

# Physical-Psychosocial Condition of Street Children in Dasmariñas City, Cavite, Philippines

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**Abstract:** This is a study intended to explore and gain insight into the physical and psychosocial condition of street children in Dasmariñas City, Philippines from June, 2014 to February, 2015. The street children were selected based on three street child categories: “*children on the street*”, “*children of the street*”, and “*abandoned children*” Phenomenological research design was utilized using interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) among 12 (twelve) street children aging 7 to 17 years old. Another (4) four key informants were also selected from the barangay officials at streets, officials from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and NGO's from Dasmariñas City, and Philippine National Police Office (PNP) were interviewed. Purposive sampling was employed in determining the participants. The result revealed that generally, street children have disrupted home environments; houses were used to be a drinking spots and drug dens, and extreme family conflicts involving verbal, physical and sexual abuse. Furthermore, street children were forced to contribute in their family income, neglect and abuse were evident within the family, and they cannot even manage to attend school. These are the reasons why they became street children. They did not develop trust from their family or previous environment, but was able to develop autonomy and initiative. Street children labelled themselves as a ragged beggar, homeless person and people who sleep anywhere. Their life is condemned to a meaningless existence by the general public, which cast such with negative label such as *pag-pag (leftovers)*, *pangangalakal (junk)*, *at panonobre (trash)*. Therefore, some of them adopted a negative image, social pathology, crime and expression of prejudice.

**Keywords:** Physical-Psychosocial Condition of Street Children.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Street children are estimated at about one hundred fifty million in both underdeveloped and industrialized countries today. The issue has expected global extents – whether uneducated, malnourished, orphaned, abandoned and handicapped. Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) asserts that “State Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.” Homelessness and street childhood deny each one of those rights. In the Philippines, children discovered themselves unable to bear broken families and broken homes. Their parents appear incapable of providing love and care that are critical to their psychosocial growth. Most often, they are the product of urbanization, and the rural-to-urban migration, which is an indicator of the explosive growth of families in the cities in search of hope and fortune. They come from squatter's areas characterized by overcrowding, substandard housing, and unsanitary dwellings. They suffer from lack of facilities, and services showing below poverty line, which is a reflection of the real condition of the Philippine society.

Among the six cities and seventeen municipalities comprising the province of Cavite, the City of Dasmariñas was the most densely inhabited with a population size making up 18.6 percent of the total provincial population, based on the

2010 Census of Population and Housing (CPH). Dasmariñas City has the highest number of informal settlers with 11,695 households. It also has the largest percentage of household size of eight and above with 13, 240 households out of 115, 690 total households compared with other cities and municipalities in the province of Cavite (CPH, 2007). What is more frightening, the city has the biggest number of street children. They are commonly seen in areas of commercial and shopping malls, parking lots, public terminals, markets, church, schools and parks. They leave home starving and beg on the street where they are defenseless against sexual exploitation, disease, malnutrition, illiteracy, and abuse. This is the result of human neglect, spiritual stagnation, corruption and political irresponsibility that allows and worsens the poverty in an unjust social system.

Moreover, street children are often exposed to various hazards. Many of them are exposed to the hazards of air pollution, food poisoning and lead poisoning. They are also high at risk of accidents and diseases. At such an early age, they learn that survival is the do-or-die of life. They are constantly hurt by rejection, discrimination, and exploitation that make them physically and psychologically wounded as they grow up.

By all means then, the street children embody one of the most neglected and fast growing minorities and one of the biggest challenging issues in the Philippines. It is for the same reason that the researcher decided to make a study of the physical and psychosocial, mental and emotional condition of street children in Cavite.

The responsibility for the goals of child survival and development is not assumed action by the government alone. There are many non-government organizations and foundations that are helping and serving street children but the task remains formidable. Everyone owes these children the best they could give and the sincerest concern they are allowed to have. Everyone must take a step together in rebuilding the nation. For the sake of the children who are the future leaders of the country, we have to take a stand, to join hands and look into the issue of street children with more involvement.

## 2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Phenomenological research design using focus group and interview techniques to gather data was utilized in the study. Following the major procedural steps in the process of phenomenological research, first, we determined if the research problem is best examined using a phenomenological approach to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences of a phenomenon. We recognized and specified the broad theoretical assumptions of phenomenology to fully describe how participants view the phenomenon. We used bracketing out to extract their meaningful experiences from in-depth interviews and multiple interviews with participants. We went through the data (e.g., interview transcriptions) and highlight "significant statements," sentences, or quotes that provide an understanding of how the participants experienced the phenomenon. Next, we developed clusters of meaning from these significant statements into themes to write a description of what the participants experienced (textural description) to come up with a composite description that presents the "essence" of the phenomenon, called the essential, invariant structure (or essence).

Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Snowball sampling was a strategy related to purposive sampling that was used for recruiting participants for focus group discussion and participant observation. These participants came from the list of names of street children that gathered from the key informants. The 12 (twelve) street children were introduced through their addresses or location in order for the researchers to find them. The focus group discussion and participant observation took place at the children's own natural street setting where they work and live.

### Data Gathering Procedure:

In the data gathering procedure, the following ethical considerations were satisfied. Respondents in their proper mindset who were able to make decisions of their own were allowed to read the Informed Consent before they engage themselves to participate in the study. They were neither forced nor threatened if they will not join in the study. The anticipated benefits and risk of the study were thoroughly explained. The interview guide were carefully evaluated by certified licensed Psychologist and the language and tone used were culturally and morally (non-offensive) appropriate. Interview questions from English were translated to the local language consistent with the Filipino culture of respect for better understanding. The approval of the respondents was sought to videotape or record the voice for clearer assessment of the interview. During the interview and debriefing proper, the researchers were guided by a Registered Psychologist. Debriefing after several series of interview was conducted to assure the safety and well-being of the respondents. Tokens were given to the participants after the conduct of the study. In interpreting the data, concepts or themes were extracted

and analyze according to individual experiences. The researchers were guided by a Registered Psychologist to interpret the data. The names of the respondents were withheld and only pseudonyms were used to secure their privacy and confidentiality to remain protected.

### Participants of the Study:

**Table 1. Frequency distribution of participants in (Focus Group Discussion) FGD and Key Informants Interview (KII)**

DATA COLLECTION METHOD	CHILDREN ON THE STREET	CHILDREN OF THE STREET	ABANDONED STREET	KEY INFORMANTS	TOTAL
Interview & Focus Group Discussions	4 (1 female & 3 males)	4 (1 female & 3 males)	4 (1 female & 3 males)	0	12
Key Informant Interviews	0	0	0	4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>

Sixteen (16) people City of Dasmariñas Cavite served as the participants of study as shown in Table 1. Twelve (12) street children were the participants of Interview and Focus Group Discussion; one (1) female and three (3) male “*children on the street*,” one (1) female and three (3) male “*children of the street*,” lastly, one (1) female and three (3) “*abandoned street children*”. The street children were selected based on three street child categories. The three categories were: *children on the street*, *children of the street* and *abandoned children*. **Children on the street** are street-working children who work in the street, and sleep at home. According to Child hope Asia Philippines (CAP, 2013) these children work on the streets but do not live there, having a home to return to after working. Some of them even continue to attend school while working long hours on the streets. These street children are almost unconnected or totally forgotten all the kinds of relationship from their immediate families and relatives. On the other hand, **children of the street** are street-living children are children who work and sleep on the street. According to Child hope Asia Philippines (CAP, 2013), these children often create a sort of family among fellow street children. Some of them still have family ties, but do not visit them and some even see these ties as bad. These street children are only maintaining tenuous relations with their families, visiting them only occasionally. They see the street as their home where they seek shelter, food and companionship. Meanwhile, **abandoned children** are also *children of the street* but are differentiated from that category by the fact that they have cut off all ties with their biological families and are completely on their own, as stated by Agrawal (1999).

