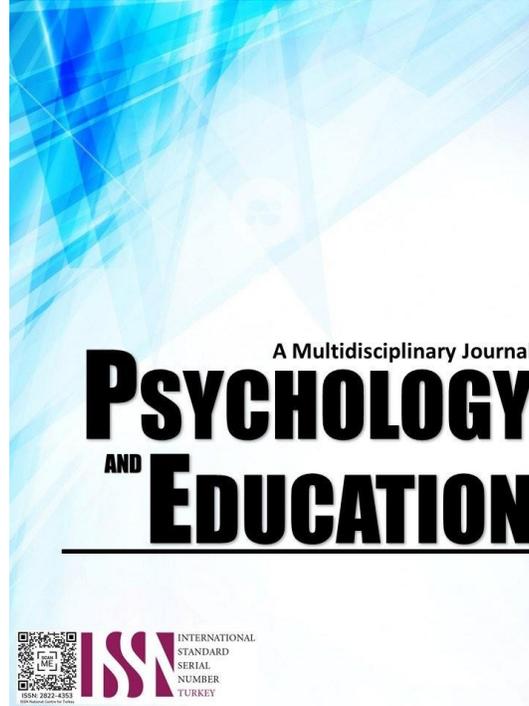


LIVED EXPERIENCES OF ADOLESCENT ORPHANS: BASIS FOR AN INTERVENTION PLAN



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Lived Experiences of Adolescent Orphans: Basis for an Intervention Plan

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Abstract

This study investigated the lived experiences of adolescent orphans, providing insights into the personal experiences, challenges encountered, and support services they received as a vulnerable and often underserved population—the research aimed to offer a broad understanding of the complex dimensions of their lives. Through in-depth interviews and qualitative analysis, the study showed the complex emotional, social, and educational environment in which adolescent orphans navigated. It highlighted their coping mechanisms, resilience, and goals, as well as the difficulties they faced in accessing necessary resources and services. The research also examined the roles of different support systems, including house parents, social workers, and teachers, in influencing the adolescents' experiences. The findings of this study served as the foundation for developing a tailored intervention plan that aimed to address the specific needs and promote the well-being of adolescent orphans. This intervention plan encompassed strategies to improve emotional resilience, academic success, and life skills development. Moreover, it emphasized the significance of tailored support systems that acknowledged the unique situations and aspirations of each orphan. By bridging the gap between research and practice, this study contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of adolescent orphans and laid the groundwork for a well-rounded and evidence-based intervention plan that could empower them to overcome the challenges they faced and build a more promising future.

Keywords: *lived experiences, orphans, emotional and behavioral challenges, support services received and intervention plan*

Introduction

Losing a parent is among the most devastating experiences a child can go through. This experience stays with the child, influencing their growth and development and, ultimately, how society perceives them. According to estimates provided by UNICEF, there are approximately 153 million orphans across the globe, with Asia having the highest number, with 71 million kids. The number of orphans is expected to rise, particularly as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increasing international conflicts. The Philippines is a developing nation with substantial economic advancements. The need to address a particular issue in the Philippines is the country's current situation regarding the number of children who have been neglected, abandoned, or are orphaned. The nation has a problem with abandoned children (Kaiman & De Leon, 2016). Roughly 1.8 million children in the Philippines are abandoned or neglected (Children's Rights and Emergency Relief Organization of the United Nations, 2018). This represents over one percent of the total population.

According to Ekvall (2017), the World Bank Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (OVC) Toolkit defines an orphan as someone under 18 whose mother, father, or both have passed away, victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts are factors that contribute to this expansion. Orphaned, homeless, and other unaccompanied children and adolescents, make up a sizable portion of the population that is grossly underrepresented. Aside from the common definition of orphans, there are also children who live as orphans despite the fact that both of their parents are alive. This is referred to as "social orphans." These children do not have the protection of their living parents for these reasons, substance abuse, abuse, neglect, parents afflicted by physical and psychological problems, poverty, social and domestic issues, unwanted pregnancy, and child. Because of these factors, many parents neglect their children, and as a result, their security, health, education, and psychological needs are not adequately met. In the end, these circumstances may be detrimental to the emotional, physical, and psychological health and development of children. In addition, having living biological parents is not enough for children especially when their social demands for having parents are not met, it will certainly negatively impact them.

