

Coping Strategies and Self-Actualization among the Rehabilitated Drug-Users: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to explore the coping strategies and self-actualization of the rehabilitated drug-users. Using an interview guide, the researchers gathered data from 8 rehabilitated drug-users from the IT Works Chemical Dependency Treatment Center in Ozamiz City. The study utilized the qualitative research method using Yin's 5-step data analysis approach to obtain meaningful themes. The findings reveal five themes: recovered through spirituality, managing self-control to prevent relapse, communication and good diversion of bad habits, importance of self-management and, choose dependable acquaintances. The rehabilitated drug users come up with coping strategies by recovering through spirituality, managing their self-control to prevent relapse, and having communication and good diversion of bad habits. The rehabilitated drug-users also attained self-actualization through realizing the importance of self-management and choosing dependable acquaintances. The researchers recommend that rehabilitated drug-users should continue the routine that helps them recover during their rehabilitation to prevent having relapse. The researchers also suggest that the families of the rehabilitated drug-users should provide physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual support to help prevent the rehabilitated drug-user from going back into his addiction.

Keywords: coping, rehabilitated drug-users, rehabilitation, self-actualization, strategies

INTRODUCTION

Drugs are chemicals that can affect a person's mental or physical state (Ignaszewski, 2021). The Department of Health and Aged Care (2019) declares that drugs can impact how your brain functions, how you feel and behave, your understanding, and your senses. As a result, they are unpredictable and dangerous, especially to the human body. Drugs are chemical substances that can change how your body and mind work (Weil, 2017). They include prescription, over the counter, alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs (MedLine Plus, 2019).

Drug addiction is a global epidemic that affects people worldwide (Dubey et al., 2020). It is a serious issue that can lead to death if not treated properly. Drug addiction is a growing problem in the United States and worldwide (Ritchie et al., 2019). Therefore, it is important to understand the causes and effects of this disease. However, they do not realize the drug's long-term effects on the human brain (Xie et al., 2019). Drugs can affect the brain in many ways, depending on the type of drug. Teixeira et al., (2020) noted that some drugs could cause the brain to release too many certain chemicals, while others can prevent the brain from releasing enough.

According to the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (2022), UNODC World Drug Report 2022, cannabis legalization in several parts of the world appears to have increased daily usage and accompanying health consequences. The report also outlines record increases in cocaine production, the development of

synthetic narcotics into new markets, and ongoing gaps in the availability of medication therapies, particularly for women. According to the research, around 284 million persons aged 15 to 64 took drugs globally in 2020, a 26% rise over the preceding decade. Young people are consuming more drugs than prior generations, with use levels in many countries being greater than in previous generations.

The Barangay Drug Clearing Programme, which incorporates the adoption of supply, demand, and harm reduction techniques, is at the forefront of the Philippine battle to rid communities of the drug epidemic. As of December 31st, 2020, 20,946 barangays, or 50% of all barangays in the Philippines, had been proclaimed drug-free, while 7,115, or 17%, remained drug-free. The Philippine government's Balay Silangan Reformation initiative, a harm reduction initiative, plays an important role in the implementation of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Philippine National Police (PNP), and concerned local government units conduct house visits to watch-listed individuals as part of the Barangay Drug Clearing Program (BDCP) to encourage them to submit themselves to the government's rehabilitation and reformation program (Kanato et. al, 2021)

According to the study of Cuizon, M. C A et al., (2021), in Ozamiz City, Philippines, one of the significant special laws is the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, which saw a high number of infractions in 2018 before experiencing a sharp decline through 2021. The war on drugs is being carried out by the current administration, and law enforcement in order to advise drug traffickers and users to avoid taking drugs, an officer performs Oplan Tokhang. In Visayan, the word "TOKHANG" means to approach and discuss (Llanera, 2022).

The Republic Act 9165, the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, seeks to impose stiffer penalties on illegal drug pushers. In addition, it provides rehabilitation and treatment programs to those who have fallen victim to prohibited drugs (Perez, 2021). The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) is the lead anti-drug enforcement agency of the Philippine government under the Department of the Interior and Local Government (Alagabia Jr & Cawi, 2019). Phillips (2020) acclaimed that the law penalizes different drug offenses starting from the use of illegal drugs up to the trafficking or pushing of the same. Furthermore, the penalties are increased if the offense was committed within school premises or a hundred meters from any school, public or private hospital, or rehabilitation (Anaraki, 2022).

