involvement, personal growth	Spiritual focus, future planning	Financial stability, mental clarity
Program's Positive Impact	Redemption, community support	Personal transformation, employment	Community integration, personal change	Life transformation, spiritual growth	Financial stability, employment

The themes of the participants' replies were grouped, as shown in Table 4, and they include Realizing Self-Worth, Fear and Coercion, and Desire for Redemption. Following their discussion on how drug surrenderees describe their involvement in the Oplan Tokhang Program, the participants recollected their own experiences that helped them understand and effectively comply with the government's rehabilitation program.

Table 4. Themes on how do drug surrenderees characterize their participation in the Oplan Tokhang Program.

MAJOR THEMES	CORE IDEAS/ STATEMENTS
Desire for Redemption	I really wanted to change the direction of my life. (DS1_SQ1.1.3) I want to fix my life and help my family in need,

	especially my only child. (DS2_SQ1.1.3)
	a significant help for those who are really willing to change, and it can encourage others to change (DS5_SQ3.1.8)
	I want also to completely change and fix my life so that would be better and that was my only goal at that time. (DS1_SQ1.1.1)
Fear and Coercion	'Friend, let's change because we're getting older and aging. (DS1_SQ1.1.2)
	when my friends surrendered, I joined them (DS4_SQ1.1.1)
	I was really afraid; I was on the list. (DS5_SQ1.1.3)
Realizing Self-worth	I was really overwhelmed back then, ma'am, because I felt that I was still important (DS1_SQ1.1.5)
	When they helped us change and lead us onto the right path in life. (DS2_SQ3.1.1)
	My spiritual aspect has grown, ma'am, and I have become closer to the Lord (DS4_SQ3.1.3)
	My life has changed significantly (DS5_SQ2.1.1)

Desire for redemption. The participants share the common realization that they all felt the need to renew their practices and live a new life. With several reasons and circumstances, after having experienced the hardships of hiding and getting paranoid as their names are on the drug watchlist, they also felt the need to change their lives for the better. Specifically, they shared:

I didn't hesitate anymore, ma'am, because at that time, I really wanted to change the direction of my life. I had been using drugs for almost 5 years, and I couldn't even take care of my child during that time. I told myself that this wasn't right because my family was falling apart, and even my child might drift away from me. (DS1_SQ1.1.3)

My emotions were fine when I joined the program because I voluntarily joined, and I felt good about it. The reason I joined this program is that I want to fix my life and help my family in need, especially my only child. (DS2_SQ1.1.3)

The positive effect of Oplan Tokhang is that you can change all the negative things you used to do in your life and truly focus on transforming your life without looking back. This Oplan Tokhang is also a significant help for those who are really willing to change, and it can encourage others to change because of this program. (DS5_SQ3.1.8)

At that time, there was a barangay called Oplan Tokhang, and I was the one who surrendered to the police so that I could change accordingly. Then, I realized that I wanted to change and feel sorry for my child. And someday, I hope that he will achieve his goal and he won't be involved in drugs like me. I also want to completely change and fix my life so that it would be better, and that was my only goal at that time. (DS1_SQ1.1.1)

The desire for redemption, which aligns with Estacio's (2018) findings that the main motivation for giving up and taking part in the various rehabilitation programs is to change for themselves, emerged as a powerful driving force behind the participants' voluntary enrollment in the drug rehabilitation program.

For these people, redemption was a complex process of seeking inner rejuvenation, mending relationships, and reintegrating into society. For their part, they want to escape the bonds of shame and guilt and to find a way to forgive themselves and be treated with respect. Enrolling in the program was a deliberate choice to change their life and escape the terrible hold of addiction. A strong desire to recover their feeling of purpose and confidence was sparked by this voyage of self-discovery and personal development.

Rebuilding trust with loved ones and repairing broken family ties were key components of the relational quest for redemption. Participants sought assistance in order to protect their loved ones from the terrible effects of addiction. Their devotion to the recovery process was strengthened by their will to help their loved ones and make apologies. Regaining their position as contributing members of society was another aspect of redemption.