The number of children affected by social orphanhood is similar to the number of children affected by war and natural calamities. According to the United Nations (2017), the number of children who live in orphanages has reached 2.7 million. However, the inclusion of social orphans in this figure has not been verified. Nonetheless, there exist estimates concerning this topic. For example, it has been discovered that 80-90% of the world's children living in orphanages are social orphans, and a survey discovered that 80% of children residing in 750 different orphanages have one living parent. From this, for many parents, the only option when faced with certain circumstances, is to place their children in orphanages. As a result, many social orphans are now forced to live in orphanages. Furthermore, even when one of their parents is still alive, some of them may still lack their parents' care, love, and attention despite having enough food, drink, beds, and other necessities. As a result, they have to deal with several challenges and face many difficulties. Social orphans also carry with them several distinct and serious psychological issues. An orphan acknowledges that he or she has no parents, that they have passed away, and that the orphan will eventually come to terms with this reality. However, a social orphan acknowledges that he or she has a parent who is still alive, but the parent has chosen to neglect the child, leaving the child feeling abandoned. As a result, social orphan children are much flimsier and more defenseless.

The adolescent period is significant and crucial because it is during this time that adolescents' needs change. In our country, however, numerous orphans receive neither parental nor adult affection. Hence, the prevalence of social problems such as delinquency, crime, suicide, alcoholism, drug addiction, prejudice, underachievement, and school dropout among adolescents has highlighted the need for mental health services, particularly for institutionalized adolescents.

Adolescents are a susceptible demographic that goes through emotional transformations. A failure to properly channel their emotions might result in significant behavioral changes. During puberty, psychological or emotional changes emerge in various ways, the most common of which is a shift in behavior. The adolescent's confusion and indecision during the transition can sometimes translate into a conflict of interest (Rajan, et al., 2018). Moreover, according to Ushanandini (2017), the lack of parental support and affection, as well as inadequate attachment, suboptimal mental health, depression, diminished self-efficacy, compromised social adjustment, and reduced self-esteem, substantially influence the emergence of risk-taking behaviors in adolescents. The orphan child may experience trauma due to poor living conditions and inadequate care. According to a study conducted by Mostafaei et al. (2012), children residing in orphanages exhibit higher levels of unhappiness and are more susceptible to depression compared to children who are not orphaned. This can be attributed to the absence of parental affection and support and the lack of effective role models, which consequently lead to challenges in adapting to their environment and the development of various psychosocial and behavioral issues.

Along with the growing population of the Philippines, the number of orphaned and abandoned children is also increasing. According to the Philippines Orphanage Foundation (2020), there are at least two million orphaned children out of a population of over 109 million. Orphanage circumstances vary by country and region in the world. This is one of the global concerns. The fact that these children are under 18 years old makes them even more vulnerable, as they have neither a solid foundation nor a secure future. This demonstrates that orphanhood is an economic phenomenon closely related to the concept of childhood, which is shown to be a social and economic construct with no universal validity (Angeles et al., 2018).

While numerous studies have shed light on the challenges faced by orphans and vulnerable children, there is a clear research gap regarding the specific and nuanced experiences of adolescent orphans in the Philippines, particularly those residing in care institutions such as the Duyan Ni Maria Children's Home in Mabalacat.

Existing research has shown that orphanhood has negative emotional, behavioral, and developmental consequences. However, there has been little research on the unique experiences, challenges, aspirations, and dreams of adolescents living in institutional homes.

Furthermore, there need to be more studies concentrating on the consequences of being an orphan during adolescence, a vital developmental period. Adolescence is a transitional period in which new demands, difficulties, and coping methods arise. Understanding the unique challenges that orphans confront at this critical stage is critical for designing effective interventions that support their well-being and resilience.

There is a particular need for research investigating the lack of parental support, emotional challenges, and their influence on academic and social outcomes for adolescent orphans. These interconnected factors profoundly impact their opportunities, mental health, and ability to deal with the complicated demands of adulthood.

Furthermore, while institutional care provides a safety net for these adolescents, more research is needed to determine how well the institutional environment addresses their emotional needs, mitigates the negative consequences of social orphanhood, and promotes their overall development. Identifying gaps in the support given by these organizations is critical for improving current practices and creating specific intervention programs.