### 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### Physical Condition of Street Children:

Physical condition includes diseases, injuries and other physical problems often contribute to poor psychosocial health and sometimes mental illness. More commonly, poor physical health can affect self-esteem and people’s ability to meet their goals, which leads to unhappiness or even depression. In such cases, receiving the best possible treatment for both the physical problem and the resulting psychological consequences is the key to optimal recovery and good psychosocial health.

**Table 2. Physical appearance of street children**

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
<b>Children on the Street</b>	<p>“Lagi po ako naarawan kaya maitim ako, nag-titinda po kasi kami ni papa” (I am always exposed to sunlight because my father and I sell on the street) -SC-EV</p> <p>“Nakakaligo lang po kami kapag nag-kakayayaan kami ng mga kaibigan ko mag-punta sa ilog” (We only take a bath when my friends and I, agreed to go to the river) -SC-M</p> <p>“Minsan lang po ako makaligo kapag nauwi po ako sa amin pero minsan hindi, nakakatamad e magdudumi din naman ako” (We seldom take a bath, we only take a bath when we go home, but most of the time, we don’t, we I get lazy because I would get dirty again) -SC-S</p>
<b>Children of the Street</b>	<p>“Yung iba naming kaibigang may galis kasi kaya nahahawa na din kami” (Some of</p>

**Abandoned Children**

our friends have skin disease and we eventually infected by it”-SC- G

“*Minsan po hindi ako nakakabili ng gamot kasi walang pera, naubos sa DOTA*” (Sometimes, I cannot buy medicine, I spend the money to play DOTA)- SC-EZ

“*Kahit po madudumi yung kinakain namin hindi po kami nag-kakasakit*” (Even we eat dirty left over food, we don’t get sick) –SC-L

“*Natural lang naman ‘te sa batang lansangan na maging madumi hindi ba kasi nga nasa lansangan kami*” (It is only natural for streetchildren like us to get dirty because we are in the street)–SC-R

“*Dapat po talaga madumi kami at nakakaawa kasi naaawa po sila samin, kaya nagbibigay sila ng pera minsan pagkain*” (We need to be dirty and look pitiful so that they will give us money, at times, food) –SC- I

Legend:

\*SC- Street Child + code letter

**Children on the Street:**

Children on the street who are engaged in vending (cigarettes, candy, drinking water, etc.) are more likely to be looking clean than those children who are engaged in begging, they bathe regularly. However, they are also infested by what we called “*lisa*” (Lice) because of staying longer under the heat of the sun. They are small, thin with dark skin and some of them have rashes all over their body. Though they spend their time mostly on the street, at the end of the day, they still come home with their families. A 12-year-old male child on the street claimed that he has a dark skin because of staying longer under the sun while vending together with his father. According to Shukla, (2005) this category of street children spend a substantial portion of their time in the streets, usually as child workers.

Children on the street engaged in begging similarly appear dirty because of staying long on the street, begging and playing with their friends. A 15-year-old male child on the street said they only take a bath when their friends hang out and go to the river. Some of these children on the street return home in the morning to get some sleep and clean themselves, others only go home every after two or three days. A 17-year-old male child on the street claimed that he just take a bath only when he comes home and sometimes he feels lazy to clean himself because he would be dirty again. Children on the street are underheight and underweight. These children suffer from hunger at their respective houses that they ended up looking for food on the street. When a 10-year-old female child on the street asked why she vend on the street, she simply replied, “to have some food.” Lack of food and support, are the reasons behind the tendency of a child to stay and work on the street, and their parents are more likely to be unemployed, illiterate, and uncooperative, less mutually caring and have higher levels of violence (Shukla, 2005).

**Children of the Street:**

These street children do not go home for months, looking dirty with ragged clothes, and do not bath regularly. Children of the street are prone to diseases like skin disease particularly “*Galís*”, asthma, fever and cholera. A 10-year-old female child of the street said that their skin diseases obtained from their fellow street children. It appears that some street children with illnesses simply ignore the pain and continue to work on the street.

Children of the street especially boys, appear to have a strong sense of masculinity and sense of power associated with muscular physique. They seem to be aggressive with dominating behaviours that are threatening to girls, and younger boys. A 10-year-old male child of the street admitted that weak street children are afraid of him; he admitted that he bullies and beats smaller children and steals their money. This macho image is enhanced by carrying out physical exercises and by carrying their merchandise. Physical activities helped these male children to have a strong body for defense during fights, and for attacking people (Mhizha, 2010). Some younger and weaker male street children’s bodies are marked by bruises, wounds and scars, on the head, face, and even around the eyes. The street children sustain such scars and wounds from beatings by the stronger boys.

**Abandoned Children:**

On the other hand, abandoned children are children who live and work on the street without any contact from their families. These street children are prone to diseases, pains in their teeth, ears and eyes. Some children do not buy medication for treatment. A 17-year-old male abandoned child said that he does not want to buy medicine because he uses

his money to go to a computer shop and play internet game particularly, DOTA. Some street children claim that they have strong body resistance to diseases. They can survive any illnesses from eating left over foods, sometimes found in trash bins. A 10-year-old male abandoned child said that even though they eat dirty foods, they can resist diseases.

The physical features of these abandoned street children who are engaged in begging and working (vending, parking, loading, *panonobre*, etc.) present dirty appearance because they have no regular place to sleep and stay. A 16-year-old male abandoned child said that it is natural for the street children to look dirty because they live on the street. They are underheight and underweight for their age because of hunger and food deprivation. They have skin diseases and commonly dark skinned because of too much exposure under the sun. These children do not bath regularly, and do not put clean clothes on. Dirty and ragged appearance attracts more attention from the people as it shows that they are really needy. A 14-year-old female abandoned child said that it is necessary for street children to look dirty and poor while begging so that people, feel pity on them and give them some food or money as their means to survive.

### Mental Condition of Street Children:

The mental condition of children on the street, children of the street, and abandoned children are interpreted and extracted into four themes including: (1) future goals; (2) self-esteem; (3) misbehavior; and (4) substance abuse.

### Future Goals:

The street children have different ways on how they view themselves in the future. They have a positive and negative outlook about their lives in the society. Their dreams and goals are representations on how they perceive themselves in the future.

Table 3. Future goals of street children

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
Children on the Street	<i>"Te ako gusto kong maging President. Hindi na kami magugutom. Saya nun!"</i> (Sis, I want to become a President. We will no longer be hungry. It's fun!)-SC- K
	<i>"Ako po gusto ko maging pulis"</i> (Me, I want to become a police officer)-SC- M
	<i>"Ako, sundalo para maipagtatangol ko pamilya at kaibigan ko"</i> (Me, I want to become a soldier so I can protect my family and my friends) -SC- EV.
	<i>"Gusto ko po maging engineer para hindi na ko nasa lansangan"</i> (I want to become an engineer, so I will no longer be a street child!) -SC-S.
Children of the Street	<i>"Wala, ayoko tumanda, ayoko lumaki, ayoko mag kaasawa, wala akong pangarap sa buhay ko"</i> (None, I don't want to get old, I don't want to grow big, I don't want to get married, I don't have dreams in life!) -SC- A
	<i>"Gusto ko pa din po pumasok kaya lang walang pera at saka ipapang kain ko na lang yung ipapang pasok ko"</i> (I still wanted to go to school, but we don't have money, I'd rather spend the money for food than spend it in schooling!)-SC- G
	<i>"Okay lang po kahit di na ko makapag-aral basta makakain araw-araw"</i> (It's ok with me not to go to school so long as I eat everyday) -SC- C
Abandoned Children	<i>"Gusto ko din po maging pulis dahil kapag pulis po nirerespeto, e gusto ko po irerespeto ako"</i> (I also wanted to become a police officer, because the police officer gains respect, I also wanted to be respected) -SC- EZ
	<i>"Gusto ko, hindi na ko batang kalye, para hindi na nila ko titingnan ng masama at pag-uusapan"</i> ( I want not to be a street child anymore so that they will no longer belittle me and talked about) -SC-I
	<i>"Kahit madudumi kami at walang tirahan karapatan pa din namin na irespeto kami"</i> (Even if we are dirty and homeless, we have the right to be respected) -SC- R

### Children on the Street:

Some street children are aspiring of a very high-status jobs, majority of them have dreams such as becoming a police, a soldier, a pilot, and a President of the Philippines. A 10-year-old female child on the street proudly declared with the smiling face that she wants to become a President, so that they would no longer be hungry. A 15-year-old male child on

the street confidently asserted that he wants to become a police. A 17-year-old male child on the street said that he wants to be an engineer so that he would not be on the streets anymore. These children are hoping for their life to change, that one day, things might be different. These children on the street have a more positive outlook towards their future, their dreams and their profession they wanted to be years from now (Mhizha, 2010).