Fear and Coercion. The participants share that the fear of getting caught or worse, being killed, pushed them to surrender and undergo the drug rehabilitation program through Oplan Tokhang. Specifically, they verbalized:

What if something happens to us? What about our families? They would suffer.' I also made them realize that life is precious and they also have children like me. What if one day your children end up like you? That was a wake-up call for them, ma'am. That's the advice I gave them, and thankfully, some of them listened." (DS1_SQ3.1.4)

My friends who, like me, also use drugs said, 'Friend, let's change because we're getting older and aging. Then I said, yes, that's true, and what we're doing is wrong. Let's just ask for forgiveness from the people we've hurt and seek help from the Lord. (DS1_SQ1.1.2)

The Purok Chairman came to us and informed me that my name was included in the drug list. Then, when my friends surrendered, I joined them because it was true that I was using and selling drugs, and I wanted to clear my name. (DS4_SQ1.1.1)

Of course, ma'am, at first, I was really scared because I thought I might end up in jail and that many of my friends would be implicated since, for sure, they'd ask me to point out who my companions were. I was really afraid, ma'am, but in the end, I realized I didn't need to be scared because the real aim of the program was to help us change our lives for the better. (DS4_SQ1.1.3)

Fear and coercion had a major impact on participants' choices to join the drug recovery program. Others gave in to pressure from family, social stigma, work or school duties, or accumulated stressors, while many dreaded arrest, physical injury, and health effects. Desperation and a desire to get away from oppressive situations drove participants to seek solace in rehabilitation as a result of this intricate interplay of impulses. The demographic profile of local surrenderees shows unmarried males who are motivated by fear of dying and seek redemption via rehabilitation programs to protect themselves and spur personal development, which is in line with Estacio's 2018 results.

Realizing Self-worth. The last feature that emerged from the participants' accounts of their voluntarily joining the drug recovery program is the deep understanding of their intrinsic value. This realization acted as a crucial impetus, inspiring people to look for atonement and take back their lives. In particular, they observed:

I was really overwhelmed back then, ma'am, because I felt that I was still important. No matter what your past is or your involvement in illegal drugs, you are given a chance to change, ma'am. It showed me that I truly mattered, and the one I really held on to during that time, ma'am, was the Lord. I just prayed for Him to help me. (DS1_SQ1.1.5)

When they helped us change and led us onto the right path in life. (DS2_SQ3.1.5)

My spiritual aspect has grown, ma'am, and I have become closer to the Lord. This is a significant factor in my change, thanks to the Holy Spirit. If we were just focused on lectures, I doubt I would be able to change. (DS4_SQ3.1.3)

My life has changed significantly, ma'am. Before, my sisters, who were abroad, no longer trusted me. I used to ask them for an allowance for my child, but I would use the money they sent to buy drugs. Because of that, our relationship was ruined, and they lost their trust in me once they found out I was using the money for my bad habits. But now, I've regained my sister's trust. I've even opened a bank account, and she's started sending me money again. I've made new friends and joined the Kabacan Runners group, and running and doing thrills have also become two of my hobbies. (DS5_SQ2.1.1)

One of the main reasons given by drug surrenderees (DS1–DS5) for going through recovery was the realization of their own value. Spiritual development, self-worth recognition, healthy relationships, all-encompassing support, and individual accomplishments were the main causes of this insight. Rebuilding connections (DS5) and supportive settings (DS2) were praised by some, while religion was crucial for others (DS1, DS4). Recognizing their intrinsic value, participants also highlighted intrinsic drive (DS1). Regaining trust, discovering new interests, and reaching financial stability were all noteworthy aspects of DS5's metamorphosis. This incident emphasizes how crucial it is to attend to patients' practical, emotional, and spiritual requirements throughout rehabilitation. Programs that are successful should include spiritual support, promote healthy relationships, reward individual accomplishments, and highlight internal drive. People may rediscover their value by doing this, which will lead to long-lasting change.

This bolsters the idea that self-assessment is essential for mental and social health, including relationships, ambitions, and objectives. Self-esteem is a risk factor as well as a protective element in drug recovery. While lower self-esteem is linked to mental illnesses, social issues, and addictive behaviors, higher self-esteem encourages better health outcomes, social conduct, and coping methods. Enhancing one's sense of self-worth, treating underlying psychological problems, creating support systems, and promoting individual goal-setting are all essential components of successful rehabilitation programs. People may attain overall well-being, enhance mental health, and build resistance against addiction by doing this (Mann et al., 2020)

Table 5. Themes on how has Oplan Tokhang shaped the lives of drug surrenderees and influenced their journey towards becoming productive citizens in society

