

Surviving Street Life: A Phenomenological Study on Street Children

Dr. Enna S. Bodoso¹

Abstract

The street children phenomenon is among the major societal problems that need attention, mitigation, and investigation. Hence, this qualitative study was conducted to explore the lived experiences of street children in a city in Negros Occidental, Philippines. Eight street children composed of girls and boys were the participants of this study. Face-to-face in-depth interviews and observation were employed to gather data. Descriptive phenomenological analysis was utilized. Ethical considerations were strictly observed. It was found that most of the street children in the study are males. Most of them have more than four siblings. Half of them have separated parents and have quit school. They experience varied challenges and employ different coping strategies. The themes that emerged in the study are the following: problematic families, dangerous daily activities, difficult lives, rugby for survival, empty stomach, neglected and problematic schooling, and freedom and autonomy.

Keywords: social science, street children, qualitative research, Philippines.

Introduction

Children's Rights and Habitat Declaration (1997) declares that there is no greater indicator of the health of a society than the well-being of all its children. UN Convention recognizes that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding.

Around the world today, all are confronted with an uncomfortable but undeniable truth: Millions of children's lives are blighted, for no other reason than the country, the community, the gender, or the circumstances into which they are born (UNICEF, 2016).

In the Philippines, children are regarded as gifts from God, blessings, a source of joy as well as happiness, and economic as well as practical assets of the family. On the contrary, quite a good number of children could now be seen not only staying most of the time in the streets but

¹ Carlos Hilado Memorial State University- Alijis Campus, Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines, enna.bodoso@chmsu.edu.ph

eventually living on the streets. Many of these children already consider the streets as not only a place to secure money and/or means needed for day-to-day survival but also as their homes and an area where they can enjoy the company of their friends and peers; this, amidst varying forms of hazards that they may face resulting from living or if not staying most of the time in the streets (Lamberte, 1994).

Under the program of the Department of Social Services and Development (DSSD) is the Anti-Mendicancy Task Force which is in-charged of helping street children and their parents by providing livelihood programs for them to stay away from the street. Each barangay also has the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) which is in-charged of looking into the welfare of the children. But, have these programs been fully implemented, or have they been able to address the problem to prevent and ultimately put an end to this social issue? How come many children are still on the streets?

This study focused on the phenomenon of street children in a city in the Philippines.

In order to be able to design strategies of intervention so as to improve the lives of street children, there is a need to know and understand the many aspects of their lives. Moreover, there are few data available concerning the children living on the streets of Negros Occidental, Philippines, hence, this study is a probe into their lived experiences.

Methodology

Research Design. The researcher utilized the qualitative research design specifically the interpretive phenomenological approach to delve into the lived experiences of the street children. Qualitative research is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014).

IPA is a qualitative approach which aims to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experience (Smith, et. al., 2009).

Participants. Guided by the principles of qualitative approach, Creswell (2014) states that 3 to 10 individuals will be sufficient in a phenomenological study. Thus, eight (8) street children who stay or sleep on the streets of Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines, for at least six (6) months composed of boys and girls were purposively chosen as participants. With the help of the social workers from the Department of Social Services and Development (DSSD) Office specifically the City Anti-Mendicancy Task Force Office in Bacolod City, the Office of Virланie Foundation (a Non-government Organization), sidewalk vendors, and a teacher from Banago Elementary School as gatekeepers, the eight participants were identified and selected based

the aforementioned circumstances. Criterion sampling was used in this study.

Data Collection Procedure. Given that the primary method of data collection was the lived experiences, rapport was established with the participants prior to interviews. However, to ensure that a common set of topics and questions would be answered in view of the pertinent data needed to address the research problem, an interview guide was constructed to be used when checking that all necessary concepts were covered during the interview.

The interview was conducted in the participants' first language so they can freely express their experiences. An audio recorder was used to document the interview verbatim with the permission of the participants. The researcher took note of the time started and time finished, date, place, and interviewee.