#### Children of the Street:

A 9-years-old male child of the street once asked what he wants to be, years from now, he barely said, “Nothing!”, he does not want to get older, he does not even want to grow bigger, he does not want to get married and he does not have dreams in life. Some of these children think of going to school but because of lack of financial support and guidance from their parents, they refuse to attend to school. A 10-year-old female child of the street said that she still wanted to go to school but she does not have money, she would rather use the money to buy food instead of going to school. For them, there is more important thing to prioritize instead of going to school, such as working and begging on the streets to earn money and survive. According to Larsen (2003), some street children see no bright future ahead of them.

#### Abandoned Children:

A 17-year-old male abandoned child said, when he grows up, he wants to be a police man so that he would gain respect from people. Most street children value the same thing in general: being respected, having their own homes, work, family and study as a form of social mobility. Society has a prejudiced view of the street as a place devoid of values and morals (Castro, 1997; Hecht, 1998; and Swart, 1988 cited by Rizzini, 2003). But not all street children who experience prejudice want to display behavior that they are “bad” as many people perceive. Although, the intention of street children who live on the street is essentially associated to their survival and security, their dreams are often related to overcoming the prejudices they suffer in their daily life, and in their dream of acquiring basic needs and higher status valued by society. A 14-year-old female abandoned child said that people will not look at her as a bad person if she is no longer a street child.

#### Self-esteem of Street Children:

The perceptions of street children about themselves consist of positive self-image and sense of self-worth. Street children with high self-esteem generally have a positive outlook and satisfied with themselves most of the time. They recognize their own unique qualities to face challenges and take risks. Street children who live up to have a positive self esteem in themselves are more likely to have a positive attitude, happy and more productive in their endeavor.

Table 4. The Self-esteem of street children

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
Children on the Street	<p>“Yung ibang bata na kasing edad ko hindi kaya mga ginagawa ko kaya mas magaling ako sa kanila. Hindi ko na kailangang mag-aral.” (Other children, similar my age, cannot do what I can do, that’s why I’m better than them, I don’t need to go to school.) - SC- EV</p> <p>“Ako ‘te masaya ako kasi bata pa lang ako kaya ko ng mabuhay mag-isa, e yung ibang bata hindi nila kaya” (Sis, me, I’m happy because at my young age, I can live by my own, others kids, they can’t.) -SC- M</p> <p>“Kahit kung ano-ano masasamang sinasabi ng mga tao tungkol sa akin, masaya pa din ako sa sarili ko atsaka sa mga kaya kong gawin!” (Though, there are many negative criticisms were thrown upon me, I’m still happy and proud of what I can do!) –SC- K</p> <p>“Masaya po ako sa kung ano ako, pero gusto ko pa din po ‘syempre maging mayaman” (I am happy for what I am, of course I still wanted to become rich.)-SC- S</p> <p>Wala naman akong pakialam sa sinasabi nila basta ako, hindi naapektuhan at gagawin ko gusto ko.” (I don’t give a damn to other people say, I’m not affected, I will do what I want to do.)-SC- C</p>
Children of the Street	<p>“Naiinis ako ‘pag kung ano-ano tinatawag nila sa akin e hindi naman nila ko kilala.” (I’m pissed off to whatever they call me, they don’t even know me.)-SC- A</p> <p>“Nahihiya ako sa itsura ko, madumi, ‘saka laging may dala-dalang mga bakal at bote.”</p>

**Abandoned Children**

(I feel ashamed with my looks, dirty and always carrying steel and empty bottles.)–SC-G

*“Gusto ko din po kagaya ng normal na bata lang para hindi na nila ko pandidirian”* (I still wanted to be like normal kids so they won't get rid of me.) –SC-J

*“Dahil kung ano-ano din naman ang binibintang nila sakin edi ayun tinotoo ko na kase gumawa kanang masama at hindi sa kanila e masama pa din naman tingin nila sa akin at sa mga kagaya ko”* (Because they accused me of something I do not commit, I tend to make it real because whether I do bad or not, I would still appear bad and to the rest of streetchildren like me.)–SC- EZ

*“Nasasaktan po ako kapag sinisigawan at minumura ako ng mga tao, napapaiyak at saka nahihiya po ako.”* (I feel hurt when people shout at me and say foul words, I cry and I feel ashamed.)–SC- L

*“Masakit yung mga binibintang nila pero hinahayaan ko na lang, nasanay na din ako, di naman totoo e.”* (It is hurting, being accused of something, but I can't do anything about it, I'm used to it uh, it's not true, anyway!!) –SC- R

**Children on the Street:**

These children have hopes and sense of dignity and responsibility to overcome difficult situations. A 12-year-old male child on the street proudly claimed that other children with the same age like him cannot do what he can daily do, which is why, according to him, he is much better than other kids and he does not need to go to school. Many of them value street life as a learning process, and see themselves as resilient survivors in an environment that is harsh and destructive to their moral beliefs. A 15-year-old male child on the street proudly pronounced that he is happy because at his young age he can live and work all by himself unlike other children. “Children of the street” value themselves for what they are. They also dream to become productive in society in the future while keeping part of their street identity and values. A 10-year-old female child on the street said that even though people say bad things about her, still she was not ashamed for who she is and what she can do. They recognize their own abilities in order to overcome hardship and regret their offensive label, also through their harsh experiences; street children obtain valuable practical skills and survival instincts (Shukla, 2005).

**Children of the Street:**

Some street children hate how other people look at them as if they are not human being but others do not really care at all. A 10-year-old male child of the street claimed that he does not give a damn of what other people say about him. He does not want to be affected on what they say and happily do whatever he wanted to do. Similarly, a 9-year-old male child of the street said that he hates when other people call them different “label” when in fact, people do not know who they really are. The street children are aware of socially constructed images of “street children,” such as that of the “poor kid” or “young thief” and they adopt these, as required, to serve as survival mechanism (Rizzini, 2003). Street children are being discriminated because of their rascal behaviour and nasty appearance, discrimination leading street children to hate themselves and their appearance. A 10-year-old female child of the street said that they are embarrassed on their physical appearance, untidy looks carrying plastic bottles and steel. As stated by Larsen, (2003) street children are united through the experience of discrimination which they encounter daily, a large number of them showed a strong desire to be “normal,” that is, like any other children. A 7-year-old male child of the street said that he wanted to be a normal child like other non-street children so that others will not be disgusted on him.

**Abandoned Children:**

Streetchildren feel hurt and ashamed when accused as “thief” or “robbers.” A 17-year-old male abandoned child decided to make the accusations real because even though he do not do anything wrong, people's negative perception about him would not be changed. Similarly, a 10-year-old male abandoned child said that he feel pity on himself and humiliated when other people yell at him in disrespectful way. According to Mararia, (2011) street children in their quest for acceptance by those who are indifferent, or who despise or belittle them, the society in general, the street children related in many ways in which they maintain their self-esteem. This manifests itself in how they take care of themselves– how they dress, what they eat– and in the way they conduct their affective relations and in what they dream of for their future.

**Misbehavior of Street Children:**

When street children are miserable, they either internalize their misery or act it out. They usually appear as bad or misbehave such as using abusive language, being aggressive or violent, damaging property, stealing, lying, refusing to comply with requests or expectations at school or home, or displaying misconduct.