Overall, addressing this study gap is critical to developing tailored interventions that can alleviate the unique obstacles faced by adolescent orphans, allowing them to appreciate fulfilling and productive lives despite the adversities they have experienced.

Research Objectives

This study aimed to explore the lived experiences of adolescent orphans in Mabalacat, Pampanga. Specifically, the study would address the following objectives:

1. To determine the lived experiences of the adolescent orphans in terms of:
 - 1.1 personal experiences;
 - 1.2 challenges encountered; and
 - 1.3 support services received.
2. To propose an intervention plan based on the findings of the study.
3. To establish the implication of the study to guidance and counseling

Literature Review

Orphans, Emotional and Behavioral Challenges

Approximately 2 million children in the Philippines face neglect or abandonment, driven by various socio-economic factors such as drug-related conflicts, high poverty rates, teen pregnancy, and natural disasters. These conditions often lead children to be placed in

orphanages. Teen pregnancy, exacerbated by the pandemic, is cited as a significant contributor to the orphan crisis, particularly among young mothers from low-income families lacking parenting knowledge. Poverty emerges as another key reason, as parents hope for better opportunities for their children in orphanages due to their inability to provide necessities, (Gaddam 2022).

Emotional and behavioral challenges among orphans reveal significant associations with symptoms such as depression, anxiety, stress, aggression, low self-esteem, isolation, and hopelessness. Orphans exhibit higher prevalence rates of depression, anxiety, and stress compared to non-orphans, with low self-esteem being particularly prevalent among them. Additionally, behavioral problems among institutionalized children include hyperactivity, neglect of school homework, delayed duties, lack of concentration, withdrawal, aggressiveness, lying, stealing, physical aggression, cursing, and disobedience, (Priyadarshini et al., 2020).

Methodology

Research Design

This research study used a qualitative design; this design was simply to reveal and provide a deeper understanding of real-world problems by unfolding participants' manners, experiences, and perspectives (Moser et al., 2017). This research also employed a phenomenological methodology, which emphasizes the interpretation of lived experiences, specifically referring to "the world as we directly encounter it without prior reflection, rather than as we conceptualize, categorize, or contemplate it" (Van Manen, 2017).

Participants

This study was limited to fifteen (15) adolescent social orphans between the ages of 10 and 19. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique in selecting the participants of the study, a sampling technique in which the individuals were selected based on a set of criteria.

Inclusion criteria: Adolescents living in the institutional home Duyan ni Maria who are the ages of 10 and 19. This selection criterion is crucial as it ensures a specific target population for the study. By including adolescents within this age range, the study can explore the unique experiences, challenges, and needs of individuals who are in the transition from childhood to adulthood. Adolescence is a crucial period marked by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. Therefore, understanding the circumstances of adolescents within this age group living in an institutional home like "Duyan ni Maria" is fundamental for developing tailored interventions and support systems.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Those adolescents who maintain regular contact with their parents' family through weekend or vacation visits.
2. Those children who have intellectual disabilities as well as severe chronic medical illnesses.
3. Those whose duration of stay in the institution was less than a month.

The final count was composed of seven (7) orphans who were willing and agreed to undergo an individual interview.

Instruments

The researcher used a semi-structured interview format, an interview guide with both open-ended and closed-ended questions. It was a collection of questions, topics, and problems the researcher desired to investigate in the study. This interview guide served as the primary source of data for this investigation.

Procedure

This study adopted an In-depth interview approach for data collection, aligning with one of the most prominent qualitative methodologies, (Guest et al. 2013). In-depth interviews entail a profound engagement between the interviewer and a sufficiently informed interviewee, fostering rich dialogue and insights.

Ethical Considerations

Studies on social orphans were delicate and intricate, and it was crucial to consider ethical concerns throughout the research process. The researcher sought ethical clearance from the ethics committee to ensure that ethical standards were observed. The study considered the participants' well-being, such as confidentiality, fidelity, respect for participants' autonomy, and obtaining permission from the respective officials. Ethical standards also protected the participants' anonymity. Here are some important ethical considerations to remember:

Protection of vulnerable populations. It is fair to say that, of all the research ethics principles, this admonition was the cornerstone of ethical behavior. Social orphans were a vulnerable and potentially at-risk population. Participants in a research study reasonably expected they would not be exposed to situations in which they could be harmed. One of the minimally perceived risks was the discomfort they might have experienced in responding to personal or sensitive inquiries. Likewise, they were not required to answer any question with which they were uncomfortable. The researcher must provide the option to withdraw from the study, consult with a mental health specialist, or receive a debriefing to mitigate the risks. Including crisis hotlines for mental health in the questionnaire

was yet another measure taken to mitigate the risk.

