LEARNING SKILLS OF THE STREET CHILDREN IN METRO CEBU

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Abstract

Street children are the common problem of developing countries such as Philippines. This study aimed to assess the overall scenario of the street children in Metro Cebu by mapping out the areas where they usually stay, their activities and the possibilities of educating them and to determine their learning competencies in the area of basic reading skills and functional mathematics. One hundred and eight (108) respondents were selected from different barangays in Metro Cebu using simple random sampling techniques, administered by means of questionnaires and interview guide. Family background, educational qualification, occupation of their parents, and establishing the common places where they stay both in day and night time were obtained. Children interviewed were between 5 and 15 years of age. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used in data analysis. The study revealed that most of the street children are not in school, because they either dropped out or have not been to school since birth. Furthermore, most of them were living in the street selling candies and cigarettes, and roaming about as beggars or scavengers. They cannot read nor recognized letters in the alphabet. The study also disclosed that they are educable and willing to learn, provided proper attention and intervention should be given to them. The study concluded that street children need proper care by providing them with the right amount of nutritious foods they need and encouraging them to value-laden education that will develop their potential in the academe and making them functional literate. Therefore, quality education should be afforded to children for they are the hope of our country.

Keywords: Learning skills, street children, functional literacy, appropriate intervention

Introduction

The learners of the 21st century must be functionally literate. This is part of the medium development plan of the Philippine government to provide education for all children without discrimination. In 1980's to

1990's, community leaders saw a growing global concern for the rights and welfare of children.

Statistics posted by the Missionaries of Asia on their blog reported that there are approximately 1.5 million children in the streets in the Philippines. They work as beggars, pickpockets, pushers, or prostitutes. In Cebu City alone, the number is about 5000. One can see them in commercial areas, around malls, churches, in densely-populated and high-traffic areas where people can be seen shuttling to and from work. Thus, the number of boys who are street children outnumbers those who are girls at a ratio of 7:3.

Childhope Asia, an international movement on behalf of street children defines street children as young people who spend a considerable time living and/or working on the streets of the world's cities. Different countries describe street children in different ways. However, two general categories have been frequently used to describe them: those who live and work on the streets, and those who work on the streets but maintain regular contact with their families.

They usually spend a significant amount of time engaged in different occupations with or without the protection of responsible adults. With ages ranging from 5-18, they ply the sidewalks in a desperate attempt to make a living through whatever means they can for their survival. An estimation of 25% lives on the streets with other street children, or with their families.

Thus, it is obvious that poverty is the major culprit. Many children beg because they are hungry and their basic needs for sustenance are not met. Some board jeepneys or tug at the skirt to ask for a few pesos that a commuter could spare.   Others still, are engaged in street trade, selling sampaguita flower garlands, candles, or bottled water. What happens to them in the future is a matter of grave concern. If the problem is not addressed, and there are interventions, the vagrants of today may become the hooligans of tomorrow.

Likewise, it is poverty that prevents them from going to school to acquire skills that may be of practical use later on, and which may well be an avenue to uplift them from the sorry state they are currently in.   But while poverty is considered a disadvantage for many, it is not a hindrance to achieving success. Many lad or lass who hails from an impoverished background has emerged to be tremendously successful through sheer hard work and determination in working one's way through school.

There are organizations and institutions working for their welfare, notably one of which is the Cebu City Task Force on Street Children which is headed by Mrs. Margot Osmena, the wife of Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña. It alone has contributed a lot to the development of and the rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law by providing free education through its Mobile School Program and free housing and care at the Parian

Drop-in Center. In fact, the UNICEF has recognized its gains and has considered a move to make the program a model not only for other provinces but for other countries as well. UNICEF officials have found remarkable the coordination between the City Government and a network of nongovernment organizations working together for the cause of children in the city (gvnet.com).

There are also non-government institutions or private entities devoted to housing and educating the children of the poor. Despite this fact, yet many children out on the streets do not have access to the basic things in life, including education.   An article by Veronica Uy (Philippine Daily Inquirer 2/26/2009) reported that some government operations to rescue street children are ineffective, indiscriminate, involuntary, and were done for the wrong reasons.   Since batons, guns, and handcuffs are used in these operations, children see them as arrests, and not rescues.   There were instances in which a child, who was rescued 59 times, kept going back to the streets.   Such was also the case in some areas of Cebu City, where children are rounded up, brought to the home, but still manage, to escape to return back to the streets.

