

# Factors That Motivate Street Children in Making Decision to Get Out of Street Life in Jakarta

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**Abstract**—Marginal, vulnerable, and exploitative are the right terms to describe the living conditions of street children. In their childhood, they have had to deal with harsh and unfriendly urban environment. Children who are supposed to obtain an education, playing time, and love are forced to work to make money. The lack of knowledge, expertise, and experience limits their activities of earning incomes to selling, busking, and begging. Further, they want to get out of street life and have decent education and livelihood. This study aims to analyze the motivations of street children to get out of street life. It uses a qualitative approach with the type of descriptive research. Literature study, observation, and in-depth interviews are data collection techniques employed. The results of this study illustrate that physiological needs, which are the most significant aspects related to the decision of leaving street life, include food, drink, clothing, and shelter. They also want to earn a decent living both for themselves and their families. Having a decent job with steady income is also a goal to be achieved, so they can also help raise the family's dignity. Furthermore, self-experiences on street have also motivated them to leave the street life.

**Keywords**—*Child Welfare, Street Children, Motivation to get out of street life*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Population growth in big cities in Indonesia is currently significant enough to cause a variety of existing problems, and one of them is a social problem. One social problem that is often found in big cities is the problem of street children. The existence of street children seems to have become a daily phenomenon in big cities in Indonesia, even though their existence should be taken care of by the State as mandated by Article 34 of the 1945 Constitution that the poor and neglected children shall be taken care of by the State. The reality on the ground shows that these provisions cannot yet be fully implemented. The problem of street children cannot be separated from firstly, the continuing structural poverty in our society; second, the increasingly limited playgrounds for children because of developments that increasingly do

not take into account the interests and needs of child protection; third, the increasing economic symptoms of wages and the opening of opportunities for children to make money on the streets; fourth, the existence of street children has been felt by some people as a form of disturbance. (Abu Huraerah, 2006).

Every child has various needs that are the right of the child, which includes physical needs (air, water, food, shelter), security needs, the need to love and be loved, the need for appreciation, the need to actualize himself and grow (Dina, 2020). Adults, including their parents, society, and government, are obliged to fulfill the children's rights.

The needs and rights of these children cannot be fulfilled properly. This makes street children in Indonesia become a complex social problem. Life to be a street child is indeed not a choice of life that anyone wants and not a pleasant life, because they are in a condition with no future. Their existence is a problem for many parties, including families, communities, and countries. The limited skills possessed have caused them to do activities such as selling on the roadside, busking, begging, and other activities that are considered to be negative by the community.

UNICEF distinguishes street children into two categories, namely, children on the street and children of the street (Unicef, 2002). Street children who are in the first category are children who still have a strong relationship with their parents. While the second category no longer has a close relationship with his family. A study conducted by UNICEF on street children categorized as children of the street led to the fact that their motivation to live on the streets was not only because of the urgency of household economic needs, but also the occurrence of violence and rifts in their parents' household lives (Unicef, 1996). For these children, even though life on the streets is no less harsh, it provides more alternative value than living in a family filled with violence that they cannot

bear. If on the streets, the children can run away from the threat of violence, but in their families, they must simply accept the fate when beaten by the adults around them (Fanani, 2002).

Marginal, vulnerable, and exploitative are very appropriate terms to describe the condition and life of street children. Marginal because they do the type of work that is not clear career path, undervalued, and generally also does not promise any prospects in the future. Vulnerable because of the risk that must be borne due to very long working hours; vulnerability is also in terms of health and social environment. As for the so-called exploitative, because their bargaining position is, subordinated, and tends to be the object of arbitrary treatment from thugs or irresponsible officials (Suyanto, 2010).

Although street life is precarious for children, it is not easy for street children to leave or get out of street life (Bengtsson, 2011). Bengtsson concludes that motivation to leave the road is not only based on different experiences but also the child's own choice to leave the road can create motivation itself. However, some children are motivated to get out of street life because they have transformed into stable persons and have a strong desire to move forward and improve their lives.

Data collection was carried out in DKI Jakarta Province and the research informants consisted of former street children who had successfully escaped from street life. This location was chosen because Jakarta was one of the cities that has succeeded in reducing the significant number of street children for the last five years. The researchers also want to find out how physiological needs and self-experiences affect the motivation of street children to get out of street life.

## II. METHOD

This study used descriptive qualitative methods because qualitative research conducted to obtain in-depth information about social experiences such as attitudes, motivations, beliefs and behaviors from the person's point of view (Pollit, Beck & Hugler, 2001). This research illustrated how physiological needs and self-experiences motivated street children in making decisions to get out of street life. Data collection techniques carried out using primary and secondary data sources. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with informant selection techniques using purposive sampling and snowball. Secondary data was obtained through literature and documents to support field research data. Literature studies were useful for creating research frameworks and processing research data; the sources were obtained from books, journals, research reports, and so on. The documentary studies were in forms of secondary data obtained from several sources, such, news, archives, and legislation (Creswell, 2003).