Each interview commenced with the researcher introducing herself, then explaining the purpose of the study, and ensuring the participants of the confidentiality of the answers they would give. The body of the interview included the reasons why they are on the streets, their daily activities, their problems and challenges.

Since the researcher used a qualitative method through an interview, an interview schedule was tested for its validity. In determining its validity, content validation was employed. Three authorities and/or experts in the field of children and social psychology were asked to evaluate the contents of the research instrument. In qualitative research, dependability or reliability often refers to the stability of responses. The researcher obtained detailed footnotes by taking minutes of the discussions and employing a good quality voice recorder to capture the details of the interview. It was then interpreted by an outside evaluator, to listen to the audio-recorded narratives for reliability of the responses to check the consistencies and accuracy of the responses/answers of the participants. The researcher used the inter-rater reliability by providing the pool of experts and the adviser with the said audiotapes for verification.

A letter asking permission to conduct the study was sent and was approved by the Head of the Department of Social Services and Development of Bacolod City. A letter asking for the referral in the selection of participants was also sent and was approved by the Program Manager of Virланіe Foundation, Bacolod City. The researcher then met up with the participants for the establishment of rapport. After this, the study was introduced to the participants. The rationale, purpose and processes were discussed with the participants to make them understand the research. After signing the informed consent by the target participants, the interview was then set. The researcher conducted the interview just before the onset of the

pandemic (February 2020) and during the pandemic (March 2021). During the pandemic, minimum safety protocols were followed. Wearing of face masks and face shields and social distancing were strictly followed. Face-to-face interview were done inside the Central Market, M Lhuiller Pawnshop in front of Metrodome, McDonalds in Lacson Street, Merzci Bakeshop in front of Metrodome and inside Banago Elementary School 1. Most of the interviews were done in the morning, others were in the afternoon.

Putting in mind the relative sensitivity of the issue being studied vis a vis the ethical considerations of doing research, an Informed Consent Procedures was observed. The researcher placed priority on maintaining the privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of study participants. The consent form explained the following: 1) the purpose of the study; 2) the nature of participation in the study; 3) how confidentiality will be maintained; 4) the right to refuse participation without jeopardizing their relationship with the institutions or individuals affiliated with the research; 5) the right to refuse to answer particular questions during the interview; 6) the right to discontinue participation at any time. Use of pseudonyms; and 2) storage of all forms and data with individual identifiers in secured envelopes were observed as well. Since the participants agreed to be involved in the study, the researcher followed the systematic procedure in gathering data.

Mode of Data Analysis. This study analyzed data using a modified version of phenomenological data analysis by Moustakas (1994). These steps are as follows:

1. Conducting the qualitative or in-depth interviews with the participants of the study to obtain their lived experiences as street children. In interviewing, the researcher employs informal, in-depth, and semi-structured interview using open-ended questions.
2. Practicing Horizontalization or Developing Reflective Insights. This is the part when statements relevant to the topics are identified, reorganization of information into clusters of meaning, and the convergence of these clusters making a general description of the phenomenon both textually and structurally.
3. Developing Thematic Insights. Themes will then be developed from the statements. Statements will be placed into clusters around each theme. Theme serves as labels for each cluster and represent core components of the experience. Themes will be compared to the transcript to determine if they are accurate reflections of the experience. Themes that are not accurate will be eliminated.
4. Formulation of Eidetic Insights. Individual textural and structural narratives will encompass the experiences of each participant. These individual composite textural-structural descriptions will be combined

to form a composite textural-structural description. In composite description, the common divergent themes, characteristics and processes will be included to provide a clear understanding of the lived experiences of street children.

Results & Discussions

Table 1 shows the profile of the street children in Bacolod City, Negros Occidental, Philippines. Eight participants were selected for this study and were characterized in terms of age, sex, number of siblings, educational attainment, status of schooling, marital status of parents, and classification as street children.