Thus in this study, the researchers intend to seek out the street children in Metro Cebu and assess their learning competencies to structure a literacy program so that the children may at least have the rudiments of basic education. When children are able to read and write, or do functional math, and enjoy doing so, there might just be a chance that they will be motivated to go to school full-time. This is also the researchers' contribution to the aims of the World Council on Education for All, calling on all nations to ensure that all children have access to education by the year 2015. The presence of these children on the streets is a major obstacle to achieving that goal. But if concerned and ordinary citizens recognize the problem and try to do something about it, nations may be close to achieving that goal through a concerted effort. An Efren Penaflorida might be a very elusive dream, but these children must have access to education, even on the streets, so that they will not grow up to be illiterate adults, and thus be unable to find decent jobs.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to assess the learning skills of the street children and identify the appropriate intervention of the problems about literacy of the street children in Metro Cebu. Specifically, this study is aimed to: (1) evaluate the overall scenario of the street children in Metro Cebu by mapping out the areas where they usually stay, their activities and the possibilities of educating them and (2) to determine the learning competencies of the Metro Cebu's street children in the area of basic reading skills and functional mathematics.

Short Literature Review

Literacy is at the core of Education for All (EFA) as a learning tool, a learning process and a learning outcome, all contributing to the achievement of broader human development goals. A three-pronged policy for literate societies is essential. Quality schooling for all children is necessary if the entire next generation of adults is to be literate – this means not just universal primary enrolment but also universal primary completion and good-quality primary education. Scaled-up youth and adult literacy program are necessary if the hundreds of millions of adults without literacy skills are to have the means to acquire and use these skills; hence, simply waiting for universal primary completion is not the answer.

Nor are 'one size fits all' solutions: strategies need to respond to diverse needs and contexts. Literacy is also important for achieving the other EFA goals. Mothers who are educated are more likely to send their children to school than those who have not attended school (Schultz, 1993; Comings et al., 1992). The same is true of parents who have participated in adult literacy programs.

The six EFA goals which the Philippines has committed itself include expanding early childhood care and education; providing free and compulsory education for all; providing learning and life skill to young people and adults; increasing adult literacy by 50% percent; achieving gender equality by 2015 and improving the quality of education.

The study is anchored on the legal basis of children education which includes Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and cognitive engagement by Fredricks et al. (2004). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), also adopted in 2000, are the world's time-bound and quantitative targets for addressing extreme human deprivation in its many dimensions. The targets range from having extreme poverty cases to cutting down on child and maternal death rates and reducing malnutrition. Education is part of the MDG framework. However, the MDG targets for education are far less ambitious and more restrictive than the EFA agenda.

Former Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo stressed that the basic task of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan for the period 2004-2010 is to fight poverty and build prosperity for the greatest number of the Filipino people. Also, Pres. Noynoy has declared an all-out global people power against poverty citing that through unity, nothing is impossible. The president, in his UN address said that compassion towards people who need help is both humane and necessary. He went on further to say that in quoting his predecessor; we should take up the challenge to ensure that those who have less in life shall have more in law (Philstar, 2010).

Fredricks (2004) identify a range of specific factors as antecedents to cognitive engagement/self-regulation. Those of relevance to our study

include teacher actions in creating a socially supportive and intellectually challenging environment, and in creating conditions for positive peer interactions in which students "actively discuss ideas, debate points of view, and critique each other's work". Furthermore, Zimmerman's (2001) social cognitive theoretical orientation focuses on "interdependent contributions of personal, behavioural and environmental influences" on students' ability and willingness to self-regulate. Our study explores the ways in which the environment created by the teacher supported the children both academically and socially in a manner that allows them to develop what we will identify as observable, fledgling skills of self-regulation.