MAJOR THEMES	CORE IDEAS/ STATEMENTS
Community Reintegration	I was trusted and elected to be a barangay councilor. DS1 I got an employment DS2 I became a facilitator to a program DS3 I was given another chance despite being labeled a drug surrenderee. DS5
Rebuilding family dynamics and relationship	When I thought about my child's future, I became firm not to be tempted again... DS1 My relationship with my child has improved, ma'am, and my family loves me very much... DS1 My life and my family have become better. My

relationship with my child has also improved and become more positive ...DS2

Properly handle my family and not neglect them... DS3

My relationship with my child and my new partner also became much better and more harmonious. DS4

I've regained my sister's trust... DS5

I can use what I learned because I can inspire them to avoid what they shouldn't be doing... DS3

I learned from their advice, ma'am, to avoid drugs, and we were also given an awareness lecture... DS4

I learned lot from the seminars and the advises given in the program ...DS4

I am also very grateful to our dear mayor because she accepted me back to work... DS5

Based on the qualitative data gathered through the interview with the participants, Table 5 presents the themes and core ideas or statements on how Oplan Tokhang shaped the lives of drug surrenderers and influenced their journey towards becoming productive citizens in society.

Community Reintegration. This entails assisting patients in reintegrating into their communities after therapy. Restoring social ties, sustaining sobriety, and encouraging long-term recovery all depend on this stage. Successful reintegration programs include case management, counseling, support groups, vocational training, and community outreach to meet social, job, housing, and healthcare requirements. Relapse rates are decreased, physical and mental health are improved, and social functioning is improved with successful reintegration, all of which contribute to an overall improvement in quality of life. In particular, the responders stated:

Even when I was just an aspirant for councilor, I was already planting good things, ma'am. However, struggles are inevitable, especially since the people in our area know about my past; many still do not want to believe or trust me. I also train and coach children in the sport of basketball to help develop their skills and divert them. DS1 (DS1_SQ2.1.2)

The program has truly helped me a lot, and now I am working as a cook at the police station and getting paid for it. DS2 (DS2_SQ3.1.3)

There were many of us, but my drug friends only joined the CBDRP later when I became the facilitator. Because I knew how to handle them, how to lead them, especially if they felt uneasy because we had the same heart. I knew how to manage them, what would work for them and what wouldn't, just not in a harsh way because if you're harsh, they will definitely fight back. DS3 (DS3_SQ1.1.2)

What motivated me was my job in the government, where I was given another chance despite being labeled a drug surrenderer. I am also very grateful to our dear mayor because she accepted me back to work so I could provide support for my child. That is one of the best things that happened in my life, being given an opportunity to work at the municipal office. DS5 (D5_SQ2.1.2)

This theme bolsters the findings of recent research by Shaver, Forsyth, and Meritus (2023) that showed participants' mental health significantly improved and drug usage significantly decreased. Peer support and community integration were shown to have a critical role in residents' rehabilitation. These results highlight the value of all-encompassing strategies that prioritize sustained processes and community support. In order to maximize recovery results, effective drug misuse therapies need ongoing evaluation,

creative approaches, and flexibility.

Rebuilding Family Dynamics and Relationships. Following drug misuse treatment, this approach calls for work, tolerance, and comprehension. Through counseling, candid discussion, and support groups, families may get over trust concerns, communication obstacles, and emotional wounds. Resilience, better communication, and healthier relationships are all facilitated by dedication and tenacity. Following their participation in Oplan Tokhang's rehabilitation program, participants made particular notes about:

But when I thought about my child's future, I became firm not to be tempted again. I also asked myself, 'Is this the only direction my life will take? Maybe I can level up.' I said this because it would be a waste of my talent if I just stayed where I was. I became positive, and even with my friends who were also in the process of changing, I told them that no matter what temptation comes our way, we shouldn't pay attention to it. (DS1_SQ2.1.1)

As of now, my relationship with my child has improved, ma'am, and my family loves me very much because they can see that I have truly changed. No one can help you but your family; if you get sick or encounter problems, only your family will be there to help you. (DS1_SQ2.1.1)

Everything is fine now, ma'am. My life and my family have become better. My relationship with my child has also improved and become more positive. Despite the mistakes I made, my family accepted me completely, and they felt more at ease when they saw that I had truly changed, ma'am. (DS2_SQ2.1.1)

There are many things, ma'am, like how to fix my life, how to properly handle my family and not neglect them, and how to make amends to those I've hurt. Doing these things is what brings peace to my heart. (DS3_SQ3.1.3)