Table 1. Profile of the Street Children in Bacolod City

Participant	Sex	Age	Number of Siblings	Educational Attainment	Status of Schooling	Parents Marital Status	Classification as Street Children
Bea	F	18	8	Grade 7	Quit	Separated	Children of the Street
James	M	13	5	Grade 1	Quit	Orphaned	Children of the Street
Joshua	M	18	5	Grade 5	Quit	Separated	Children of the Street
Marvin	M	11	6	Grade 1	Quit	Separated	Children on the Street
John	M	15	4	Grade 5	Quit	Separated	Children on the Street
Kyla	F	12	5	Grade 7	Quit	Living Together	Children on the Street
Andrew	M	13	2	Grade 8	Quit	Living Together	Children on the Street
Jane	F	14	0	Grade 6	Quit	Living Together	Children on the Street

Table 1 shows that with regards to sex, five (5) of the selected participants are males and three (3) are females. The study of Connolly (1993), as cited in dela Barra (2015) reported that majority of the children living and working in the streets are boys, but it is estimated that between one-fourth to one-third of street children are girls. Studies show that girls have more alternatives to avoid living on the streets than boys, even though this does not make them less vulnerable. Girls may avoid the streets by taking work as domestic servants, staying with other family members, or living with pimps. Fewer girls are on the streets because many of them must stay home to care for their smaller siblings, while the contribution of boys at home is often less valued. Boys are expected, in the face of economic necessity, to earn income, usually by working in the street. In addition,

in a meta-analysis study done by Alem and Laha (2016), altogether, their ultimate sample of 31 studies exposed the presence of 68,014 street children on three different continents. It was noted that 71.84 percent (48,863) of them were boys and the remaining 28.16 percent (19,151) were girls in the composition of street dwellers.

As to age, it can be noted that among the eight participants of this current study, one is eleven years old, one is 12 years old, two are 13 years old, one is 14 years old, one is 15 years old, and two are 18 years old. The data indicate that the average age of these street children is 14 years old. This result is similar to the study conducted by UNICEF (2001) on Street Children in Zimbabwe wherein 260 street children with ages 3 months to 18 years and composed of 220 males and 40 females, constituted the sample of the study. The sample's average age was 13 years. Nearly eight percent (7.6%) of the sample were below the age of five, 24.3 percent were ages six to ten, 42.2 percent were aged 11 to 15, and 25.9 percent were 16 to 18 years of age.

For the number of siblings, one participant among the eight children is the only child, one has two (2) siblings, another one has four (4) siblings, three of them have five (5) siblings, one has six (6) siblings, and one has eight (8) siblings. The profile suggests that most of the street children have four (4) to eight (8) siblings. This is similar to the study done by Le Roux and Smith (1998) wherein the street children included in the baseline belonged to large families with a number of children ranging from 1 to 18. More than half of the sampled street children have from 4 to 7 brothers and sisters (51.9%). Most of the street children are either firstborn (32.6%), second child (25.1 %) or third child (21.3%). Data shows that street children are likely to be the older siblings in the family.

As to the marital status of their parents, half of the participants (4) have separated parents, three comes from a home with parents living together, and one is an orphan. The data show that street children involved in this study belonged to different marital statuses of their parents. The study of Lamberte (1994) provides related circumstances of children. According to him, sample children coming from homes with parents living together have cited other than poor living conditions, being driven away, abuse/maltreatment and disagreements as major reasons for living and/or staying most of the time in the streets. Children with separated parents on the other hand cited equally poor living conditions, disagreements, peer influence and need to secure work to help the parent. As gleaned from these observations, family relationship seems to be problematic among those living with complete parents. This is likely possible given the fact that quite a number of them have stepfathers and/or stepmothers.