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Several factors cause the emergence of street children, both internal and external factors. External factors are the factors that come from outside oneself. Based on the interview results, there are several reasons for informants

to become street children, among others, because of economic and educational factors. Lack of adequate education is one of the causes of a continuous cycle of poverty. Living in poverty is one of the factors causing the increasing number of street children in big cities, including Jakarta. The other external factor is economic conditions. Family limitations in economy make them difficult to meet their daily needs. These difficulties also cause the families to regard education as not too important; meeting basic daily needs is more important than education. As a result, children are forced to drop out of school because their families cannot afford it. While, internal factors are those originating from within the child itself, which cause them to become street-children. Children have the desire to live freely without rules and orders from their parents. This is an internal factor where children have dreams of freedom. Children want to be independent and act according to their wishes.

### A. *Factors that Motivate Street Children to Get Out of Street*

#### 1. *Physiological Needs*

Based on depth interviews, street children want to get out of street life, mainly because of the very essential and basic needs (physiological needs) for their survival, namely income/money for vital daily needs, adequate food, drink, and shelter. Maslow described human needs as being relatively fluid—with many needs being present in a person simultaneously (Maslow, 1943). The results of the research show that physiological needs factors have a considerable influence in motivating children out of street life because these needs are the most basic needs for survival. If related to Maslow's theory of needs (1993), the desire to change is driven by the existence of basic needs, such as food, drinks, clothing, and a more decent place to live. Physiological needs are the most basic potential for all other fulfillment needs, such as safety needs, love needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization. The physiological needs are essential, because if these needs are not met, then other needs are automatically not met.

The informants also wish to be able to live independently and not depend on others; they can meet their own basic needs without relying on anyone. The need to be independent and free from dependence on others called self-esteem needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Street children also need to be respected by others for their achievements. The independence mentioned by the informant is by getting jobs and income so that they can have what was dreamed of by the street children so far. , According to Maslow (1993), these desires are driven by basic needs. Human behavior is motivated by the existence of needs. Related to this case, street children want to get out of street life because of the very essential and basic needs (physiological needs). If these basic needs are not met, then their survival can be threatened, and it will not be able to meet the other needs that exist in the Maslow hierarchy, such as, safety needs, love needs, self-esteem needs, and self-actualization. Therefore, physiological needs are the most basic or essential needs that must be possessed by street children before the needs of other needs.

Without intending to rule out education, it can be seen that street children still have the goal of completing a decent education even though, in the end, the physiological needs that mostly influence them to be off the road. They want to earn a decent living both for themselves and their families. Poverty is a cliché reason that makes children live on the street; they help parents get extra income because of both their own will and encouragement from parents. However, their income on the street is not adequate for the fulfillment of physiological needs. This becomes the reason for the children want to get out of street life. When they succeed in getting a decent job, and steady income, it is a goal and a level of success achieved by street children. With better income, they can raise the level of family well-being, such as helping parents, buying a motor vehicle, paying home, and other installments. This achievement is a basic need that is thought by street children. These must be met and become their motivation to get out of the street life.

## 2. *Self- Experiences*

Based on the interview results, it is recognized that ex street children have different experiences. Emotional experiences while living on the street encourage them to get out of the lives of street children. These experiences include affection, loss, and insecure feeling.

- Getting other people's affection. Street children usually live on the streets with their friends. The close relationship is felt like one's own family. However, when there are things that make him lose his affection, he will look for another subject of affection. Affection seems to be crucial for the street children as their parents - source of affection for any child - are not around.
- Losing a loved one. The experience of losing a loved one gives a deep feeling to street children. It could be said that this experience is a traumatic experience that is a turning point for street children to be out of street life.
- Feeling threatened. There are traumatic experiences with street children's friends, namely criminal activities such as being taught pickpocketing, being chased by security officers, and being offered to use prohibited substances by friends who are addictive to drugs. Criminal acts among street children seem to be regarded as common. They have even been stigmatized by this negative label. The various negative incidents experienced have made informants feel threatened. The criminal actions strengthen them that street is not a safe place. Although as a street child, he usually struggles with friends who commit crimes, the informant perceives that safety needs is an important necessity for his life. Informants as human beings in general also have a desire to have a family; this makes informants think to begin to account for their lives and prospective families. The desire of having their own families becomes the motivation to get out of the street life and look for a better job for his future. Some informants who had dropped out of school had time to

continue their education up to package C and had gone to college. It is expected that the level of education pursued can ensure better jobs and income for informants.

Further, the results of the research that have been carried out show the influences which motivate informants to get out of street life. The influence from within is the existence of positive self-concept that he understands his strengths, there is a drive-in him to change and fight for a better future. The self-concept of John Robert Powers (1977) is "self-awareness and understanding which includes; who am I, what are my abilities, what are my weaknesses, what are my strengths, what are my roles, and what are my desires?" Every human being tends to develop himself for change, the betterment, more mature, in a more positive direction. These are what some informants experience so they are sure to move from the streets.

## IV. CONCLUSION

Street children are children who are excluded, marginalized from the treatment of affection because most at a relatively early age has had to deal with harsh city environments, and even very unfriendly. Children who are supposed to get an education, playtime, affection, and others are forced to work to help their parents. The limited skills possessed to make them carry out activities such as selling on the side of the road, busking, begging, and other activities that are considered harmful by the community even though they also want to have a good education and a decent living.

Based on the results of these studies, it can also be concluded that the physiological needs of the street children inside and outside provide a significant role in the decision of street children to leave street life. These basic needs contain elements needed by humans in maintaining physiological and psychological balance, which aims to maintain life. If these elements are not met, then it will be difficult to achieve good survival and achieve the fulfillment of other needs.

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