Confidentiality. Any individual who participated in a research study had a reasonable expectation that any information provided to the researcher would be kept confidential. As a result, the participant had the right to anticipate that such information would not be disclosed to anyone else.

Informed Consent. Individuals who took part in this study were informed about the study's purpose, nature, and possible risks and benefits and had the option of participating or not. Participants who voluntarily participated in the study had signed an informed consent form. Furthermore, since the principal subject of this research was adolescent orphans who were minors, The researcher also obtained informed consent from the children. Consent was sought from their legal guardians, which was obtained from them. They should not have been penalized if they chose to withdraw from the study. Suppose individuals opted to withdraw from the study before the data collection phase was completed. In that case, they could have been confident that their data would have been deleted under the applicable legislation.

Privacy and Anonymity. Any participant who participated in a research project had a reasonable expectation of privacy. They should not have been forced to give the researcher personal information they do not wish to give. Their responses were kept anonymous, and their identities were not linked to them in the data presentation; a specific number was used to identify them. The data gathered was used only for the purposes for which it was collected. The study's findings might have been submitted for publication. It could have been presented at any research forum, published in scholarly publications, or used for any other purpose deemed suitable by the university to promote education, knowledge, or research. However, no information about their identities would be revealed.

Debriefing After the Interview. Interviews with adolescent orphans may elicit emotions and memories related to their experiences. Debriefing sessions will be held to address any emotional distress or discomfort reported by participants during the interview. Participants will be encouraged to communicate their emotions and thoughts safely and nonjudgmentally.

Benevolence. Researchers had to ensure that the potential benefits of their study outweighed any potential risks or damages. In the case of social orphans, researcher have to ensure that their study positively impacted the participants' lives and that the knowledge obtained by exploring and comprehending the lived experiences of adolescent social orphans could provide crucial insights into the obstacles these children encountered and informed the development of effective interventions to promote their well-being.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the summary of findings. Through the analysis of the major theme, many significant findings were formulated. The qualitative output represents a clearer outlook on the lived experiences of adolescent orphans.

The collected data were coded and analyzed from the researcher's employed strategies. From the data, significant themes emerged. Following the objectives of the study, the presentation of the obtained results was divided into three sections based on the analysis's findings. Part I of the presentation focused on their personal experiences as orphaned adolescents. Part II addressed the challenges they had encountered, while Part III described the support services they had received.

Table 1. *Lived experiences of adolescent orphans in terms of personal experience*

<i>Participants' Answers</i>	<i>Sub-themes</i>	<i>Major Themes</i>	<i>Formulated Meanings</i>
<i>"Ano po minsan tinatanong ko ano nasaan ba tloga yung mga magulang ko? Bakit nila ako iniwan dito? Bakit nila ako pinabayaan mapunta dito?" (Sometimes I wonder where my parents really are. Why did they leave me here? Why did they let me end up here?) – IDI-AO3</i>	Seeking Answers in Dealing with the Abandonment		
<i>"Bakit po nila ako naisipan idala dito." (Why did they decide to bring me here?) – IDI-AO6</i>		Parental Abandonment: Seeking Answers Amidst feeling of Rejection and Neglect	It reflects a genuine desire to understand parental abandonment's emotional, psychological, and societal effects.
<i>"Kung hindi na po ba talaga nila ako kayang buhayin, kaya po dinala nila ako dito?" (Is it because they really can't support me anymore that they brought me here?). – IDI-AO7</i>	Questioning the Parents' Decision- Making		
<i>"Ano po yung, dati po, iniisip ko na ano may dahilan kung bakit nila ako pinunta dito, may ano, may problema ganun, siguro di nila ako kayang buhayin, kaya pinunta nila ako dito, so iniisip ko po may malaki silang problem ana kinakaharap ngayon kaya dito nila ako nilagay para atleast mapa-aral</i>	Finding Reasons for the Abandonment		
<i>ng mabuti ganun. – (Before, I used to think that there's a</i>			

reason why they brought me here, like some issue or problem, maybe they can't support me, that's why they brought me here. So, I'm thinking they must be facing a significant problem now, that's why they placed me here, at least to ensure I get a good education.)- IDI-AO3