As to the highest educational attainment, two participants completed Grade One, two completed Grade 5, one is in Grade 6, two completed

Grade 7, and one is in Grade 8. For their status in school, five of them stopped school and three are currently studying. The data describe the street children as those who are in school and those who are out which must have effect on their behaviors on the street. The results of the study on a Rapid Situation Assessment (RSA) of Street Children in Cairo and Alexandria (2000) obtained data on the educational levels of street children which indicated that 70 percent of the sample dropped out schools during their primary, and 30 percent of them have never attended schools.

The study of Volpi (2002) provided related information as he found out that many street children do not go to school and others perform poorly in class and are at high risk of dropping out. Because of the peculiar nature of their life and problems, the skills required to survive on the street, and the lack of parental support, these children find it difficult to adjust to standard school curricula and school discipline.

As to their classification as street children, three of the participants of this current study are children of the street as they work and live on the street. Five of them are children on the street which indicates that they work on the street at daytime and go home at night.

Lived Experiences of Street Children

Problematic Families

The participants of this study chose to stay or live on the streets rather than suffer hunger, physical assault, and verbal abuse at home. The type of family and the relationship that exists within it contributes to the child leaving their home. Most participants of this study have separated parents, and some of the parents found a new partner in life. This results to a child not taken care of properly.

One participant said:

“Kay bulagay si Mama kag Papa ko. Tiyo ko ang nagpadako sa akon”.
(My mother and father are separated. My uncle raised me.)

Ali et al., (2004) stated that almost 75 percent of the children cited poverty to be the main factor in their living on the street; this included those whose fathers were not working and even some whose fathers were employed. Most children worked to augment the family income. Some 15 percent explained that their being on the street was due to the death of a family member or due to physical abuse at home.

James is an orphan. He lived with his older siblings but because he was always beaten, he preferred to run away from home and stay on the street. To quote, he said:

“Naglayas ko sa balay kay ginakastigo ko sang magulang ko”. (I ran away

from home because my older sibling beat me.)

Deaths of parents/unhealthy relationship of extended families forced them be on a street. Thus, flee to street to search for work was the main reason for joining to a street (freeChimdessa, A., & Cheire, A., 2018).

The rest of the participants have an intact family but are very poor. Some of their parents have no job, so they resort to begging food and working on the streets in order to eat. One participant said:

“Si Papa sa construction ga obra pero subong wala na kay tapos na. Si Mama ara lang sa balay.”(My father works in a construction but now he has no work because it is finished. My mother just stays home.)

Another participant said:

“Para may inug-balon ko. Kis-a wala kwarta si Mama kag si Papa wala man.”(So I will have baon for school. Sometimes Mama has no money, and so as Papa).

Dangerous Daily Activities

A study conducted on Street Children in Zimbabwe (UNICEF (2001) revealed that the majority of the street children gave earning income for their families as their main reason for being on the streets. The children living on the streets have to find a way in order to survive on their own.

In a study done by Embleton (2016), where there were a total of 13 559 participants from 24 countries, of which 21 represented developing countries. The most commonly reported reason for street involvement was poverty, with a pooled-prevalence estimate of 39% (95% CI, 29%-51%). Forty-seven studies included in this review reported family conflict as the reason for street involvement, with a pooled prevalence of 32% (95% CI, 26%-39%).

When asked what she does with the money she gets from selling, one participant said:

“ginabakal pagkaon kag ginahatag kay lola. Ginabakal bulong ni lola.”
(used to buy food and to give to grandmother. To buy her medicine.)

When asked who pushed her to work, she said:

“Ako lang... kay gusto ko makabulig sa pamilya ko”.(Only me...because I want to help my family.)

Ali, M., 2001 in their RSA (Rapid Situation Assessment) is a manifestation of the effect of various interrelated factors leading to the existence of the problem of street children in Egypt. Poverty, family breakdown, and child abuse and neglect, seem to be the leading causes for the problem. They beg for food to eat. Others work in order to have money to buy food. Some of the work they do on the streets are washing cars, looking for scraps, looking after cars and motorcycles being parked, serving as “parking boys” calling passengers for

jeepneys, selling towels, and “paatras” (help drivers when they go backwards). To quote, one participant said:

“Pangayo-ngayo... Pamantay salakyan.” (Begging...Looking after cars.)