They were surprised, ma'am, because I stopped using drugs, drinking, and hanging out with my old friends. People and my family started to respect me again. My relationship with my child and my new partner also became much better and more harmonious. (DS4_SQ2.1.1)

Because of that, our relationship was ruined, and they lost their trust in me once they found out I was using the money for my bad habits. But now, I've regained my sister's trust. I've even opened a bank account, and she's started sending me money again. (DS5_SQ2.1.1)

I taught from their advice, ma'am, to avoid drugs, and we were also given an awareness lecture regarding the NPA, emphasizing that we should never join their group. All I can say to my friends who are still using or involved in drugs is that they should completely stop. It's not enough to just quit for a moment and then go back; they really need to leave drugs behind for good. (DS4_SQ3.1.8)

What motivated me was my job in the government, where I was given another chance despite being labeled a drug surrenderer. I am also very grateful to our dear mayor because she accepted me back to work so I could provide support for my child. That is one of the best things that happened in my life, being given an opportunity to work at the municipal office. DS5 (DS5_SQ2.1.2)

Recovery from substance addiction and drug rehabilitation requires a change in identity, especially for people dealing with complex family relationships. A study of 30 participants conducted by Gunn and Samuels (2020) in a Midwest treatment program found three key factors influencing this identity shift: past relationships, perceptions of permanent addiction, and current caregiving support. Family dynamics can either help or hinder recovery, highlighting the need for support practices addressing these complexities.

This implies and supports the idea that a successful drug rehabilitation leads to rebuilt family dynamics and relationships, marked by restored trust, improved communication, enhanced emotional intelligence, and healthier conflict resolution. This, in turn, fosters stronger family bonds, improved mental health,

increased resilience, reduced stress, and better overall well-being, ultimately lowering the risk of relapse. Based on the qualitative data gathered through the interviews with the drug surrenderees, Table 6 shows the major themes and core statements on the insights that they gained from their engagement with the Oplan Tokhang Program.

Grateful for the chance for a new life. Individuals who complete drug rehabilitation often express deep gratitude for a second chance at life. They appreciate the fresh start, renewed purpose, and hope for a brighter future. Through personal growth, they gain self-awareness, empowerment, and resilience. Reconciled relationships, supportive networks, and community acceptance also foster a sense of belonging. Many of them experience spiritual renewal, forgiveness, and inner peace.

Table 6. Themes on the insights that the drug surrenderees gained from their engagement with the Oplan Tokhang Program

MAJOR THEMES	CORE IDEAS/ STATEMENTS
Grateful of the chance for a renewed life	<p>I am grateful that they provided a livelihood program... (DS1_SQ3.1.9)</p> <p>I am thankful of this program, as it helped change me...(DS2_SQ2.1.3)</p> <p>The advices were helpful, thank you to the pastors. (DS3_SQ3.1.3)</p> <p>I am thankful that I got the trust of my family back...(DS4_SQ2.1.4)</p>
The program is very helpful and effective	<p>Continue helping and supporting the drug surrenderees even if they have already graduated from the program... (DS2_SQ3.1.9)</p> <p>Program of Oplan Tokhang is great for correcting what is wrong to what is right...(DS3_SQ3.1.7)</p> <p>Oplan Tokhang has really brought about positive changes because it has transformed the lives of many drug surrenderees... (DS5_SQ3.1.7)</p> <p>The program has lots of activities that helps us surrenderees to become better people... (DS3_SQ3.1.6)</p> <p>I would also like to suggest, ma'am, that we give jobs to our drug surrenderees in the barangay so that they can have a source of income and won't return to drug dealing ... (DS1_SQ3.1.9)</p> <p>If there are any drug surrenderees, they need to conduct house-to-house visits and closely monitor them regularly... (DS4_SQ3.1.9)</p> <p>They continue to pursue encouraging those involved in drugs to surrender so they can receive proper treatment for a life transformation... (DS5_SQ3.1.9)</p>

This gratitude fuels their motivation to maintain sobriety, pursue growth, and positively impact their communities. Specifically, the participants said:

I am grateful that they provided a livelihood program for drug surrenderees like me. I would also like to suggest, ma'am, that we give jobs to our drug surrenderees in the barangay so that they can have a source of income and won't return to drug dealing. (DS_SQ3.1.9)