“Tinanong ko po yung founder ng duyan, tinanong ko po kung nasaan yung nanay at tatay ko, yung nga po sinabi po nya nandito po ako sa duyan sa orphanage daw, bahay ampunan, wala daw po akong nanay tska tatay.” (I asked the founder of the Duyan. I asked about the whereabouts of my mother and father, and she said that I am here in Duyan, at the orphanage, a shelter home. She said I don't have a mother and father.) – IDI-AO2

“Tinatanong ko yung iba, ano, napapatanong din ako meron din kaya silang ano mga magulang? Tas nung nalaman ko po yung iba dito wala ng mga magulang ano parang okay lang sa akin. Pare-pareho lang naman pala kaming walang mga magulang ayun po. Nacurious po sa history ng Duyan, tas yung po yung lola namin, si lola alex, nalaman ko po na yung ibang parents dito, dito rin po sila lumaki.” (I ask others too, you know, I also wonder if they have parents. Then when I found out that some of them don't have parents here, it's like okay with me. Turns out

we're all the same, without parents. I got curious about the history of Duyan, and our grandma, Lola Alex, I found out that some parents here also grew up here.) – IDI-AO3

“Feeling ko po ano, parang ano, feeling ko po mag isa na lang ako nun eh kasi syempre po, wala din akong masyadong kilala nung dinala ako dito kaya ayun. (I felt like, you know, I felt like I was alone back then because, I didn't really know anyone when I was brought here, so there.)– IDI-AO1

“Umiyak po ako nun, sabi ko “hala gusto kong umuwi, wala si momsie, walang magsisiksik sakin”, hindi po ako natuog nun, nandun lang po ako sa higaan, umiyak po”(I cried then, I said, 'oh, I want to go home, momsie is not here, I have no one to cuddle me,' I couldn't sleep then, I just lay there in bed, crying.) – IDI-AO5

“Malungkot kasi po hindi ko na po sila makikita.” (It's sad because I won't be able to see them anymore.) – IDI-AO7

“Napanghinaan po ako ng loob.” (I felt discouraged.) – IDI-AO6

“Hindi nila ako mahal.”(They don't love me.)– IDI-AO2

“Palagi ko pong inisiip na ano, bakit kung parang ano mahal ba talaga ako ng mother ko po kasi syempre iniwan nya po ako dito” (I always think, you know, why did my mother choose to leave me here? Does she really love me) – IDI-AO1

“Inisip ko kung bakit, kasi minsan nakakapanuod ako sa tv na dinadala nya yung mga anak nila sa ganito tas naisip ko lang po na bakit? Bakit pati ako ganun?” (I thought about why, because sometimes I see on TV how parents take their children to places like this and I just wondered why? Why

Seeking Answers for Confirmation

Relating Experiences and Seeking Connection

Sense of Isolation

Emotional Impact of Parental Abandonment

It captures the intense and chaotic emotional chaos that people go through when a parent or other important caregiver leaves them.

Homesickness

Grief and Loss

Feeling Discouraged

Doubt in Self- Worth and Love

Questioning one's Worth

am I in the same situation?)– IDI-AO1

“Iniisip ko lang po kung bakit nila ako ginive-up, dinala po dito.” (I’m just thinking about why they gave me up, brought me here) – IDI-AO6

“Ano po, unang naisip ko po nun, bakit po nila ako iniwan?” (You know, the first thing I thought was, why did they leave me?) – IDI-AO2

Feelings of Rejection and Abandonment

“Iniisip ko kung iniisip nya rin ba kami, kung masaya ba kami dito. Iniwan nya kami tas naghanap ng iba tapos yun ang saya saya nya dun.” (I’m wondering if she thinks about us too, if we’re happy here. She left us and looked for someone else, and she seems so happy there.) – IDI-AO4