**Table 5. Misbehavior of street children**

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
<b>Children on the Street</b>	<p>“Pag sobrang sabog minsan, magiging na lang ako na sa baranggay hall na pala ako.” (When I’m intoxicated, I sometimes find myself in Barangay hall when I wake up!)- SC-S</p> <p>“Mas gusto ko dito sa lansangan kasama mga kaibigan ko kaysa sa bahay.” (I love being in the street together with my friends rather than stay home.) – SC-EV</p> <p>“Gusto ko na yung ganito minsan umuuwi ako sa bahay, kasi po ang hirap! Umaasa pamilya ko sa akin. Iisipin ko pa lang kung anong kakainin ng mga kapatid ko para na akong mababaliw.” (I prefer this, I seldom go home, It is hard because my family relies on me. Thinking of what my siblings would eat for the next meal would drive me crazy.) – SC-M</p> <p>“Mas okay sa kalsada kaysa sa bahay, dito kumikita ako.” (It is better off in the street instead of being at home because here, I earn.)–SC-K</p>
<b>Children of the Street</b>	<p>“Binubugbog ko yung mga batang pumupunta sa Mang Inasal. Kami lang ng mga kaibigan ko ang pwedeng humingi ng pagkain doon.” (I beat those kids who go to Mang Inasal (fast food chain). We, together with my friends can only beg for food there.)– SC-C</p> <p>“Hindi na ako nakain basta makapag laro ng DOTA.” (I’d rather not eat so long as I can play DOTA) – SC-J</p>
<b>Abandoned Children</b>	<p>“Nagnakaw na kami ng kaldero sa puregold, haha tapos ibebenta namin” (We steal metal pot in Puregold (supermarket), laughs, then we sell it.)– SC-A</p> <p>“Minsan sinasadya namin maging madumi para maawa sila, minsan nga ginugupit ko pa damit ko e.” (Sometimes, we really intend to appear dirty so that people will pity on us, at times, we intentionally tear our clothes uh.)– SC-G</p> <p>“Kelangan talaga mag-sinungaling minsan para may maawa at magbigay ng pera.” (It is really important to lie at times so that they will pity us and they will give us money.)– SC-EZ</p> <p>“Hindi naman masama yung mga ginagawa namin. Yung mga tao lang talaga ang nag-iisip na masama ang pag-ta-trabaho sa kalsada.” (What we do is not bad. Only people think bad about our working in the street.)–SC-I</p> <p>“Minsan gusto ko na lang mamatay kapag gutom na gutom na ako, pagod, at nahihirapan na.” (Sometimes, I want to die when I feel terribly hungry and tired.) – SC-R</p>

**Children on the Street:**

Some children on the street reportedly lost their self-control due to substance use. A -17 year-old male *child on the street* claimed that when under the influence of rugby, he lost his self-control and awareness, and then he would find himself in the Barangay hall. Children on the street, furthermore, claimed that the found freedom in the street is much better than staying at home with their family. A 12-year-old male child on the street asserted that he is happier when he hangs out with friends wandering on the streets rather than staying home. Similarly, a 15-year-old male *child on the street* claimed that he sometimes like visit his home but his heart is breaking because thinking what his siblings will eat for the next meal would drive him crazy. Vending is really not enough. Children find that their "living conditions on the street are often better than those at home" (Emmanuel, 2011).

**Children of the Street:**



These street children interpret their street lives as an opportunity of territorial ownership wherever they want. A 10-year-old male child of the street claimed that they hurt other fellow street children who went to *Mang Inasal* (fast food chain). Their friends are the only one allowed to beg food from that establishment. They are the bullies of the territory. These children claimed that they are the only one who can collect food from fast food chains, and claimed that they are the boss of other street children. Such findings show that street children believe that they can control the urban territory and claim to be able to guard and monitor. Another viral activity of children of the street is playing video games. Some are addicted to it, that they used the money they earned to play internet games such as DOTA. They prefer to skip meal to have fun by playing internet games. Children of the street are also engaged in activities similar with children on the street such as “*panonobre*” (distributing empty envelopes to each passengers as a form of begging accompanied by singing), vending, “*pag-pag*” (hunting left over food in the garbage), and taking intoxicating substances. These children confessed that they are wise enough and able to perform these *street smart behaviors* are their *survival mechanisms* such as stealing and bullying. A 9-year-old male child of the street claimed they stole kitchen utensils, anything that is metal. They sell it to junk shops for them to have something to eat. Another 10-year-old female child of the street claimed they make themselves look intentionally dirty; sometimes they intentionally tear their clothes to look more pitiful and gain sympathy. The longer a child stays on street; the more likely that he/she will enter into illegal activities in order to survive. These are attempts to support themselves on street, which is why they try to find work, seek money, and engage in theft (Ennew, 1994).

#### Abandoned Children:

Lying is also common among street children to get sympathy to people as a mean to earn money for their daily survival. A 17-year-old male abandoned child claimed that sometimes it is really necessary to lie in order for them to given money, because other people do not feel pity on them if they will not use deception. A 14-year-old male abandoned child conessed that lying is not illegal; they argued that vending is a lot better than stealing. However, some police officers prohibit them to vend for some reason. Due to restrictions, some abandoned children reported having pondered committing suicide. A 16-year-old male abandoned child confessed he thought of ending his life because of extreme and simultaneous feeling of hunger, physical fatigue and everyday hardships encountered. Thus, abandoned children showed some self-destructive tendencies. These tendencies include fighting with a dangerously armed civilian, walking carelessly across busy roads. It emerged that some male street-living children viewed themselves as fearless one. A 10-year-old male abandoned child claimed that people like them who sleep anywhere have neither sense of fear nor danger.

#### Substance use:

Substance use by street children greatly influences the level of self-esteem and self-efficacy to meet their goals. They use substance to cover up up their feeling of hunger, fatigue and depression. This is their way to set aside the present problem and escape from reality.

Table 6. Substance Abuse by street children

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
Children on the Street	<p>“<i>Kapag nag-sosolvent kami ng mga kaibigan ko, nawawala yung gutom ko tapos sabog lang kami saka masaya sa pakiramdam.</i>” (When friends and I sniff solvent, we do not feel hungry and we feel elated.)- SC-S</p> <p>“<i>Alam kong mali ang mag-bisyo, pero hindi naman ako baliw. Minsan lang naman ako magtsongke eh. Yosi minsan lang din. Alak pagkasama ko sila (SC-R)</i>” (I know that it is wrong to have a vice, but I’m not insane, at times, I take drugs, smoke cigarette and drink alcohol when together with (SC-R))-SC-K</p>
Children of the Street	<p>“<i>Mas masayang mag-usap kapag may iniinom po, tapos matutulog ka na lang. Bukas umaga na ulit.</i>” (It is happier to talk when drinking (alcohol), then go to sleep. Tomorrow, it’s morning again!) – SC-C</p> <p>“<i>Pumupunta ako ng Pasay araw-araw para lang makabili ng solvent. Dito kasi bawal dito yoon kaya sumasakay na lang ako ng jeep kasama ko pinsan ko.</i>” (I go to Pasay (Manila) everyday just to buy solvent. Here, (in Cavite), strictly minors are not allowed to buy, so I ride a jeepney together with my cousin.) – SC-A</p> <p>“<i>Minsan ‘te kapag naka solvent ako para kong wala sa sarili, di ko alam</i></p>

*nangyayari.*" (Sometimes sis, when we are intoxicated by solvent, I loose myself, I don't know what's happening.) – SC-G

*"Kapag po nakatira ako wala akong pakialam sa paligid ko, basta masayang pakiramdam lang yung nararamdaman ko."* (When I'm under the influence of solvent, I don't give a damn about my surrounding; It's just that I feel happy.) – SC-J

#### Abandoned Children

*"Sa amin lang kasi yung kinikita naming pera kaya madalas kaming mag-yosi kahit anong oras namin gusto."* (The money we earn is only ours, so we can smoke cigarette, any time we want to.)– SC-R