Any treatment given to a person whose physical or mental capacities have been lost due to a sickness or accident is referred to as rehabilitation (Khammarnia & Peyvand, 2018). The World Health Organization (2021) states that rehabilitation is to restore health or increase the capacity in terms of the physical, mental, psychological, social, and economic well-being limits of drug addicts. The purpose of rehabilitation for addiction is to prevent the patient from using stimuli during their psychological, legal, economic, social, and physical recovery (Dangerous Drugs Board, 2022). The Cleveland Clinic (2020) stated that the primary goal of drug-addicted patients' rehabilitation applications is to stop using drugs so that they can start addressing the patients who suffered psychological, legal, financial, social, and physical harm. Addiction patients who receive treatment at an outpatient rehabilitation facility have improved their physical and emotional well-being and their social, family, career, and civic roles (Ünüböl et al., 2021).

Coping is a basic human competency recognized as one of the most important skills that impact how an addicted person lives (Chan et al., 2019). One of the coping strategies is self-efficacy which is a vital motivation for someone to stop using drugs and stick with treatment until the end (Gorgulu, 2019). Gorgulu (2019) added that a person's motivation level directly relates to how well treatment and rehabilitation programs work. Therefore, these motivations are the most crucial aspects of achieving abstinence. In order to explain human motivation and personality expression, Abraham Maslow created his hierarchy of needs. Five need categories made up the hierarchy of wants, which were arranged from lowest and most powerful to highest and least powerful: physiological, safety, belonging and love, esteem, and self-actualization. The main goal of these needs is to inspire a person to pursue self-actualization, which is the process by which

someone tries to realize their full potential by making the most of their skills and capabilities in order to experience personal development, fulfillment, and growth (Carducci, 2020)

Accordingly, the researchers wanted to look into self-actualization and coping strategies among rehabilitated drug users. This research study aims to evaluate how rehabilitated drug users cope with the situation and how they describe their complete realization of one's potential.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The case study research design was employed in the study. A case study thoroughly assesses the analytical unit (case). Data triangulation is a crucial part of the design to provide a thorough, complete, and contextual description. The study is strengthened by information from other sources (Smith, 2018). Because it provides concrete, contextual, and in-depth information about a particular real-world topic, a case study is a useful research approach. It will allow the researchers to delve deeper into the case's main traits, significance, and ramifications. The study adopted Yin's (2011) method of data analysis. This study design is suitable for exploring rehabilitated drug-users' self-actualization and coping strategies.

The study was conducted in Ozamiz City, a third-class component province of Misamis Occidental. The city is well known for having a fascinating historical and cultural background. Both good and bad perceptions are highlighted for the city's expansive territory. This city is infamous for having high levels of organized crime and drug use. Up until this point, the uniformed personnel have been working to decrease. The city was chosen as the study's setting because it is compatible with the study's main goal, the coping strategies and self-actualization among the rehabilitated drug-users.

The study identified eight (8) rehabilitated drug users residing in Ozamiz City as the research participants. Participants were chosen based on the criteria: 1) should be a drug addict; 2) should have undergone rehabilitation; 3) resident of Ozamiz City; and 4) willingness to participate. The researchers used an interview guide to gather the data needed from the participants. The adviser checked the interview guide, and at the same time, it was checked and approved by the panel members before it was administered to the participants. The researchers used an audio recorder during the interview that was conducted with the participants. For the target participants, the researchers created an interview guide. They are considering the requirements that a person must have entered a rehabilitation facility or been able to receive treatments there. The researchers used a formal request letter to connect with the rehab center and establish communication. The management and drug abuse victims' interview guide were included in the letter. The researchers physically complete the poll while on-site, paying close attention to safety precautions like face mask use and routine hand and material washing.