Children represent hope and the future in every society. Yet, in many parts of Asia and the Pacific, children and their futures are at risk. In the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) developing member countries, children under 14 years old make up 30% of the population. Without proper protection, this vulnerable group can suffer undernourishment, poor health, and intellectual underdevelopment, which can have lasting impacts on young peoples' ability to participate fully in their communities and the broader economy. Hence, investing in their protection has profound implications for the development of the region.

Street children have received much attention in the media, both national and international in the recent years (missionaries to asia.org). The awareness and sensitization efforts have led to the development of several initiatives involving numerous groups working with street children, launching of specific schemes and programs at the local, state and national level and initiation of numerous studies on street children.

Muchini (1994) also notes that there are also "children of the street" who maintain links with family members while others have totally severed family connections. Some "children of the street" may visit their mothers and stay with "step-fathers" once in a while or may visit other siblings and, return to their street "homes". Muchini (op. cit.) further observes that the degrees to which filial linkages are maintained also vary for different children. The quality of contacts also differs, and the same can be said of "children on the street". Children classified as "on the street" include those in the grey area, who sometimes sleep on the streets and sometimes sleep at home. This category also includes those staying with distant relatives and those who stay with employers. Thus, categorizing street children into only two categories may cloud the continuity of the children connecting with their families.

Children can end up on the street for a wide range of reasons, from the necessity to help feed their families to the need to escape a hostile home life. Whatever propels them into the street, their presence is a stark, worrying sign of deeper social problems. In 2001, ADB organized a roundtable with

nongovernment organizations (NGOs) working with street children to highlight the issues and to help improve the understanding and definition of the close connection between street children's needs and ADB's primary objective of reducing poverty. The discussions, under the theme "A Streets Eye View of Poverty Reduction," painted a troubling picture of societies unable or unwilling to care for their poorest members and a future of greater violence and hopelessness for children of the streets unless prompt action is taken.

The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by almost every state in the world, including all ADB developing member countries. The Convention provides a rights-based framework for intervention in the lives of children, including street children. It establishes universal standards for children's rights to dignity, freedom from discrimination, survival, development, protection, and participation, with an overall consideration given to the best interests of the child (West, 2003).

Protection and participation are the two key principles for the implementation of the Convention with respect to street children. Protection is the main reason for intervening in the lives of street children. It includes immediate protection from danger, abuse, and exploitation, but also covers more long-term, proactive approaches designed to promote participation.

Participation, on the other hand, is a human right with particular significance for street children, who care for themselves, alone or more usually in groups, and are thus the key source of information on their situations and needs. They are most knowledgeable about the factors that send children to the street as well as about the difficulties of and strategies for survival on the street. This makes it essential to listen to children and encourage their participation during intervention design, implementation, and evaluation. When considering how to include their needs in ADB projects and programs, it is important to be aware of the challenges presented by the diverse backgrounds and circumstances of individual children.

Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is intended to protect children from economic exploitation, including the requirement for states to establish a minimum age for entry to employment. According to International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138 (1973), this should be no lower than 15 years (in some developing countries the age limit is 14 years). This is one of the core labour standards of ILO, which combines with Convention 182 (1999) on the worst forms of child labour, to establish the "effective abolition" of child labour as one of the four fundamental principles and rights at work of the 1998 ILO Declaration.

Education is relevant to street children programming with respect to both prevention and reintegration. Prevention refers to access to and

retention in schools, while reintegration strategies provide a second chance to children who have dropped out or have never been to school at all. Education programs tend to focus on improving formal education systems, thus preventing children from dropping out of school into the streets. Within formal education, particularly through teacher training, additional elements could be added to sensitize teachers in identifying pupils "at risk" of becoming street children. Prevention is also implied in curriculum developments targeted specifically at meeting the needs of "the poorest" sections of the society, "making education more relevant to the needs of labour markets" and including "beneficiary participation"—presumably by including the underprivileged children.

Street children in the Philippines, who are often referred to as "yagit," are perhaps the most vulnerable section of the society who suffers from human deprivations of all forms. Many children are forced to live and earn on the street due to their vulnerable and distressed situation. In many cities, some of them live in the cemetery and work as caretakers of the "condominium of the dead." Others work at the dumpsite, scavenging for things that can be resold at a cheap price. In General Santos City, former rugby boys now have a bright future ahead of them after they were taught to become bakers.   Now, instead of sniffing bottles of the addictive substance, the boys hone their skills in the art of making breads and pastries.