*"Hindi na namin maiwasan ang rugby at alak, hangga't may pera kami at oras magkasama bumibili kami. Rugby, kasi madalas gutom. Alak kapag marami kaming kasama para mag-kwetuhan at makatulog."* (We can't get rid of rugby and alcohol, so long as we have the money and time together, we buy. Rugby, because we often get hungry. Alcohol, when we are too many, bonding together to chitchat and to fall asleep.)– SC-L

*"Yung pera ko pinambibili ko lang ng solvent tapos wala na para sa pagkain."* (My money, I used to buy for solvent, for food, no more.)– SC-I

*"Kapag nag-nanakaw kami ng pinsan ko madalas po e nakatira kami."* (When cousin and I, commit theft, oftentimes, we are intoxicated.) – SC-EZ

#### Children on the Street:

Stressors in the street and stressors at home brought some mental problems among children on the street. It indicates that the stress at home appears to be the reason why staying on the streets becomes their coping mechanism. These children used substances in order to relieve the stress both "on the streets" and "at home". The substances they usually used include; *rugby, marijuana, cigarette and alcohol (beer)*. They use rugby so that they would not feel the hunger, stress and fatigue. A 17-year-old male child on the street said that when they sniff solvent, they do not feel Starved and they were just feeling *high* and happy all the time. Moreover, it diminishes a sense of Shame to such that they can do any acts with courage. A 10-year-old female child on the street claimed that they are aware of what they are doing and their vices are wrong but she protested that they are not insane. Both boys and girls sniff rugby, smoke cigarette and drink alcohol (beer) usually with their neighbors of their same age in order to offset stress and other hardships especially at home.

#### Children of the Street:

Children of the street often drink alcohol such as beer and vodka to stop thinking about their stress, being away from their families and bear the situation. Their conversations form a social support or bonding as they operate in a group. They give each other's advice, share about their daily encounter in the street and discuss the next place to go. A 10-year-old male child of the street claimed that they are happier to share stories when there is an alcohol, then after that, they will just sleep, and then tomorrow is another day. According to Flynn, (2008) one of the most significant aspects of street-life is a social network among children.

Children of the street also sniffed solvent. A 9-year-old male child of the street claimed he went to Pasay every day just to buy some solvent. He rides in Jeepney, because it is prohibited to sell solvent among children in minor age at Dasmariñas City. Children who use such psychoactive substances like solvent admittedly are "out of their senses." A 10-year-old female child of the street said that she was like "out of her mind" when she was under the influence of solvent. The same street child claimed that they love the feeling of being elated and hunger-free under the influence of solvent. Children of the street claimed that they feel no sense of belongingness to the community and people seemed to be unreachable. At times, they feel embarrassed and out- of-placed from their environment and solvent/ rugby is the only substance that they can turn to. A 7-year-old male child of the street said that when they are under the influence of drugs they feel nothing but "happiness;" they do not seem to care what is going on around them. Since those substances are very easy to access and affordable, children develop the habit to use them to overcome hunger, stress, shame, and depression. It is also claimed that children who sniff substances like solvent, feel themselves more confident and courageous to do anything (Hong, 2005).

**Abandoned Children:**

Abandoned children also sniff rugby, and smoke cigarette to alleviate stress, hunger, sadness and shyness. They reported to be more addicted to the use substance because they do have a session together with their peers. A 16-year-old male abandoned child claimed they owned their money that is why they can buy cigarettes anytime they want. They pamper themselves after the hard work on the street. A 10-year-old male abandoned child claimed they cannot cease using rugby and alcohol as long as they have the money and they are all happy together. Rugby is use when they are starving. Alcohol when they want to enjoy being together and the need to fall asleep easily. They provide protection, confidence and sense of belongingness to each and every one of them. According to Bolton (2007) to make up for the stress in the street, the street children used intoxicating substances, also to get rid the feeling of hunger, stress and usually cold weather.

Street children are quickly and easily addicted and tend to spend whatever petty cash they have for drugs, rather than on the other necessities specially food. A 14-year-old female child on the street said that most of the time her money is spent in buying solvent and nothing left for food. Instead of buying a food, she would rather purchase solvent to forget the starvation. The use of drugs is part of the reality of street life. Several studies have shown that around 80 percent of street children use drugs regularly (Shukla, 2005).

Consequently, substances influence street children to engage in stealing and fighting. A 17-year-old male abandoned street child claimed that most of the time when they steal things from people they are under the influence of solvent. The substances the street-living children abused sometimes appeared to make them lose their self-control (Mhizha, 2010).

**Emotional Condition of Street Children:****Table 7. Emotional Experiences of street children**

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
Children on the Street	<p><i>"Iniiwasan po namin antukin pag walang bumibili kaya naglalaro kami. Masaya po dito kasi madaming tao. Buhay na buhay palagi kaya minsan lang po kami mapagod at antukin."</i> (We refrain from falling asleep when there is no customer, that's why we play. We are happy when there are many people. We are always alive-alert, that's why, we seldom get tired and sleepy.) – SC-K</p> <p><i>"Kahit po madalas gutom ako, lagi pa din po akong masaya, lagi po kami naglalaro para malimutan na nagugutom kami."</i> (Although we often get hungry, we are always happy; we always play so we forget that we are hungry.)- SC-EV</p>
Children of the Street	<p><i>"Nakakainis yung mga hindi nagbibigay ng pera. Mga panget sila! Di nila kami naiintindihan. Buti nga sila nakakapasyal, kumakain sa labas eh."</i> (It's irritating those people who do not give us money. They are ugly! They don't understand us. Better, they can afford to unwind and dine uh!) – SC-J</p> <p><i>"Hindi ko naiisip mag-pakamatay kahit na mahirap dito sa kalsada."</i> (I never thought of committing suicide, eventhough, life here in the street is tough!) – SC-A</p> <p><i>"Kapag gutom ako tahimik lang ako minsan natutulog na lang, nanghihina ako kapag hindi nakakain e, pero kapag nakakain ako masaya ako."</i> (When I'm hungry, I tend to keep silent, sometimes, I got to sleep, I feel weak when I have nothing eat, but when I got the chance to eat, I feel happy.)– SC-G</p>
Abandoned Children	<p><i>"Nagugutom at naiingit ako kapag nakakita ako ng mga tao na nakain ng masarap, masuwerte ako kung bibigyan nila ako 'pag nanghihingi ako."</i> (I feel hungry and envy when I see people eating delicious food, I would be lucky if they would give me, once I beg.) - SC-L</p>

**Children on the Street:**

Children on the street are happy if they have money and food, otherwise, sad. They have full of energy because their work demands it. Selling, assisting parking, and calling out for passengers require a lot of vigour. A 10-year-old female child on the street claimed that they keep away from being sleepy when there is no customer yet, so they always play together. Similarly, some adolescent street children also energetic when they are at work. They are emotionally consistent; their

facial expression shows some courage and happiness. A 12-year-old male child on the street said that even if he is hungry, he is still happy; he plays together with his friends to forget the feeling of hunger.

### Children of the Street:

Children of the street at first, exhibited “social withdrawal”; they are very hard to approach as though they develop distrust to people. It took three days for the researchers to establish rapport with these children. On the first day of encounter, one of them immediately ran away for no apparent reason. Majority of them do not establish consistent eye contact and often looked down when talking. Ironically, they are not ashamed to people when they beg for money or food. Children of the street manifest antisocial behaviors; they are involved in stealing, shouting at people, fighting, eating left over foods and taking a bath in public. It is common to hear the street children shouting rude words at each other and even to strangers. For instance, a 7-year-old male child of the street asked for money from a certain middle-aged man. This man fearfully but humbly told the street child that he has no money. In response, this particular street child shouted foul words towards the man. Generally, street children appeared to be disrespectful among elders. According to the key informant from the DSWD, when they warn street children to fight, children would talk to them in a very disrespectful manner and utter foul words.

These street children are emotionally strong; they do not have any reported thoughts of committing suicide. A 9-year-old male child of the street claimed that he does not even think of committing suicide, though life on the street is hard. Children of the street can come back and forth at home to be with their family anytime they wish. For them, it is still happier being on the street even if it is hard; and they do not wish to end their life.