I have learned a lot from their lectures; they really prepared many lectures for us to help remove the thought of drugs from our minds. They did this to help us, and we gained a lot of lessons from their lectures. Now, here I am, having become successful, so I am very grateful for the Oplan Tokhang program. (DS2_SQ3.1.8)

Even during the height of my drug use, they worked hard to finish their studies, as I was a neglectful father to them. That's why I'm really thankful because, despite everything, they still managed to have a good life. (DS3_SQ2.1.3)

I always had no money back then, but now I always have money in my pocket. And I regained the trust of people and, most especially, the trust of my family. (DS5_SQ2.1.4)

According to research about adaptation, gratitude plays a vital role in promoting resilience and well-being. Research reveals a strong link between gratitude and flourishing, with gratitude serving as a reliable predictor of adaptation and long-term flourishing. Notably, gratitude interventions can be tailored to individual preferences, offering a valuable tool for individuals with disabilities to cope with adversity and thrive. This echoed theme of gratitude by the participants indicated a positive insight on their experience of undergoing the rehabilitation process offered through *Oplan Tokhang*. If it could indicate resilience and positive adaptation, it is an interesting topic for a future study to take (Phillips et al., 2022).

The program is very helpful and effective. Participants positively described the Oplan Tokhang drug rehabilitation program, affirming its effectiveness and helpfulness. They credited the program with transforming their lives, overcoming addiction, achieving sobriety, and improving mental and emotional well-being. The comprehensive approach, supportive environment, and personalized interventions enabled successful recovery and reintroduction into society. Participants praised the program's empowering outcomes, including increased self-esteem, improved coping skills, and a renewed sense of purpose. Specifically, they stated:

What I can say to the implementers of Oplan Tokhang is to continue helping and supporting the drug surrenderees even if they have already graduated from the program and provide them with rations. (DS2_SQ3.1.9)

The overall program of Oplan Tokhang is great for correcting what is wrong to what is right. (DS3_SQ3.1.7)

Actually, ma'am, Oplan Tokhang has really brought about positive changes because it has transformed the lives of many drug surrenderees, including mine. It has helped me focus on my work and show my employer that I am dedicated and can be trusted. At least they no longer have to worry that I might not perform my job of delivering summonses because of my vices. (DS5_SQ3.1.7)

Before, there were only a few participants, but now we have many joining, as well as in other activities like basketball games in our barangay and distributing flyers and conducting symposiums with other drug surrenderees. Even just a little outreach to them and providing assistance with what we have in the barangay is important. (DS3_SQ3.1.6)

I would also like to suggest, ma'am, that we give jobs to our drug surrenderees in the barangay so that they can have a source of income and won't return to drug dealing. (DS1_SQ3.1.9)

What I can say to the implementers, ma'am, is that if there are any drug surrenderees, they need to conduct house-to-house visits and closely monitor them regularly. This way, they can see the situation in the lives of the drug surrenderees. I also hope that jobs can be provided for drug surrenderers who are unemployed so that they can have a source of income. (DS4_SQ3.1.9)

What I hope for is that they continue to pursue encouraging those involved in drugs to surrender so they can receive proper treatment. (DS5_SQ3.1.9)

The drug rehabilitation program through *Oplan Tokhang* has demonstrated remarkable effectiveness, as reported by participants. They describe it as "life-saving" and credit it with helping them gain control over addiction, rebuild relationships, and discover new purpose. Notably, participants highlight the program's supportive staff and holistic approach.

Oplan Tokhang facilitated transformative journeys for drug surrenderees, progressing from coercion and fear to redemption, self-discovery, and personal growth. Initially, the prospect of surrendering seemed daunting, driven by fear of consequences rather than a genuine desire for change. However, as participants embarked on the program, they found solace in its supportive environment. Comprehensive interventions, including counseling, therapy, and peer support, helped them regain self-worth, overcoming addiction's debilitating grip.

As they progressed, participants successfully reintegrated into their communities, revitalizing family dynamics and relationships once fractured by addiction. The program's holistic approach addressed underlying issues, fostering emotional healing and renewed connections. Participants began rebuilding relationships with loved ones, finding acceptance and support within their communities, and eventually becoming productive citizens.