In Davao City, death squads are eliminating street children who are involved in petty crimes. Authorities say this is good for business because people feel safe and that the DDS [Davao Death Squads] is doing a service to the community—that they are trying to get rid of the garbage," he said. All the young Davao victims who lived on the street, had joined gangs, and many had police records for petty crime or were drug couriers, was stated by local rights monitors.

In Iloilo, the local government unit turned over 20 housing units for street children and their families in the Gawad Kalinga (GK) Village in Barangay So-oc, Arevalo district. Till date, a total of 36 housing units have been built within the GK Village, and the turnover for the first 16 units was done in November last year. Livelihood programs such as dress making and terracota pottery have likewise been put in place for the women and youth. The GK Village in Iloilo is the sixth that the PLDT group has adopted nationwide. Therefore, it serves the specific purpose of providing street children and their families with permanent homes.

Fredricks et al. (2004) also identify the characteristics of a task as an antecedent to the development of self-regulation. Of particular interest for our study are the findings from one piece of elementary school research in primary science. Drawing from the work of Blumenfeld and Meece (1988), they cite "complex hands-on tasks" combined with instructional support

from a teacher who "presses students for understanding" (Fredricks et al., 2004). Characteristics of mathematics tasks found to be effective in promoting cognitive engagement includes "novel tasks that have personal meaning"

Methods and Materials

This study utilized the descriptive-normative research using researchers made questionnaire in the collection of data. The descriptive method involves the description, recording, analysis and interpretation of the prevailing conditions and the present nature of a certain group. The following processes were included: induction, analysis, classification, enumeration, measurement and assessment of the data. Survey refers to the gathering of data regarding current conditions. Normative is used to ascertain the normal or typical condition. This study made use of questionnaires for the children as well as checklists on learning competencies in Reading and Writing. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents or ordinary citizens in places where the children are usually stationed. Also, a checklist on the learning skills in reading and writing patterned from Crystal Klonek Reading Interest Inventory were administered to diagnose the children's level of competency in the said areas.

The respondents of this study were the street children in Metro Cebu, who are stationed around malls, shopping areas, churches, schools, jeepney stops and areas such as the bus station and the pier. These are the children who we presume that public service has not been extended to them; otherwise, they would not be in the streets. They are from ages 5-15 years. Therefore, the locale of the study were places where street children abound ---- malls, shopping areas, churches, schools, jeepney stops, and areas such as the bus terminal and the pier.

Results and Discussion

There were 108 children subjected in this study. All the children in the present study were between 0-15 years of age. Most of them were male. Thus, the study of Singh, et. al (2008), confers that majority of the street children were males (71%) because parents usually insist that the male offspring should work as a labourer at places far away from the home.
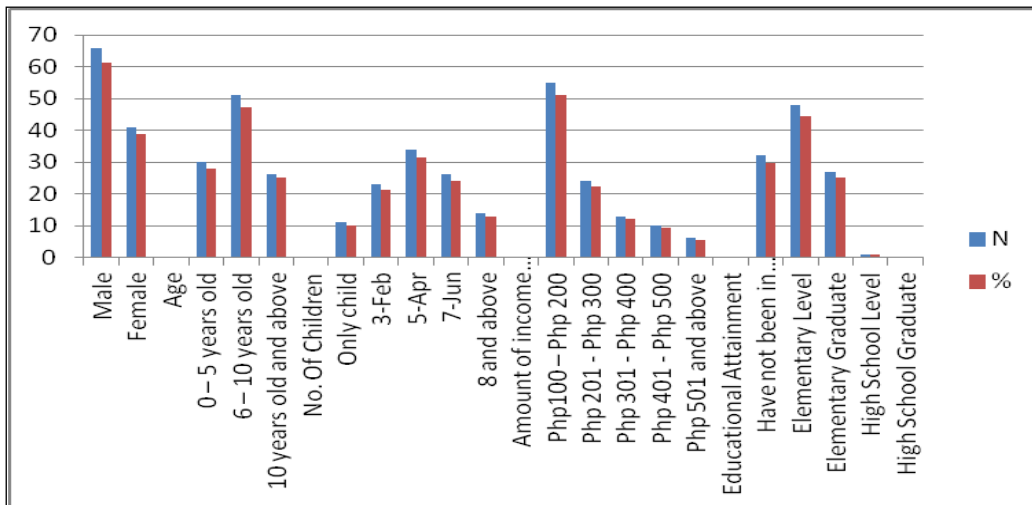
Figure 1: Demographic Profile of the Street Children in Metro Cebu