### Abandoned Children:

Abandoned street children are resilient in handling difficult situations. They love to play around with their fellow street children. They always seek attention and do not hesitate to talk about their experiences. They are fond of answering mathematics problem, drawing and listening to short stories. A 16-year-old abandoned child said it has been such a long time since the last time he used paper and pencil.

Whenever these street children are on the street, they experience many adversities from food deprivation, clothing, shelter and other basic necessities of life. A 10-year-old male abandoned child said that he feels “envy” whenever he sees other children eating delicious food and wearing nice suit. Nonetheless, once these children are on the street, their experiences are unified by a series of adverse material circumstances, which contribute to the development of a common culture, the culture of the street, and a strong social identity based on their awareness of having been stigmatized and rejected by mainstream society (Richter, 2003).

### Social Condition of Street Children:

The social condition of children on the street, children of the street, and abandoned children are grouped into three factors namely: (1) socio-economic status; (2) family background; and (3) academic history.

### Socio-Economic Status of the Family:

Street children are basically in the *grass root* level of socio-economic condition. They have no opportunity of moving about in a higher and wider circle of society. They do not get the chance to socialize with a large number of people from all walks of life that would naturally helped to improve their status quo.

**Table 8. Socioeconomic status of street children**

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
Children on the Street	<p>“Konti konti lang po ang kinikita sa panonobre, barya barya lang po. Suwerte na kung makakita ng 120.” (I only earn a little in begging using envelop, only coins. Lucky, if see Php 120.00 on it.) - SC-EV</p> <p>“Nagtatawag ako ng pasahero sa Langkaan sa FCIE, ako lang pwede mag tawag doon, ako lang kakilala ng mga driver doon e, pag may ibang umepal patay sakin.” (I call passengers in Langkaan (Cavite) near FCIE, I am the only recognized by the jeepney drivers. If someone attempts to take my place, he will be dead!)– SC-M</p> <p>“Sa hapon ako nag-titinda kasi madami ng tao pag hapon, malakas kita ko, ako lang pwede</p>

**Children of the Street**

*mag tinda doon (Robinson Dasma) pwede sila mag-tinda sa umaga, basta teritoryo ko 'yon 'pag gabi.*" (I vend every afternoon because there are many people, I earn a lot better, I am the only one who can vend there (Robinson Dasma). Others (streetchildren) can also go there to vend only in the morning, but at night, it is my territory!) – SC-K

*"Kung masipag ka maghanap ng makakalakal kikita ka ng malaki, kaso madami na ding batang nangalakal ngayon kaya suwertehan na lang kung makakanap ka ng madami.*" (If you are hard working in looking-sorting garbage, you will earn a lot better, however, there are many fellow streetchildren competitors doing the job, that's why, you're lucky if you find a lot (of valuable garbage items to sell) - SC-S

*"Nagnakaw po ako ng five thousand doon sa mga estudyante sa court naglalaro ng volleyball."* (I stole worth Php 5,000.00 among students playing in the volley ball court.)– SC-C

*"Tinutulungan ko yung mga may kotse na mag-park at pag-aalis na sila sa McDo e ako ulit ang titingin sa kalsada ganon lang, may limang piso na ako. Swerte na yun minsan walang binibigay e"* ( I'm assisting car drivers to park their car, and when they leave McDonald (fast food chain), I will assist again to look at the road when they leave the place, that's it, they will give me 5.00 pesos for that.) – SC-A

*"Nag-sisinungaling ako minsan, para mag-ka pera, pero kasi naman, minsan mag-sinungaling at hindi, hindi pa din sila magbibigay"* (I tell a lie at times, so I can have money, but sometimes, whether I tell a lie or not, some people will not really intend to give money.) – SC-G

**Abandoned Children**

*"Maliit lang kita sa panghihingi pag-malaki na kasi kami di na kami bibigyan, kalimitan yung mga maliliit na bata lang binibigayan ng mga tao, swerte na kung makaka bente."* (Only little earning we get from begging especially when we get older, no one gives me money. Mostly small children are given money by people. Unlike us, lucky if we get 20 (pesos a day)) – SC-R

*"Kumakatok kami sa mga bahay bahay kukunin ang basura nila tapos po kukunin namin lahat ng pwedeng ibenta. Minsan may mga laruan, masaya na ako nun! Hahaha. Lahat ng pwedeng gamitin kukunin ko."* (We knock door-to-door and we collect their garbage, then we will get those items we can sell (in the junkshop). Sometimes, there are toys, I'm happy with that, hahaha. I will get anything that is valuable!) – SC-L

**Children on the Street:**

Vending is one of the primary sources of income generating for children on the street. A10-year-old female child on the street sells candies, cigarettes and drinking water on the streets. The street child starts at three in the afternoon and ends at seven in the evening near the Robinson's mall at Dasmariñas, she claimed that she solely owned that small vending area. Children on the street have some sense of territorial ownership in the place where they vend. Another 15-year-old male child on the street, who makes a living by shouting out loud the place of destination of the jeepney drivers to call out for passengers at First Cavite Industrial Estate (FCIE) in *Langkaan*, Cavite. He claimed that none of the fellow streetchildren can come to his "territorial space" without his consent. If some street children attempt to go to his place and do the same thing for a living, they will be driven out because he is the only one recognized by the jeepney drivers. Similarly, a 17-year-old male child on the street make a living by hunting and collecting garbage plastic bottles, used papers and pieces of steel, bronze and other metals in different trash bins scattered all over the city to sell it in a junk shop. This job is known as "*pangangalakal*." The street child asserted that this kind of job is a "One time, big time job", that one is lucky when they had picked a lot of plastics and steel. With this kind of job, there are lots of competitors, because majority of the fellow street children are also engaged with this kind of survival job. On the other hand, street children who are engaged in begging are really small and slim. This street survival job is known as "*panonobre*." *Panonobre* is a form of begging done by distributing empty almost dirty and crumpled white envelopes where one can voluntarily put donation, while waiting, the streetchild may sing a song or play improvised instrument made of can to produce music before they will collect the envelopes they distributed among the jeepney passengers. They will sing or play improvised musical instrument to catch attention and seek sympathy. This activity is too risky and annoying to some jeepney passengers and jeepney drivers, hence, streetchildren neither produce money nor gain sympathy. Most often than not, the jeepney driver gest

angry and does not want them to ride in their jeep to beg because when they jump over their jeep, it is still running. They are risking their lives and this makes the jeepney drivers worry about the risks that these street children may come across. A 12 year-old male child on the street claimed that he earns an average of one hundred twenty pesos (Php 120) a day. For easy survival, some of them are forced to engage in snatching and stealing.

### Children of the Street:

Some “children of the street” are engaged in immoral behavior including lying, stealing and fighting. A 10-year-old female child of the street said that to be able to have money, she makes lies to people, but sometimes whether she tells a truth or lies, it does not make a difference. Most people neither give them money nor food. Some of these street children practice the art of snatching and stealing. The items they snatch and steal includes food, cell phones, money, clothes and other valuable materials. A 10-year-old male child of the street confessed that he once stole money that cost P5, 000.00 from the group of students playing volleyball.

Children of the street are also engaged in survival jobs like helping out jeepney drivers by parking and loading passengers by shouting out loud the place of destination, wiping out the front shield of the jeepneys and cars. But this kind of survival job does not attract more money among streetchildren because it depends on the jeepney drivers and car owners if they will give them a tip or donation. A 9-year-old male child of the street claimed that sometimes drivers do not give donation, but when they give, usually they receive an average of Php 5.00 per driver. They earn approximately P50.00 up to P150.00 a day.