Marvin, a physically challenged child due to an accident, suffers the pain of being barefoot under the scorching heat of the sun just to earn money. His exact words when asked why he is not wearing slippers was:

“Kay kung ga tsinelas ko, ga amu na daan tiil ko hu (nagtudlo sa iya tiil nga ga kiwi).” (Because when I wear slippers, my feet go like this.)

When asked if he does not feel the heat, he answered:

“Waay eh, batyag lang na namon ang sakit para ka kwarta eh.” (No, we just suffer the pain just to earn money).

Some of them stay on the street overnight just to earn more. Kyla said:

“Magbuhi kada hapon gakadto ko di. Mga alas singko, alas sais. Tapos alas nwebe kami gapuli. Kis-a gaka agahan kami, kung Biernes sa gab-i bala, kay 24 hours na di sa may McDo.” (After class every afternoon, I go here. Around five or six o’clock. Then we go home at nine o’clock in the evening. Sometimes, we stay overnight, every Friday evening because McDonald’s is 24 hours open.)

A study conducted in Islamabad by Ahmed (2018) said that some children also did other activities for money. 13 children said they sell newspapers, flowers, toys, balloons , etc. for collecting more money and 3 said they wash cars for more money, 6 children said they just go to schools or Madrasa and collect money from people but 18 respondents said they did not do other activities for money but only begging.

Difficult Life

Myburgh et al. (2015) reported that children living on the streets are frequently exposed to physical assault, threats and verbal abuse by other groups of children living on the streets, the general public and the policemen.

Police harassment and assault is a serious hazard to these children. This highlights the powerless position in society of children living on the streets. James explained:

“...Kung diri kami gatulog hu, ginadakop kami kag gina kastigo sang mga

pulis (gatudlo sa sidewalk sa Central Market. Tapos bastrukon ka pa nila”. (...when we sleep here, we are captured and beaten by the policemen (pointing on the sidewalk in Central Market). Then, they punched us on the stomach.)

Some participants are also threatened by the policemen because they are mistaken as “rugby boys”. Whatever crime that happened, it is blamed to them. One participant said:

“Gakasal-an kami gapangawat. Tapos kun may mga gamit nga nabutang kun diin-diin, pareho bi sa motor nga may helmet, gakasal-an kami kami nagkwa...Kay may ara da daan mga sunoy bala, sunoy nga parehas mga rugby boys, gapangwa. Tapos gakasal-an kami na. Tapos indi kami na palibudon mga pila ka adlaw. (We were accused of stealing. For those misplaced things, like a motorcycle with helmet, we are mistakenly accused of stealing it. There are gangsters here, gangsters like rugby boys, stealing. Again, we are mistakenly accused of it. And so, we are not allowed to roam around and sell our merchandise).

This is similar to the street children in India. It was found that all forms of abuse were common, but physical abuse (74%) was highest and the police (25.5%) was an important perpetrator (Srivastava, M., & Shareef, N., 2016).

Some of street children also experienced verbal abuse. Jane said:

“Gina-singgitan kami nila, halin da!” (They shout at us saying, go away!)

Children living on the streets are also exposed to harsh environmental conditions without shelter. One participant said:

“Wala kami tululugan. Kung may masaway di samon, ga rekta kami lakat, lagaw-lagaw kami.” (We have nowhere to sleep. If someone is checking on us, we immediately leave the area.)

For the sake of food, some participants suffer physical pain under the sun just to earn. For some, their lives are put to risk but they choose to continue their activities in order to have money. One participant said:

“Basi bala ma deretsohan ko sang salakyan magpa-atras haw, kag kung mabungguan ko eh. Kulbaan ko.” (I am scared that I will be hit by the vehicle or other passing vehicle when I guide cars backing from the parking lot).