The data collection was done thoroughly to obtain the necessary information from the participants. Before the interview with the identified participants, the researchers asked permission from the Dean of the College of Criminology of the university, allowing the researchers to pursue the study and conduct the interview through a formal letter. Upon obtaining the necessary permissions, the researchers identified the study participants. Then, the researchers set an appointment with the identified participants and propose the interview schedule. The researchers inform the participants that the conversation will be recorded and assure them that all their responses were kept with the utmost confidentiality. Further, the social distance between the respondents and the researchers was noticed when interacting. For each sort of responder, the researchers generated various survey records to determine a trustworthy study review properly.

This survey was entirely voluntary, and no individual was compelled to participate in the research. The researchers asked for full consent over the participants ensuring that all information was solely used for research purposes. Confidentiality was expected to be dealt with in handling all the information supplied by the participants. At the same time, the respondents were briefed prior to anything else. They were given a

letter stating the relevance and justification of this study and an assurance that the information they supply was used only for educational research purposes and that no harm is intended during the data-gathering procedure.

During the day of the data-gathering procedure, researchers ensured that the participants were not busy the moment they were approached. This ensured that the participants answered the interview questions with sufficient time. However, in the advent of refusal, the researchers shall no longer pursue nor force them to answer the interview questions. This is to ensure that the researchers did not cause any disturbance in the process of gathering the data. Concerning the rights of every participant who participated in the study, the study was conducted according to the “Republic Act No. 10173,” also known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012”. Therefore, recordings of any shall not be taken without the prior consent of the respondents since the data gathering was recorded. This is also pursuant to the “Republic Act No. 4200,” or the “Anti–Wiretapping Law of 1965,” to ensure that there shall be no legal rights being tampered with nor violated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part presented the different themes that were derived from the different responses of the participants of the study during the conduct of the interview. It is evident in the study that most of the participants were 30-50 years old and most of them are rehabilitated drug-users. Further, based on the responses of the participants of the study, there were five (5) themes identified such as: (1) Recovered through Spirituality, (2) Managing Self Control to Prevent Relapse, (3) Communication and Good Diversion of Bad Habits, (4) Importance of Self-Management, (5) Choose Dependable Acquaintances.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

Code Name	Age	Gender	Civil Status
P1	50	Male	Married
P2	38	Male	Married
P3	34	Male	Single
P4	36	Male	Married
P5	42	Male	Married
P6	50	Male	Married
P7	32	Male	Single
P8	30	Male	Single

• Recovered Through Spirituality

This theme shows that one of the self-actualization and coping strategies among rehabilitated drug-users is recovered through spirituality. Recovery means to get back or regain something. Recovering from something means not making only yourself better, but also a gratifying achievement in life. In relation to drug addiction, recovering from it means you are working well in managing and taking control of yourself successfully. Recovery alone will not be successful if it was not done without God. Learning good coping strategies for stress, emotions, and triggers is important to recover. However, the most significant thing above all that strategies to recover is to have a strong connection and faith with God.

Code Name	Responses
P1	“They teach us with life management, its importance and follow the 12 Steps. The 12 Steps help us to have a connection with God and have a strong foundation to eradicate our addiction”
P2	“In the rehab facility, we were taught of the structures in life like having a routine every day, following some protocols, attending meetings or life classes, and applying the 12 Steps.”
P4	“They teach us how to manage our lives during our meetings and the 12 steps. The 12 steps tell us or guide us on how we overcome our addiction in a spiritual way.”
P5	“We follow the programs they provided with us, teach us life management, and follow the contents of the 12 steps to guide us spiritually.”

All 12-Step programs are distinguished by the belief that the central mechanism of addiction recovery is a process of spiritual awakening, and that this awakening can occur as an experience of sudden transformational change or (more commonly) unfold over an extended period of time. This spiritual transformation, which is generally viewed as a product of “working” the 12 Steps, begins with an admission of the need for complete surrender (“We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable”). Through this act of submission and the rise of hope (“Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity”) comes the willingness to do anything to recover and the acknowledgment that no future drug use of any kind is possible if insanity and death are to be avoided. NA’s philosophy of complete abstinence is rooted in the collective experience of its members that all past half measures resulted in pain and tragedy in spite of great and repeated assertions of personal will (White, W. L., 2011). This is supported by Sensitization theory which shows the lasting changes of recovery of rehabilitated drug-users through spiritual strength.