### Abandoned Children:

There is a tremendous age difference on the nature of survival job among abandoned street children. Younger abandoned street children are generally engaged in begging, and usually earn more money than their older counterparts because people feel that older street children are old enough to work for themselves unlike the younger children. The younger street children make more money because they elicited more sympathy (Larsen, 2003). A 16-year-old abandoned child confessed that begging is a small time job and does not make more money because he is old enough for the job, and it is lucky to have a twenty peso (Php 20.00) a day in begging. Some female street children, however, are only into vending for survival. Abandoned children also engaged in *pangangalakal* or hunting and trading plastic or glass bottles, metals and sell it to junk shop owner. A 10-year-old male abandoned child said that sometimes they go together with his friends, knocking door-to-door to ask the house owner or anybody from the house if they have pieces of steel, metals, bronze, electric wires, used papers, empty plastic or glass bottles that they can cheaply buy and later sell them at the nearest junk shop. At times, they are lucky to get old toys and worned out clothes.

### Family Background:

A home is the first agent of the socialization process. The congenial home environment has a positive and socialising effect in every street child. Thus, the family plays a vital role in the process of social development. A happy, contented and well-knit family helps in advancing social adjustment of every street child.

Table 9. Family Background of street children

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
Children on the Street	<p>“<i>Sanay na po kong mabuhay sa kalsada, wala naman akong ibang pwedeng gawin e. Hindi na ako natatakot. Ito lang ang kaya ko para mabigyan ng pagkain ang mga kapatid ko.</i>” (I used to live in the street, there is nothing I can do. I’m not afraid, this is the only thing I know so I can feed my siblings)– SC-M</p> <p>“<i>Wala kasi laging pagkain sa bahay kaya dito ko lagi sa kalsada para makahanap ng makakain, kasama ko kapatid ko manlimos.</i>” (Since we do not have food at home, we are here on the street to seek food and beg together with my siblings.) – SC-K</p>
Children of the Street	<p>“<i>Marami nang naging asawa si Mama pagkatapos mamatay ni Papa. Dalawa na yung sumunod, yung una mabait pero yung huli hindi. Lagi akong pinapalo kahit walang ginagawang masama. Lagi kasing nakainom tapos ginawa niya pang tindahan ng shabu sa bahay.</i>” (My mother has been through a lot of relationships when my father died. It’s been two consecutive, the first one is kind, the latter is not. He always beats</p>

**Abandoned Children**

me, though I'm not doing anything wrong. He is always drunk and he made our house a drug den of shabu (illegal drug).) – SC- G

*“Laging nag-aaway magulang ko, si papa laging nainom tapos namamalo kahit wala kaming kasalanan, si mama laging nasa sugalan.”*

(My parents are always fighting, my father is always drunk and my mother is always in a lottery house.) – SC-J

*“Yung tatay ko ni-ra-rape niya yung ate ko, nakikita ko pero kunwari tulog lang ako. Si mama pinaso ako ng sigarilyo, adik yoon e, ayoko na umuwi sa bahay. Sana may umampon sakin.”* (My father raped my older sister, I saw it, but I pretended I fell asleep. My mother burned me with cigarette butt, she is addict, I do not want to go home. I hope someone will adopt me.) – SC-L

*“Hindi ako inaalaagan ni mama e, lagi lang siyang nag-susugal, lagi wala sa bahay.”* (My mother does not take care of me, she is always gambling, she's always not in the house– SC-I

*“Yung asawa ng tita ko ginagawang tindahan ng shabu yung bahay namin, natatakot nga ako kapag may mga pumupunta doon eh.”* (The husband of my aunt is making our house a drug den. I'm afraid if someone comes uh!)– SC-R

**Children on the Street:**

Children on the street work hard because they have a family waiting to be fed. A 15-year-old male child on the street claimed that he is used to live and sleep on the street; he does everything to survive and fears no one. His siblings rely on him, and when he arrives home, he must bring food for them. Older *children on the street* are responsible to face the issue of settlements for their family. Some street children seem to find basic needs why they live on the street. Business establishments such as SM Shoemart, Robinson and Walter Mart are urban shopping centers where some *children on the street* in Dasmariñas City sell cigarettes and candies. Their working hour usually starts at 4:00 p.m. and ends at 10:00 p.m. or onwards. These street children are called as “*takatak boys*.” While, other children stays outside of the different establishments assisting cars to park and helping jeepney drivers to call for passengers. According to Ayuko, (2004) children who are in search of freedom to find basic needs move to the street.

**Children of the Street:**

Children of the street reported to have experienced a history of physical abuse, verbal, sexual abuse and even malicious touch. Most of them are abused from their families, that they never wanted to go back home since it happened. A 7-year-old male child of the street said that his parents are always having fight, her mother is often engaged in gambling, while his father is always drunk, he is always beaten up by both parents although he did nothing wrong. It appears that the family is the main reason why these children become *children of the street*. According to a study conducted by Schimmel in Canada (2006), running away from home might be their act of resistance and their expression of all the frustrations and circumstances life gives to them. Family background is the main reason of children for being on the street. A 10-year-old female child claimed that her mother had engaged to several relationships after her father died. Her mother's live-in partner always beats her for no compelling reason. According to her, her stepfather is always drunk and sells illegal drugs discreetly inside their house which is life threatening.

**Abandoned Street Children:**

Abandoned street children reported to have left their homes due to their parents' or guardians' drinking habits and do not wish to go back home. Their house had been transformed into drinking spots and even drug dens as explained by a 17-year-old abandoned child. In addition, children might experience physical, sexual abuse as a result of leaving home (Benitez, 2007). In contrast, even at home, abuse cannot still be avoided. A 10-year-old male abandoned child claimed both of his parents physically hurt him. His hand was burnt with cigarette butt for no valid reason. He even saw his father raping his sister, he pretended he was sleeping but he witnessed the whole thing. Many street children also stated that their troubles often consisting of disrupted home environments and extreme family conflicts involving physical and sexual abuse.

**Academic Status:**

School is another potential agent for social development of any street child. At school, street children get an opportunity of mixing with the large number of students, thus, getting varied types of social experiences. Furthermore, school experiences in the form of various types of school programmes and activities, opportunities for healthy social communication, guidance from teachers, determine to a large extent of the social skills and attitudes as well as the habits that the child learns. Schools also teach some of the basic social attitudes and principles of good conduct and interpersonal relationship. Thus, the school helps tremendously in the street children's social development.

**Table 10. Academic history of street children**

CATEGORY	STATEMENT
<b>Children on the Street</b>	<p><i>"Mahalaga pa din po sakin ang pag-aaral kahit mahirap lang po kami!"</i> (I still value education even though, we are poor!)- SC-K</p> <p><i>"Niloloko ako ng mga ka-klase ko dati, dahil sa pagtitinda ko, minsan sinasabi pa nilang rugby boy ako."</i> (I'm mocked by my classmates because I vend, sometimes, they label me as a "rugby boy.")-SC- EV</p> <p><i>"Yung kinikita ko sa pag-titinda at sa iba pa, binibigay ko sa kapatid ko para makapag-aral siya."</i> (The money I earn in vending, and others, I give to my sister so that she can finish her schooling) - SC-M</p>
<b>Children of the Street</b>	<p><i>"Mas mahalaga para sakin ang pagkain kaysa sa pag-aaral"</i> (Food is more important to me than education.)- SC-S</p> <p><i>"Minsan po naiinggit ako kapag nakikita ko yung ibang bata na kasing edad ko na nag-aaral"</i> (Sometimes, I get envy when I see other children similar my age are going to school.)- SC-G</p>
<b>Abandoned Children</b>	<p><i>"Sapat na po na maalam akong bumasa kahit papano at kayang isulat ang pangalan ko, yun lang naman importante"</i> (It is enough for me to learn basic reading and writing my name, that is the most important!)- SC-A</p> <p><i>"Malungkot nung nasa school ako dati. Naiinggit lang ako sa mga kaklase kong may mababait na magulang. Kumpleto mga gamit nila sa school, pati baon na pagkain. Hirap din akong sumabay sa klase kasi 'di ko nagagawa mga assignment ko."</i> (It was sad when I was schooling. I envy my classmates with generous parents. They have complete school stuff including pack lunch. I also find it hard to catch up at school because I don't have time to do our homework.) - SC-I</p>

**Children on the Street:**

Children on the street who are vendors had finished elementary education though, many of them dropped out of school at the second Grade. A 10-year-old female child on the street claimed that education is still important for her even though they are in hand-to-mouth existence. Some children of the street are still attending school irregularly. Children on the street who are engaged in begging and vending valued education than those children of the street (Mhizha, 2010). Some of the children ended up dropping out of school to vend and raise money for their own or for their siblings. A 15-year-old male child on the street declared his earnings on vending was used for his sister's school expenses. Some street children were satisfied in earning for a living even without having obtained an adequate education. A 17-year-old male child on the street said that searching for food is more important than being at school.