According to Childhope Asia Philippines, majority of the visible children on the street were boys which is about 70 percent. In the same report, it concurred that girls are fewer because, among other reasons, they are generally helping younger siblings, they are usually hired as domestic helpers within private households, they are lured or trafficked into prostitution and are housed in brothels. Hence, it is speculated that the male child is expected to do less work at home than the female child (Childhope, 2003).

In the Philippines, most couple who have more children are those who cannot afford to send their children to school resulting to the difficulty in finding decent job. The street children have unstable lifestyles, lack of medical care and inadequate living conditions, abuse by adult which lead to pick pocketing, sexual violence and prostitution. Majority of the street children come from large families of at least 5 to seven 8 siblings. Most of the children have parents who were separated and many appeared to be living with other partners who often maltreated and neglected the children.

Table 1 also shows that 33% of the respondents do not attend school. Most of them was at elementary level and have dropped out from school. This is regarded as a very important indicator of their vulnerability and future life chances. During the focus group discussion, the parents of the children revealed that they have not gone to school, and that is reason they did not send their children to school too. This is in accordance with the findings in the study of Singh, et al (2008) that only 8% of the fathers and 2% of the mothers of the street children had primary education. The respondents blamed the poor educational status of the parents as an important factor in the etiology of child labour. They stated that early

marriages and excessive workload in the families are attributing factors that
contribute to poor education in them (Singh, et al, 2008).

Table 1. *Children Living in the Street*

Gender	N	%
Male	49	72.06
Female	19	27.94
Age		
0 – 5 years old	21	30.88
6 – 10 years old	11	16.18
10 years old and above	36	52.94
Activities		
Candy and Cigarettes Vendor	22	32.35
Beggar	17	25
Parking Boy	8	11.76
Car washer	5	7.35
Garbage Scavenger (Collecting empty plastic bottles)	15	22.06
None at all	1	1.5

Most street children stay in the street; hence most of the males do not
have a permanent home; they just simply live in the street. The female
children living in the street mentioned the lack of parental care as the main
reason for being in the street. About half of theme revealed that their parents
or guardian hurt them and that was the reason why they live in the street.
Therefore, about 52.94% of the children were 10 years and above.

They earn money mainly by selling cigarettes and candies, collecting
empty bottles, washing cars and begging from people passing in the area.
These children may even work more than 12 hours per day looking for
money to sustain their daily needs. The vast majority of street working
children (32.35%) were candy and cigarettes vendors. They spend their
money on food, while others use their money to support family expenses and
the rest declared they save money for personal expenses.

Genemo (2010) cited that throughout cities in Asia, Africa and Latin
America, varying numbers of poor individuals survive by salvaging materials
from the waste stream. In this same study, it was claimed that these people
recover materials to sell for reuse or recycling, as well as diverse items for
their own consumption. In the study, Genemo (2010) cited from Medina
(1997) that this individuals are generally known as 'scavengers'.
International Labour Organization (ILO) as cited from Gunn & Ostos (1992)
states that children can earn more from scavenging than neighbourhood adult
factory workers working a ten-hour shift. According to Genemo (2010) cited
in Bartone (1988) and Medina (1997), they pointed out that most studies
report the reasons for human scavengers which constitutes the poor segments
of the population of developing countries. ILO (2004) mentioned several
reasons why there are scavengers such as: poverty/family needs the
additional income or needs the labour to reduce the use of paid labour;

parents are not able to provide for income and lack of skills/low education. Basic education and skills training programs increase peoples' chances for more remunerative employment as well as their productivity, whether wage-employed or self-employed. In those settings where most adolescents and young adults do not have a basic education, the employer pays the price through reduced efficiency, increased supervision or increased on-the-job training costs (USAID, 1982).