Participants mostly reported being moderately spiritual and religious, and that overall, religion had not helped them overcome their AOD problem. In contrast, spirituality was most commonly reported as either not helping at all or having made all the difference in terms of helping individuals overcome their AOD problem. Prior professional treatment and 12-step mutual-aid use were both related to greater spirituality, but not religiosity. Overall, spirituality but not religion, appears to play a role in aiding recovery, particularly among those with prior treatment or 12-step histories, but women and men, and racial-ethnic groups in particular, differ strikingly in their spiritual and religious identification, and the role these have played in aiding recovery (Kelly, J. F., & Eddie, D., 2020).

The current studies on spirituality and recovery among drug users build upon the findings of previous research, deepening our understanding of the relationship between spirituality and substance abuse recovery. Earlier studies established the positive association between spirituality and outcomes such as reduced substance use, improved well-being, and enhanced treatment engagement. Current research expands on these findings by delving into specific populations, such as adolescents, and exploring the mechanisms and pathways through which spirituality influences recovery (Grim, B. J., & Grim, M. E., 2019). Additionally, recent studies focus on the role of spirituality in relapse prevention, highlighting its significance in maintaining long-term sobriety (Laudet, A. B. et. al, 2006). The current studies also emphasize the subjective experiences of spirituality, highlighting themes such as connection, meaning, and surrender to a higher power. Overall, these studies contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted role of spirituality in the recovery process, reinforcing its potential as a valuable resource in promoting sustained recovery and overall well-being among rehabilitated drug users.

The first identified theme implies that rehabilitated drug-users who have God during the time of their recovery and trusting the way of the rehabilitation center in rehabilitating them, helps them overcome their addiction. The 12 Steps and programs provided by the rehabilitation center are their means to cope with their addiction. It also helps individuals overcome feelings of hopelessness and despair often accompany

addiction. Having that coping strategy can help them develop a sense of gratitude and humility which can be crucial for maintaining sobriety.

• **Managing Self-Control to Prevent Relapse**

This theme shows that one of the self-actualization and coping strategies among rehabilitated drug-users is managing self-control to prevent relapse. Adopting habits and actions that enhance physical, mental, and emotional well-being constitutes living a positive lifestyle. Maintaining social relationships with the people around you alleviate emotions of loneliness and isolation. One of the most effective ways to manage self-control is by attending meetings. Meetings provide individuals with a supportive community of people who are also in recovery. This community can offer encouragement, advice, and accountability to help individuals stay on track with their recovery goals.

Additionally, meetings can provide a safe space for individuals to share their struggles and receive feedback from others who have been in similar situations. Another way to manage self-control is through behavior modification. Behavior modification involves changing one’s behavior through positive reinforcement or punishment. In the context of addiction recovery, this might involve rewarding oneself for staying sober or setting consequences for relapse. By modifying their behavior in this way, individuals can create new habits that support their recovery goals. Finally, following programs provided by the rehab facility can be an essential part of managing self-control. These programs are designed to provide individuals with the tools they need to stay sober and maintain their self-control over time. They may include therapy sessions, group counseling, educational classes, and other resources that support long-term recovery.

Code Name	Responses
P1	“I attend meetings whenever I have cravings to avoid relapse.”
P2	“Through their program which is behavior modification, I was able to manage my recovery.”
P3	“In the rehabilitation center we were put in ground behavioral modifications, we follow the programs that the rehabilitation center provided and patience is important.”
P4	We join meetings and we follow daily structure.”
P5	“We follow the programs of the rehab facility.”

People can recover from SUDs provided that they are enabled to make sense of the crisis that set them onto the journey of recovery and by making a commitment to a new way of life (Meuth, 2020). This commitment requires a psychological mind-set change involving accepting addiction as a disease which requires lifelong maintenance or incorporating a new faith-based identity as strategy (Shaari, 2021). Commitment also entails taking action and making lifestyle changes that include letting go of old friends and environments and establishing new supportive convoys of support (Stokes, M., et. al, 2018). This is supported by Sensitization Theory which shows how rehabilitated drug-users manage the time they have and showing lasting changes to prevent relapse.