These findings are similar to the results of the study by Chimdessa (2022) that street children are encountering widespread challenges like social network fragmentation, child trafficking, harassment, and shortage of basic needs.

Rugby for Survival

Some street children beg in order to survive. Others work to maintain themselves and their family. Still, some engage in illegal activities. On the other hand, there are those who turn to other “substances” as a means of dealing with the hunger and frustration that they encounter on the streets (Julien, 2022).

Children on the streets display various defense mechanisms against the harsh environment and coping mechanisms in order to survive. One of these is suppression. Suppression is a conscious or semi-conscious decision to postpone attention to a conscious impulse or conflict.

The use of rugby allows children to temporarily forget their sadness and problems and it keeps them alive. One participant said:

“Ga lupad ka.” (It feels like you are flying).

John said:

“Ti kay amu na gapabuhi samon. Gakalimtan namon ang mga gakalatabo sa amon.” (...that’s what make us alive. It makes us forget what’s happening to us.)

West (2003) said that street children who are “successful” have learned and practice a wide range of coping skills, which in most other social contexts would be recognized as highly desirable. For example, abilities to negotiate difficult situations, to bargain, and to assert themselves are attributes that might suit many small enterprises. Many street children might be better perceived as small entrepreneurs. A participant who sells towels when asked if they are shy to approach people said:

“Wala..kay sanay naman kami bi...Amu na kis-a gapakitluoy nga baklan kami. May ara kis-a nga piliton ko gid. Dugay man kis-a nga pilit ko gakabaklan man ko. Ginapilit ko sila. May ara man time nga ginapilit sila gapangakig. Pabay-an ko nalang eh. Lakat nalang ko eh. Dayun didto nalang ko sa sunod nga salakyan.”(No. because we are used to it. There are times that I keep on begging them to buy. After many attempts they buy. I convinced them. There are times that when I keep on insisting, they got angry. I just walk away and go to other customers).

According to De Vries (2009), children on the streets tend to develop networks of friendship with people who have similar lifestyles. Street children are happy being with their group. Although they experience threats and difficulties, they enjoy street life because of their “barkada.” When street children band together, they represent an exceptional companionship system, which replaces the family as a source of emotional and economic support. The group offers protection, support, friendship, and solidarity. Its members generally show strong loyalty to each other. In addition, their use of street jargon gives them a special identity (Le Roux & Smith, 1998).

In a study by Labid, (2006) on Status, Hopes and Aspirations of Street Children in Catbalogan City, Samar, it was revealed that many street children pointed out that peers acted as supportive means for their existence on the street. They helped each other to develop their ability to cope with street life. James said:

“Nalipay ko sa barkada ko nga gabulig sa akon.”(I am happy with my gangs because they help me.)

For children selling towels in the streets, they help each other. They have this “manong”(elder brother) who does the marketing for them. Jane said:

“Ang anu to, ang lalaki to bala. Ang damu-damu to dala. Sang una, sang wala sa, kami gabakal. Subong kay ara sya, sya lang gabakal. Daw sya nalang gapangumpra tapos ga kwa kami sa iya. Wala nya naginansyahan. Wala man sya ga anu kay buot man na sya.”(The man outside. The one with many towels. Now that he is here, he is the one who buys towels for all of us. He is our supplier/patron but he does not get any profit from it. Because he is kind.)

Empty Stomach

One of the major concerns of street children is food. They go out from their homes and stay on the street to basically, feed their empty stomach. Most of them beg to strangers.

Kyla said:

Kaagi ko nga nalipong kay gutom-gutom nagid ko. (I once fainted because I was already very hungry).

When asked about his needs at present, Joshua stated:

“Mga pagkaon, mga bayo, kag makapatindog balay nga kami lang (naga-refer sa iya mga barkada).” (Food, clothing, and to build house for us (referring to his groups).