Feeling Betrayed

“Ano po yung sa mama ko po kasi po sabi nya, dati po yun nanunuod po kasi kami nun ng tv, tapos yung bata dun orphan, dinala sya sa bahay ampunan, tas tinanong ko yung nanay ko “mommy balang araw din po ba mapupunta po ako sa ganyan? Tas sabi nya “baby never kang mapupunta sa ganyan promise ko yun sayo” tapos nung nandito na ko naalala ko bigla sabi daw hindi ako mapupunta dito eh.” (My mom once told me about a time we watched TV together. There was a story about an orphan being taken to an orphanage. I asked her, “Mommy, will I ever end up like that?” She assured me, “Baby, you will never end up like that, I promise.” But now that I’m here, I suddenly remembered she said I wouldn’t end up here.) – IDI-AO5

Feeling disappointed caused by broken promises.

“Medyo nagkaroon po ako ng konting tampo sa mother ko po kasi syempre iiwan nya po ako dito, tas parang medyo inisip ko po na bakit nya kaya ginawa yun?” (I felt a bit hurt towards my mother because, of course, she’s leaving me here, and I couldn’t help but wonder why she did that) – IDI-AO1

Resentment and confusion about their mother’s actions

“Nalessen sabi po kasi syempre ni Lord na kung ano yung makakabuti sayo yun yung gagawin nya pero para sa akin hindi naman para sa akin makakabuti dito, bakit ganun?” (It crossed my mind because, of course, the Lord says He will do what’s best for you, but for me, it doesn’t seem like being here is what’s best for me, why is that?) – IDI-AO1

Question of faith

Faith Amidst Difficulties

It refers to people’s tenacious faith, trust, and confidence in a higher power, set of beliefs, or inner strength during difficult times.

“Lumakas po, kasi po ano, pinapanalangin ko po sa Kanya na sana balikan ako ng pamilya ko.” (My faith strengthened me because, you know, I prayed to Him that my family would come back for me.) – IDI-AO2

Maintaining Hope and Optimism

“50/50 po, nagtatanong ako bakit ganito? bakit ano, bakit minsan hindi matupad yung wish ko? na sana mas maging masaya pa ako at tsaka hindi na ako pala-iyak ganun.” (Sometimes it feels like a toss-up, you know? I’m wondering why things turn out this way. Why do some of my wishes go unfulfilled? I just wish I could be happier and not shed tears

Spiritual Struggles



anymore.) – IDI-AO4

“Napalapit po ako kay God, kasi po pag may problema po ako, nandun po ako sa higaan ko nagdadasal po ako tas kakausapin ko po sa isip ko “Jesus, bat po ang gulo nilang kausap? Ano ba yung dapat na iaano ko, ano, sasaya ba ko, malulungkot ba ko, or hahayaan ko na lang?” ganun po.” (I drew closer to God because when I have problems, I pray while lying down, and I talk to Him in my mind, 'Jesus, why are they so confusing to talk to? What should I do? Should I be happy, sad, or just let it be?' Like that.) – IDI-AO5

Spiritual Connectedness

“Ano po kasi talaga ako dati, parang may pagka selfish ako, pero nung dumating ako dito, parang natuto akong magpakumbaba.” (Before, I was somewhat selfish, but when I came here, I've learned the importance of humility.)– IDI-AO1

Sense of Humility

Cultivating Virtue
in Institutional
Home

It emphasizes
how important it
is for people
going through
tough times to
develop and
strengthen

“Naging mapagbigay ako ganyan, kasi syempre po kelangan ko ring maging ano sa ibang tao kasi syempre magkakasama kami sa iisang bahay.” (I became more generous because, of course, I also need to be considerate of others since we're all living together in the same house.) – IDI-AO1

Generosity and Adaptability

“Hindi po kami pwedeng makipag-away kasi madadamay po tong Duyan.” (We can't afford to argue because it will affect Duyan). – IDI-AO6

Sense of Discipline

“Naimproved po sa pagtulong sa gawaing bahay.” (I have improved in helping with the household chores.) – IDI-AO5

Sense of Responsibility

significant traits like a
deep sense of humility,
generosity, and
adaptability.