Table 2. *Children Working in the Street*

Gender	N	%
Male	23	57.5%
Female	17	42.5%
Age		
0 – 5 years old	9	22.5%
6 – 10 years old	13	32.5%
10 years old and above	18	45%
Activities		
Candy and Cigarettes Vendor	8	20%
Beggar	12	30%
Parking Boy	5	12.5%
Car washer	4	10%
Fruit vendor	6	15%
Garbage Scavenger (Collecting empty plastic bottles)	5	12.5%

It shows that there were 37.04 percent of the children respondents who were working in the street. In South Africa, the issue of children living and working in the street is the major concern for the aid and support of the government. The Department of Social Development, South Africa as quoted from Casa (2000), reported that in the late 1990s, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF estimated that there were 100 million children living in the street, worldwide, the majority of whom were in the developing world, with an estimate of 10 million in Africa alone.

UNICEF (2004) cited from Lamberte (2002) estimates the population of street children in the Philippines to be 3 percent (246,011) of the population 0–17 years old. In the same report, it was revealed that street children comprises of 5 percent of the country's urban poor children, which is estimated to be 4,832,000. Of the 246,011 street children, 20 percent are identified to be "highly visible on the streets." Therefore, in this study, the street girls tried their hand in begging because they cannot find other work.

According to Genemo (2010) as mentioned by Constance (2004), garbage picking is among the most dangerous and socially marginalized occupations. Hence, based on the survey conducted, 57.5 percent of the children in Metro Cebu working in the street were male. They are scavenger, beggar, vendor, parking boy or car washer. Being a scavenger is said to be dangerous because they are expose to hazardous material and toxic fumes at landfills or in the dumpsites.

Table 3: *Reading and Writing Ability*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
Descriptive Statistics									
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Do you have any hobbies?	108	1.00	2.00	1.5463	.50017	-.189	.233	-2.002	.461
Do you like to read?	108	1.00	2.00	1.6019	.49180	-.422	.233	-1.857	.461
Do you like to read aloud?	108	1.00	2.00	1.7407	.44027	-1.114	.233	-.773	.461
Do you like it when someone reads to you?	108	1.00	2.00	1.7222	.44999	-1.006	.233	-1.006	.461
Do you like to talk with friends about what you read?	108	1.00	2.00	1.7315	.44525	-1.059	.233	-.895	.461
Do you like magazines?	108	1.00	2.00	1.6204	.48756	-.503	.233	-1.780	.461
Do you like to write?	108	1.00	2.00	1.5463	.50017	-.189	.233	-2.002	.461
Do you often write your assignments?	108	1.00	2.00	1.4907	.50224	.038	.233	-2.037	.461
Do you ask somebody to write for you?	108	1.00	2.00	1.5370	.50095	-.151	.233	-2.015	.461
Do you read your notes?	108	1.00	2.00	1.7315	.44525	-1.059	.233	-.895	.461
Valid N (listwise)	108								

Street children were also given opportunity to read and were asked several questions regarding their reading and writing ability. Unlike most children who are fun of reading and sharing their hobbies to their playmates, most children do not like to read. One of the barriers for providing education to children has been the high rate of illiteracy in the country. In Nepal, the literacy rate is 53.7 percent which varies between the rural and urban areas. According to the Education for All Global Monitoring Report as cited by Nathanson (2009), seventy-seven million children of primary school age are not enrolled in schools. The street children do not have ample time in reading and writing, thus they usually do something for the sustenance of their biological needs.