Neglected and Problematic Schooling

Most of the street children under this study quit school because of the following reasons: expelled from school because he is always involved in fights; no baon; being bullied, hated teacher, and had to work. For them, it would be better to work on streets and earn instead of studying (Dano, K.J. et al., 2016).

A child who was expelled from school said:

“Wala na ‘ko ga eskwela kay gaka kita ko kontra bala haw. Indi nako nila pabalikon.” (I am not studying anymore because I was always involved in fights. They do not want me to return to school.)

Another factor that contributes to the child quitting school were the negative experiences he had with his classmates and teacher. John said:

“Nag-untat ko eskwela kay traidor maestro ko daan. Mga classmate ko nga babayi ginakulit ko nila. Ginasunod nila akon sulat eh. Ako gina k
igan ni ma’am eh”.(I quit school because my teacher is a traitor.

My female classmates teased me. They follow what I write. So our

teacher got angry to me).

Some of the street children incurred absences in school because they have to work. Andrew said:

“Mang carwash kami halin aga asta ugto...dason mang scrap halin alas tres asta als singko.” (We do car washing in the morning until noon...then, look for scraps from three o’clock to five o’clock).

Freedom and Autonomy

Children on the streets, especially those who ran away from home, strives to be free from the negative experience they had there. According to Myburgh et al. (2015), it seems that these children were not actively forced to leave home, but rather decided autonomously to leave and live on the streets. This possibly explains their assertive behaviour and sense of autonomy in their current context. Life on the street is regarded as a better lifestyle and choice than living in a difficult and abusive context. Many children valued their freedom on the street (Kudrati, M., Plummer, M. L., & Yousif, N. D., 2008).

According to an interview to the Head of SDC (Social Development Center), the issue of street children is the most difficult one to resolve because street children are very volatile. They do not want to stay in one place.

Virlanie, an NGO which advocates on street children here in Bacolod City, is an open day center. Although it does not housed street children, it helps them by giving them classes (ALS) and teaching them life skills. Food will only be served if they attended the classes. They are fetched and returned back on the street after. When the researcher asked Marvin if he goes to Virlanie, he said:

“Wala. Ti kay indi ka kagwa.” (No, because you cannot go out).

Street children prefer to go out of the street and beg for food rather than to sit and listen, and be served with food.

Eidetic Insights

Other authors support the finding that street children experience being on the street as a way of life and confirmed that children living on the street are not deviants.

Street children’s family situation is what pushes them to stay on the street. They rather suffer the harsh conditions and threats on the street than be with their families. Another is poverty. These street children understand at a young age how difficult it is to find money and so, they find a way to earn money to provide food not only for their selves but also for their families.

Street children whose parents are separated are school drop-outs. They had a bad experience in school and they stopped schooling. They have no support system to help them hurdle the challenges in school.

Aside from begging, street children resort to any kind of job they can do in order to survive. Some even put their lives at risk. The gang or group they belong to serves as their refuge on the street. It is their group that makes their stay on the street enjoyable. It replaces their families. Varied challenges are being faced by these street children starting from threats from the policemen and guards to the general public, verbal abuse, lack of food and nutrition, inability to maintain personal hygiene, discomfort from having no place to sleep, and others. Street children show different coping strategies to overcome the harsh environment. Using rugby is one. It keeps them alive by not feeling hungry.

Conclusions

Based on the foregoing findings of this research study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Family background of a child plays an important role in his/her life. Street children are products of big families. The absence or lack of parental support in a family leads to the dropping out of the children from school.
2. Poverty is the major contributory factor in children staying or living on the street.
3. The issue of street children is an outcome of deeper issues that cloak the life of a street child.
4. Street children encounter many challenges on the street and they themselves find ways to cope with those harsh realities on the streets.
5. Children on the street hope and dream for a better future.
6. Street children are resilient and they want autonomy in life.

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