Unfortunately, some street children are bullied by fellow children at school for being street a child. They are labeled as "Rugby boy" or "Magnanakaw" (thief). A 12-year-old male child on the street claimed that his classmates bullied him because he is known for being a cigarette vendor. Children on the street are embarrassed when they are seen by fellow classmates begging on the street.

Socialization of children on the street is affected by the nature of their survival job they had on the street. When they dropped out of school, they are hesitant to socialize with their former classmates when they accidentally meet on the



street. Others complained that they are being avoided. Instead, they are being scolded that they should go back to their home or go back to school. Street vendor children claimed that they are not different from other members of the society. However, they still find it difficult to socialize because they are not considered as a normal child but they carry a negative impression, a stigma or worse, a social outcast in the society. However, some street vendor children continue to believe that selling is a dignified job and becoming the most popular survival job among business-oriented individuals.

#### **Children of the Street:**

Street children of the street do not regret having dropped out of school and see no opportunities of getting back to school. A 10-year-old female child of the street claimed that she look down upon herself seeing her batchmates while going to school. But there are some street children who wish to attain their dreams like becoming a police, a soldier and a pilot, but ironically, refuse to back to school due to several drawbacks. They love to compute mathematical operations such as addition and subtraction where they learned during their stay in *Bahay Pag-asa*, an institution catering the welfare of street children. But some street children revealed that they could not even read medical prescriptions or label of candies. A 9-year-old male child of the street believes that what he had learned in Grade 5 is enough; at least he can be able to read and write.

#### **Abandoned Children:**

“Abandoned children” regard schooling negatively but consider their street lives positively. Generally, these abandoned children hated their experiences at school claiming that they have several sad experiences at school. They barely follow the class’ lessons because they cannot do their school related work. These abandoned children revealed that they tolerate the shame brought about by their schoolmates. Apparently, many street children had not finished elementary education. They prefer to earn money on the street and enjoying their freedom, but they also envy their schoolmates’ status quo. Street life is an opportunity for them to cope with their frustrations in various aspects of life. However, some street children confessed that it is already too late when they realized the value of education.

Indeed, school is one of the reasons why street children fled from home and become abandoned children. Some key informants indicated that abandoned children developed street life which they defined as an addictive state among street children. It is the adjustment to a more comfortable street life without school norms, adult guidance, and timetable. This is as opposed to home life where they are abused, neglected and under control by their abusive parents or guardians. For these reasons, some street children consider street as their natural home where they are free and no restrictions from the authority unless they violate the city ordinances.

## **4. DISCUSSION**

Street children in Dasmariñas City, Cavite present an untidy, unhealthy and a ragged appearance. Their hair is infested by lice and appeared to have vulnerable skin with rashes all over their body. Street children are prone to skin diseases but claimed that they have strong body resistance. They are typically small, thin and darkened skin due to sun exposure. They look untidy because they do not take a bath regularly and they do not put clean nor washed clothes on. At times, they intentionally make themselves dirty so that they can gain sympathy so that others would give them alms. Other male street child perceived that their dirty looking appearance connotes masculinity enhanced by carrying their merchandise in the market and a sort of possessing a strong personality. They do not see their physical condition as a hindrance not to earn money in the street. They also experience tough competitions among themselves in terms of engagement to similar survival mechanisms or economic activity.

Despite several challenges and stressful situations both at homes and street life, most of the street children appear to have positive outlooks towards their life. They wish to be in a high status of profession in the society such as becoming a policeman, a soldier, a pilot, or even becoming the President of the Philippines. They are still hoping that they would not stay on the streets forever.

With regard to self-esteem, they recognize their own abilities in order to overcome hardship and survive. They are not ashamed for who they are. They are proud of themselves because at their young age, they can survive on their own. But some street children condemned their lives as a meaningless existence because of the negative labels by the general public. While others intentionally making themselves dirty, some are embarrassed on their physical appearance, unclean looks carrying plastic bottles and steel.

Street children showed misbehaviors when they are intoxicated with solvent or drunk. Most street children abused intoxicating substance not to feel hunger, stress, physical fatigue and cold weather. Some street children perform immoral behaviors including stealing, hurting other children, and lying. According to them, lying was common among street children who can manipulate people in order to earn money. On the other hand, some children on the street reported pondering committing suicide due to the problems they encounter at home and in the street.

Street children's relationship with their family appears to be very complicated. The trauma of the children of the street experienced was from their own family and previous homes. For this reasons, at their young age, they are on streets and forced to work in order to survive. For some street children, family background was the main reason why they work hard on the streets. They are responsible to feed their younger sibling. Despite having a stiff competition to survive in the street, they consider their peers as the only family they look up to. They go bonding together, drinking alcohol, share their everyday experiences, they play and sleep together.

Some street children expressed pride and happiness. They do not hesitate to talk about their experiences but still, in spite of their joyful personality, they also showed sensitivity and weaknesses, they responded, almost unanimously, that they had a sense of being discriminated, believing that they are socially misfit. They hated the label "*batang lansangan*" (*street child*), believing that they are also part of the society not just by the street not outcast of the society.

Socialization of street children appeared to be positive but it is being affected by the survival job they are engaged on the street. Their work on the streets are the reasons behind their refusal to attend school; also their feeling of shame and envy to other children. But some of them showed that they still value education like other children, they regret being dropped out from schools and wish that someday they can still hold a paper and pencil again.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Children on the street, children of the street and abandoned children experience tremendous challenges and difficulties in their childhood life. Physically, they are underheight, underweight, dirty, ragged looking, prone to skin diseases, asthma, fever and cholera. Due to poor economic condition and complicated family background, they are hand-to-mouth existence and cannot afford to go to school. Street children also have disrupted home environments; houses were used to be a drinking spots and drug dens, and extreme family conflicts involving verbal, physical and sexual abuse. They are vulnerable to hazards brought about by pollution, food poisoning, lead poisoning, smoking, alcohol and substance abuse and at high risk of accidents and diseases. They are also exposed to bullying, physical, verbal and sexual abuse and even malicious touch from strangers. Adding insult to injury, they are usually labeled or prejudiced as "poor kid" "young thief", "drug addict," "liars", "illiterate," "insane" and "wayward." Their life is condemned to a meaningless existence by the general public, with negative label such as *pag-pag*, *pangangalakal*, *at panonobre*. Therefore; some of them adopted a negative image, social pathology, crime and expression of prejudice. However, despite the present condition, some street children enjoy the freedom in the street because they earn money and if they have money, they can buy food, though it might not be enough, they have to do a great deal of effort to work harder. Begging is considered as their survival job or income-generating source; they do it with pride and dignity because according to them, it is pretty much better than the act of stealing. They work hard because they have a goal for their future and they can see the brighter side of life. Despite having a mixed feeling of enjoyment, danger and violence in the street, some street children do not wish to live in the street forever.

Social and home environment of street children appeared to be very complicated. It seems that life at home and life in the street has no significant difference because wherever they go, they are closed to danger, sex and violence. Bullying is not even an issue for young street children but rather a vicious cycle. However, they need to survive and struggle for their own freedom so they ended up on the street. They may have a strong sense of determination and resiliency, however at their young age; they are vulnerable to commit illegal acts due to absence of proper guidance from family, authority figure and their natural harsh environment.

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