Through their experiences, participants developed profound gratitude for second chances, affirming *Oplan Tokhang's* effectiveness. Their stories echo with themes of personal transformation, social reintegration, and emotional renewal. Having overcome addiction, they now enjoy enhanced self-esteem and improved mental health. With renewed hope and purpose, they've discovered forgiveness and self-compassion, often culminating in spiritual renewal. By addressing physical, emotional, and spiritual needs *Oplan Tokhang* empowered individuals to transcend addiction, embracing healthier, more meaningful

IMPLICATION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

This section presents the implications for practice, future research, and concluding remarks derived from the findings of this study. Specifically, this study aimed to explore and understand the unique experiences of drug surrenderees who participated in the *Oplan Tokhang* Drug Rehabilitation Program, the challenges they encountered in their journey toward recovery, the coping mechanisms they utilized, and the significant realizations they gained as they transitioned to becoming productive members of society.

Implication for Practice

Policymakers may prioritize funding and supporting community-based rehabilitation programs, recognizing their effectiveness in addressing addiction. Decriminalization policies and public health-focused strategies should complement these initiatives. Collaborations between government agencies, healthcare providers, and community organizations will enhance program accessibility and efficacy. Evidence-based policies will ensure sustainable, impactful interventions.

Law enforcement agencies may shift focus from punitive measures to supportive approaches, facilitating referrals to rehabilitation programs. Training programs should emphasize harm reduction, addiction understanding, and compassionate engagement. Collaborations with public health agencies and

community organizations will foster trust and ensure holistic support for individuals struggling with addiction.

Public health agencies may integrate community-based rehabilitation programs into existing healthcare infrastructure. Providing accessible, comprehensive services—including counseling, therapy, and peer support—will address addiction's root causes. Agencies may also advocate for policy reforms promoting decriminalization and public health-focused strategies.

Families and communities may start to encourage and support loved ones seeking help, recognizing the benefits of community-based rehabilitation. Education and awareness initiatives will dispel stigmas surrounding addiction, promoting compassionate understanding. Community-based programs should provide resources and counseling for families, fostering healthier relationships and reintegration.

Most importantly, individuals struggling with addiction may be coaxed to seek help from community-based rehabilitation programs, embracing the opportunity for transformation. Engaging with peers and supportive staff can foster resilience, self-awareness, and sustained recovery. Advocating for their rights and needs will promote systemic change.

Implication for Future Research

Future researchers may investigate community-based drug rehabilitation programs' long-term effectiveness, comparing outcomes with institutionalized programs. Future studies may examine decriminalization's impact, cultural adaptations for diverse populations, and economic viability. Mixed-methods approaches, participant-centered research, and community-based participatory research methodologies are recommended. Key questions include predictors of successful recovery, program impact on mental health and social reintegration, and optimal policy and program design. Addressing these gaps will inform evidence-based policies and improve addiction treatment outcomes.

Concluding Remark

In conclusion, community-based drug rehabilitation programs, exemplified by Oplan Tokhang, demonstrate effectiveness in transforming lives, fostering recovery, and reintegration. By comprehensively addressing addiction's intricate physical, emotional, and social dimensions, these initiatives empower individuals to overcome dependency, rebuild meaningful relationships, and rediscover purpose. The successes of such programs underscore the imperative for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, public health organizations, and communities to collaborate in supporting and expanding these initiatives.

Integrated approaches, combining evidence-based practices, compassionate harm reduction strategies, and inclusive policies, are crucial. Policymakers must prioritize funding and legislative support, while law enforcement agencies should shift focus from punitive measures to supportive referrals. Public health organizations should integrate rehabilitation services into the existing healthcare infrastructure. Communities, in turn, must encourage and support loved ones seeking help, promoting awareness and understanding.

Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies, comparative effectiveness analyses, and contextual adaptations to optimize program design and implementation. Exploring decriminalization's impact, cultural sensitivity, and economic sustainability will further enhance effectiveness. Investigations into post-treatment outcomes, relapse prevention strategies, and family-centered interventions will provide invaluable insights. By addressing these research gaps, stakeholders can refine best practices, ensuring community-based rehabilitation remains a beacon of hope.

Collective efforts will create a compassionate society where individuals struggling with addiction receive

accessible, effective support, paving the way for healthier, more resilient communities. Addiction will transition from stigma to a recognized public health concern, facilitating holistic interventions. Empowered individuals will reintegrate, contributing positively to society. By prioritizing community-based rehabilitation, we mitigate addiction's devastating consequences, promote public health and safety, foster inclusive communities, and empower individuals toward sustainable recovery.