Fellowships are said to provide support to people at any point of the recovery process by assisting them in changing established patterns of behavior, responding correctly to drug desires, and maintaining their hope and commitment to become and stay abstinent. Self-help groups can also help participants build new social networks among sympathetic peers, find fulfilling drug-free interests, forge wholesome interpersonal connections, and steer clear of stressful social situations and locations (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 1997).

The current studies on managing self-control to prevent relapse among rehabilitated drug users build upon the foundation established by previous research, deepening our understanding of effective strategies in this context. Earlier studies emphasized cognitive-behavioral techniques, such as identifying high-risk situations

and developing coping skills (McHugh, R. K. et. al, 2010). Current research expands on this by incorporating mindfulness-based interventions, which have shown promising results in enhancing self-control and reducing substance use (Korecki, J. R. et.al, 2020). Additionally, recent studies recognize the significance of self-regulation processes, including emotion regulation and goal-directed behavior, in recovery and relapse prevention (Köpetz, C. E., et. al, 2013). Moreover, there is growing recognition of the role of spirituality in maintaining self-control and preventing relapse, offering a holistic approach that acknowledges the importance of meaning, purpose, and connection to a higher power in sustaining recovery. These current studies collectively contribute to a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of managing self-control to support long-term recovery among rehabilitated drug users.

The second identified theme implies that managing self-control through changing the course of focus helps you to be rehabilitated and not giving in to the cravings that are being experienced. Using a combination of these strategies — meetings, behavior modification, and programs offered by a treatment center, a solid foundation for long-term sobriety can be established by those in recovery. Every method has special advantages that can aid people in overcoming the difficulties of addiction and building fulfilling lives after leaving addiction behind.

• **Communication and Good Diversion of Bad Habits**

This theme shows that one of the self-actualization and coping strategies among rehabilitated drug-users is communication and good diversion of bad habits. Communicating your difficulties and sharing your views with others can be a difficult but necessary component of personal development and connection building. Effective communication can aid in the development of trust, the strengthening of relationships, and the promotion of personal growth. When attempting to break negative habits, it is significant to replace them with healthy and useful activities. Mindfulness or meditation can assist you in managing stress and anxiety. It can also help you become more conscious of your thoughts and emotions, allowing you to better manage your impulses and avoid negative behaviors.

Code Name	Responses
P1	“We have sponsors that came also from the rehab facility but they have already overcome their addiction. I contact one of them and tell him to help me overcome my craving and he will motivate me that I will overcome it and tell me to pray to God that He will take my addiction.”
P2	“I attend meetings to connect with God and cope with what I am feeling and having a support group that you can update or call when you feel you are craving or the other member needs your help.”
P3	“We look for something to do that makes ourselves busy and at the same time learn from it to share it in meetings, reflect on it, and ponder.”
P4	“I look for activities to do here and share them at our meetings, as well as ponder on them and meditate on them.”
P5	“I’m always looking for things to do every day to distract myself from my addiction and share it with others at meetings, as well as contemplate it, and meditate.”
P6	“Through taking part in therapy, religious activities, and recovery programs, I made it through. I managed somehow to overcome my addiction and I was able to create a good support system at the time of my rehabilitation.”

Recovering from addiction, like becoming an addict, is a process that involves a series of personal choices made over an extended period of time (Morgan, 2019). In many ways recovery is like a voyage of discovery that seeks to reintegrate a self that has been in various stages of disintegration — often for many

years (O’Malley, 2019). The value of the fellowship of N.A., and other support groups like it, is that it provides both a haven and a testing ground for the reintegrating self (Pickard, 2021). Often upon seeing the anxiety and uncertainty of newcomers to the group one is reminded of oneself earlier in recovery. Often upon hearing some particularly insightful words from an old timer one is inspired to keep going forward with one’s life — one day at a time. (Cleveland et al., 2021)

Contact with recovered peers was found to moderate the effects of involuntary treatment on internalized stigma. Sequential conditional process models (i.e. moderated mediation) then demonstrated that conditional internalized stigma (i.e. moderated by contact with recovered peers) mediated the indirect effect of involuntary treatment on recovery-specific self-efficacy, which in turn influenced recovery. (McLeod, B., et. al, 2019). This is supported by Social Cognitive Theory which shows how rehabilitated drug-users establish a good communication skill and learn to divert bad habits.