The study concluded that sharing experiences and seeking connections were crucial for adolescent orphans, as these interactions helped them manage emotional issues and foster a sense of belonging. The participants' narratives distinctly described their efforts to understand their abandonment, seek explanations, and find affirmation. The research highlighted the profound impact of abandonment on their emotional well-being and emphasized the importance of support systems and community in their healing process. Themes such as "Faith Amidst Difficulties" and "Cultivating Virtue in Institutional Homes" showed how faith provided hope and resilience, while institutional care nurtured virtues like humility, generosity, adaptability, discipline, and responsibility, essential for their personal growth and well-being.

Table 2. Lived experiences of adolescent orphans in terms of challenges encountered

Participants' Answers	Sub-themes	Major Themes	Formulated Meanings
“Parang nagpre-pretend lang na masaya. Kapag po may nararamdaman ako kini-keep ko na lang po sa sarili ko. (It's like just pretending to be happy. Whenever I feel something, I prefer to keep it to myself.) – IDI-AO1	Emotional Suppression		
“Minsan po pag sa school, nakakaselos lang po kapag merong ano, yung mga kaklase po namin ganyan may mga magulang po.” (Sometimes, when at school, it is envious when there are, you know, our classmates who have parents like that.) – IDI-AO3	Envy	Emotional Challenges	Emotional challenges and struggles that adolescents face from experience and being an orphan.
“Nung dati po nung bago po sinisigawan pa po ako dito, syempre po maiiyak ako.” (Back then, when I was scolded here for the first time, I would cry) – IDI-AO5	Emotional Distress due to verbal outburst		
Para pong nakakainggit kasi po si Ate A po, kasi nga po kaklase ko po			



sya, kapag po pupunta sa school, yung una pong nilalalapan ng mga tao sya po ako po dire-diretso na lang, may times na ako po nung 1st grading meron po akong certificate sa English top 9 yun po, tas meron din po sya, tas nung 2nd grading wala na po ako.” (It is like I envy Ate A because she is my classmate. When we go to school, people usually go to her first, and I am just left alone. There were times when, during the first grading period, I had a certificate for being in the top 9 in English, and she had one too, but in the second grading period, I did not get one)– IDI-AO5

Low Self-Esteem Through Comparison

“Nabully po ako, sabi nakatira daw ako sa bahay ampunan.” (I was bullied, they said I live in an orphanage.) – IDI-AO2

Bullying

Behavioral Challenges

Behavioral challenges and issues that adolescent

“Like for example po may visitors yun, tapos syempre po pag pasaway kami, yung iba mas lalong pasaway, yun kaya, tas kami yung mga teenager, malalaki tas din napapagalitan kasi hindi namin nasasaway yung mga maliliit, tas kami pa yung dumadagdag (Like for example, when there are visitors, and of course, when we misbehave, some behave even worse, you know? And as teenagers, the older ones, we get scolded because we can't control the younger ones, but then we end up making the situation worse.)– IDI-AO3

Misbehavior

“Parang minsan, pala-away po ako, kasi inaaway din ako, kailangan gumanti din paminsan-minsan.” (Sometimes, I find myself getting into fights because I also get provoked, I feel the need to retaliate from time to time.) – IDI-AO4

Aggression and Retaliation

“Lagi kaming pasaway, kaya minsan nagagalit sila, parang hindi po kami marunong makinig. Pasaway po kami, ulit ulit po namin ginagawa yung mga kasalanan namin na alam naman naming mali pero nagagawa pa din namin.” (We're always misbehaving, so it's no wonder they get frustrated; it's like we don't know how to listen. We're disobedient, repeatedly making the same mistakes we know are wrong, yet we continue to do so) – IDI-AO4

Lack of Inhibition

orphans encountered

“Parang mas gusto ko na lang pong maging mag isa ganun.” (I feel like I'd prefer to be alone, you know?) – IDI-AO1

“Yung iba hindi ko rin po talaga kasundo, hindi ko ka vibes. Nahirapan din po akong maging kaclose yung ibang tao dito, kaya tumagal po bago ko silang naging ka close.” (I also find it difficult to get along with other people; we just don't vibe. It was also hard for me to get close to other people here, so it took a while before I became close to them)– IDI-AO1

Isolation and Weak Relationship

“Dito po kasi medyo malaki-laki po yung bahay, kaya marami pong lilinisin, kasabay po nun yung pag-aaral namin, tas yung pagsaktong kain, saktong tulog, yun po, minsan po kasi hindi namin natatapos yung mga gawaing pangpa- aralan po namin, kasi po dahil po dun minsan, yung oras nga po ng pagtulog.” (Here, the house is quite big, so there are many tasks to clean, and we also have our studies, along with having our meals and getting enough rest. Sometimes, we can't finish our schoolwork because our study time is affected, especially by our sleeping schedule.)– IDI-AO3