Table 4: *Personal Interest and Activities*

The types of music they listen

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Children's song	39	36.1	36.1	36.1
	Hiphop	14	13.0	13.0	49.1
	Jazz	1	.9	.9	50.0
	Religious	3	2.8	2.8	52.8
	Others	51	47.2	47.2	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

Favourite animals of the street children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Dog	93	86.1	86.1	86.1
	Cat	6	5.6	5.6	91.7
	Goat	2	1.9	1.9	93.5
	Lizard	7	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

Favourite TV program of the street children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Eat Bulaga	20	18.5	18.5	18.5
	Tele Nobela	7	6.5	6.5	25.0
	Pinoyb Big Brother	22	20.4	20.4	45.4
	Will Time Big Time	39	36.1	36.1	81.5
	Others	20	18.5	18.5	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

Favourite game of the street children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Hide and Seek	18	16.7	16.7	16.7
	Computer/Online games	11	10.2	10.2	26.9
	Larong Pinoy	3	2.8	2.8	29.6

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Others	76	70.4	70.4	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

Time allotted for reading and writing

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1-2 Hours	14	13.0	13.0	13.0
	3-4 Hours	4	3.7	3.7	16.7
	Others	90	83.3	83.3	100.0
	Total	108	100.0	100.0	

The questionnaires on personal interest and activities were administered to the street children and the results showed that they were not exposed to children's songs but other songs/music which are not suited for their level. With the use of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), it shows that the street children do not like either children's song nor religious songs, as most of them has heard songs which are very unpleasant for our ears.

About 86.1 percent of the street children favoured dog as their favourite animals because dog will bite and always look for food according to one of the respondents. During the FGD, they also stressed that, electronic media, particularly television have a potential impact on children living and staying in the street. It was clear that their favourite TV show was "Will Time Big Time". Many researchers reveal that children learn strategies and techniques from watching television by using their knowledge of formal features to guide attention. Educators assert that educational television program, especially those designed around a curriculum with a specific goal to communicate academic or social skills are very beneficial to children. Hence, TV shows such as Eat Bulaga, Pinoy Big Brother and Will Time big Time are purely entertainment.

It was expected that children like to play with playmates and friends. In this study, it is revealed that the street children do not play but instead, they look for food and struggle for survival. Therefore, the street children needs proper care and the right amount of nutritious foods.

Cunningham and Stanovich (1998) as quoted by Nathanson (2009) ascertained that extensive reading is linked to superior performance on measures of general knowledge, vocabulary, reading comprehension and verbal fluency. Robinson's (1973), in the study of Nathanson (2009) also revealed that writing is of critical importance for learning to read.

Table 5: *Math Interest Inventory*

	YES	%	NO	%
1. Do like Math?	34	31.48%	74	68.52%
2. Do you answer your assignment in Math?	21	19.44%	87	80.56%
3. Do you like numbers?	39	36.11%	69	63.87%
4. Do you recite the counting numbers 1-10?	43	39.81%	65	60.19%
5. Do you count aloud?	38	35.19%	70	64.81%
6. Can you count 1-20?	57	52.78%	51	47.22%
7. Can you recognize numbers?	77	71.3%	31	28.7%
8. Can you identify figures?	41	37.96%	67	62.04%

The characteristics of the street children showed that 31.48 percent likes Mathematics, while 68.52 percent do not like it. Most could rote count from 0-20 since these numbers are very basic to elementary school children. Considering that some children have been in school and are now out in the streets, they have practical knowledge about basic mathematics. Streetwise children are exposed to common situations that involve the use of basic mathematical operations such as when they are paid for services or items that they peddle in the streets.   As per interview with the children, they disclosed that most often than not, they are paid with the exact amount so that patrons do not have to wait for their change and they in turn do not have to do the task of giving out change to their patrons.

Conclusion

The study concluded that many street children have not gone to school and they do not like reading, writing and mathematics. Furthermore, the street children need proper care, right amount of nutritious foods and value-laden education that will develop their potential in the academe and making them functional literate. Quality education should be afforded to children for they are the hope of our country.

Recommendations

Based on the understanding obtained, the following are some holistic recommendations:

1. The local government in coordination with the Department of Education and some NGOs should initiate the process of formulating appropriate intervention so that the street children in Metro Cebu will be given opportunities to be in school.

2. Education of children can be done simultaneously with training skills and livelihood programs for adults.   When families have enough opportunities and resources to sustain daily subsistence, family members can devote some time in assisting their children with their school work. Opportunities for skills training and

livelihood programs for parents can also be provided in the same school where the children are enrolled.

3. Community outreach programs by education students may be focused on educating the street children.

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