Previous research has repeatedly emphasized the importance of effective communication, supportive relationships, cognitive-behavioral techniques, relapse prevention strategies, peer support programs, and family/social support in promoting successful recovery and diverting bad habits among rehabilitated drug users (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment,1997). These researches have shed light on the importance of these elements in maintaining abstinence and promoting beneficial outcomes (Menon, J., & Kandasamy, A., 2018). In light of this existing body of research, the current study may seek to delve deeper into the specific processes by which communication and diversion techniques can be maximized, either by experimenting with novel interventions or assessing the long-term consequences of various approaches. It may also investigate the possible synergistic effects of combining various tactics, evaluate the impact of developing technology, or investigate the impact of cultural and environmental factors on communication and diversion patterns in this community.

The third identified theme implies that the rehabilitated drug users who communicate to the people around them through attending meetings, reflecting and sharing their thoughts and diverting self in doing good habits such as meditating, helps a person overcome its addiction. Rehabilitated drug-users also found someone who can help them in time that they will be experiencing a challenge in their self and life. Support groups or sponsors have a good impact and a great help for them.

• **Importance of Self-Management**

Self-management is the ability to regulate one’s own behavior, emotions, and thoughts in order to attain personal and spiritual goals. It is a crucial ability that is required for success in many aspects of life. It makes a person have a greater accountability to oneself. It takes full responsibility of how he behaves or acts, accountable of its decisions in life, and initiates to ameliorate his life. Realistic goal setting and creating an action plan to attain them are further components of self-management. This is crucial for drug users who may have lost their sense of direction or purpose in life as a result of their addiction. People rediscover their feeling of direction and drive by making realistic objectives and working toward them.

Code Name	Responses
P2	“I choose to stop using drugs and alcohol because my life has no progress at all if I continue doing it. My cycle of life with addiction is spiraling down instead of spiraling up.”
P3	“I could not manage myself anymore and I realized that this is not the thing that I want to do forever.”
P4	“I could not manage myself anymore and there, they have programs that will help me to overcome my addiction.”

P5	“I can’t handle myself anymore and I see that here in rehabilitation we always have something to do here to surpass this challenge, my addiction.”
P8	“I had lost it all, I could not stop drinking, and I could not get enough booze in me to kill the ache anymore.”

Structured intervention programs are an important resource for supporting people with substance addiction (Jemberie et al., 2020). Although evidence suggests that they improve health outcomes, such as specific symptoms, less is known about their impact on patients’ ability to self-manage the consequences of substance addiction (Pettersen et al., 2019). The most common interventions were based on motivational strategies, relapse prevention and definition of active plans for risky situations (Seabra, P., et. al, 2023). This is supported by Sensitization Theory which shows that drug-users learn to control and manage themselves as part of the goal of changing.

Results show that participants decided to stop for the better. It gives them little to no progress at all. Some even mentioned how struggling they were when using drugs and grabbed the opportunity the government offers to be able to counter addiction. Some realized how hard it is to be addicted and how their self-control deteriorates during the passage of time. This shows how crucial it is to know and understand the importance of self-management to counter and prevent addiction.

Previous research has consistently shown the value of self-management skills, self-efficacy, skill training programs, peer support, and the use of digital tools in promoting effective recovery and reducing relapse among rehabilitated drug users (Tracy, K., & Wallace, S. P., 2016). These researches have shed light on the effect of self-management on treatment results and emphasized the efficacy of various strategies. In light of this existing body of research, the current study may seek to delve deeper into specific aspects of self-management, such as the development of targeted interventions for different stages of recovery, the role of self-management in long-term sobriety maintenance, or the evaluation of the efficacy of novel digital tools or interventions in enhancing self-management abilities. It could also investigate the impact of cultural or contextual factors on self-management behaviors among rehabilitated drug users or uncover individual factors that influence self-management success.

The fourth identified theme implies that abusing drugs will destroy your life and your relationship with the people around you. The rehabilitated drug users realized that they could not manage themselves anymore and decided to undergo rehabilitation to change their cycle of life. Having self-management is important to prevent making bad decisions in life.

• **Choose Dependable Acquaintances**

Having friends can improve our quality of life. They contribute to our sense of belonging and community, as well as offer a support network to help us overcome life’s obstacles. However, not all friends have a beneficial influence on a person. Friends may encourage a person to participate in harmful or destructive activities such as drug or alcohol usage, excessive spending, or dangerous activity. Individuals must be aware of the possible negative affects their friends may have on them and make deliberate decisions about who they spend time with and how they engage with their friends. Finally, having pleasant and supportive friendships is advantageous for personal development and overall well-being.

Code Name	Responses
P1	“They should choose wisely who their friends are going to be and choose wisely on making their decisions in life. Always pray to God to help you focus on your goals and choose your friends that will help you positively.”

P3	“Choose your circle of friends wisely, because sometimes they are the one who will put you in addiction.”
P4	“Beware of choosing friends and don’t always follow your desire.”
P8	“Select your friends, be vigilant, and be more aware of your decisions. There are so many ways to keep your mind busy. Read books, have a sport and be more certain with your decisions that you’ll be making.”

Using illegal drugs not only happens at an early age, but there are also some who were at the stage of their adulthood who started using illegal drugs (Mehra et al, 2019). Friends and acquaintances can have an increasingly strong influence during adolescence (Spohn et al., 2022). Mental/emotional, physiological/psychological, family, peers, community, financial, behavioral, and academic were some of the factors that affected the respondents after they used illegal drugs (Vicencio, 2022). This was supported by Social Cognitive Theory which shows how the social environment affects the behavior of the rehabilitated drug-user.

Results show that participants mentioned how important peers are. Peers influence a person in a variety of ways. It is a need to choose friends who would bring you a positive mind and a good influence. They even mentioned how choosing the right friend could be critical as they could bring a person into good or into addiction. Most of the participants gave warning in carefully choosing friends.

Previous research has continuously stressed the value of social support, peer influence, mutual assistance organizations, family and social networks, and peer recovery support programs in assisting individuals in drug addiction recovery through trustworthy acquaintances (Tracy, K., & Wallace, S. P., 2016). These researches have shed light on the importance of trustworthy connections in supporting long-term recovery, lowering relapse rates, and giving emotional support. In light of this existing body of research, the current study could aim to further investigate specific aspects of dependable acquaintances, such as exploring the qualities and characteristics of dependable relationships that are most beneficial for rehabilitated drug users, examining the long-term effects of dependable social networks on recovery outcomes, or assessing the effectiveness of interventions that facilitate the formation of dependable relationships within the context of a dependable social network. It could also investigate the importance of trustworthy acquaintances in tackling unique issues encountered by certain communities, as well as the impact of cultural or contextual factors on the establishment and maintenance of trustworthy connections.

The fifth identified theme implies that choosing friends is important because it may be the factor that will lead you to bad decisions in life. Having dependable acquaintances will help you positively in growing and improving your life. Most of the rehabilitated drug-users realized that their choice of friends before were not a good influence to them. The rehabilitated drug-users recommend that everyone should be mindful of their decisions in life to avoid regrets in future.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that having coping strategies during rehabilitation enhances their self to attain self-actualization. Based on the result of this study, it is observed that the rehabilitated drug users attained realization during hitting rock bottom. It implies that rehabilitated drug users who experienced hitting rock bottom have a significant role and responsibility in their life. Realization causes a major drive to come up with coping strategies to attain self-actualization. The rehabilitated drug users come up with coping strategies by recovering through spirituality, managing their self-control to prevent relapse, and having communication and good diversion of bad habits. The rehabilitated drug users also attained self-actualization through realizing the importance of self-management and choosing dependable acquaintances.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on results, the researchers recommend that rehabilitated drug-users should continue the routine that helps them recover during their rehabilitation to prevent having relapse. The rehabilitated drug-users should avoid doing or bad habits that would trigger them to relapse. The families of the rehabilitated drug-users should provide physical, emotional, psychological, and spiritual support to help prevent the rehabilitated drug-user from going back in his addiction. The families of rehabilitated drug users should improve their relationship with their rehabilitated drug user family member to make them feel accepted despite the challenge that has happened to them. Communities may provide programs that would help rehabilitated drug-users divert themselves. Preventing them to go back in their addiction and at the same time beneficial to the community.

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