Time Crunch for Household Chores and School works

Juggling Academic Demands and Domestic Responsibilities

The struggle of the adolescent orphans in managing their academic requirements and household chores resulting in a time crunch and emotional strain

“Maraming ginagawa po, parang nakaka-stress.” (There's a lot to do, it's kind of stressful.) – IDI-AO5

Overwhelmed by numerous tasks

“Yung pataas ng pataas yung pag-aaral namin yun po, medyo na i-



stress lang po kami minsan kasi maraming ginagawa.” (As our studies become increasingly demanding, we sometimes get a bit stressed because of the workload.)
– IDI-AO3

Marami kaming binabayaran sa school, kasi po carpentry po ako, so marami po kaming binili ganyan ganyan, tas kasama pa po yung science exhibit, tas yung festival pa po namin, tas pag magrerequest na po ganya ganyan, ibubunganga po “diba nagpapadala yung lola mo, bakit ka nagrerequest ka sa amin ganyan ganyan” (We had a lot of expenses at school, especially since I was taking carpentry. We had to buy various materials for our projects, and there were additional costs for the science exhibit and our school festival. When we needed to make requests for things, some people would question, “Isn’t your grandmother sending you money? Why are you making requests from us?) – IDI-AO5

Financial strain in school due to academic requirements

“Kapag po pinapagalitan kami, feeling ko ang sama na nila sa akin. Minsan po nagugulahan din po ako dito, kasi sasabihin po nila na ano “ang tali-talino mo, hindi mo ginagamit yung utak mo dito sa bahay, ganyan, ganyan. (When we’re being scolded, I feel like they’re being mean to me. Sometimes I also get confused here because they’ll say things like, ‘You’re so smart, but you don’t use your brain here at home,’ stuff like that.)– IDI-AO7

Dealing with demeaning comments

“Kapag napapagalitan po kami, pinagsasabihan kami, minsan po nakakainsulto mga sinasabi nila.” (When we’re scolded or reprimanded, sometimes the things they say feel insulting.) – IDI-AO3

Facing insulting remarks

Emotional Effects of Disciplinary actions and Hurtful Remarks from Houseparents

The effect of punitive actions and harsh remarks made by caretakers or house parents on orphans’ emotional well- being.

“Sinisigawan po ng mga house parents. Lagi po nasesermonan. Hindi alam saan lulugar yung emotions” (The house parents yell at us. We’re constantly being lectured. Emotions are left unsettled.)
– IDI-AO5

Challenges in Emotional Expression

Adolescent orphans face significant emotional challenges stemming from abandonment and neglect, which impact their self-esteem, emotional well-being, and ability to form meaningful connections. They often cope by suppressing emotions, leading to emotional detachment and difficulty seeking help. These challenges manifest as behavioral issues such as anger, aggression, and difficulty adjusting to new environments, highlighting the need for psychological and emotional support. Additionally, balancing domestic responsibilities with academic obligations causes stress and negatively affects their performance and health. Financial burdens further exacerbate their concerns. The negative emotional impact of disciplinary actions and hurtful comments from house parents adds to their struggles, leading to feelings of insecurity, self-doubt, and isolation.

Table 3. Lived experiences of adolescent orphans in terms of support services received

Participants’ Answers	Sub-themes	Major Themes	Formulated Meanings
<p><i>“Ano po, diba kapag sa school syempre marami kami dito, prang sinusupport naming yung isa’t-isa halimbawa po napili ako ganyan, lahat sila iche-cheer nila ako yung ibang mga elementary pupunta po sa school namin para lang ipag-cheer ako, masaya naman kasi nalaman ko na marami pong sumusuporta sa akin.” (You know, in school, we have a lot of support for each other. For example, if I get chosen for something, they all cheer for me. Some of the elementary students even come to our school just to cheer for me. It’s nice to know that many are supporting me, and it makes me happy.)</i>– IDI-AO1</p>	Peer Support and Camaraderie	Emotional Support and Encouragement	Signify a cohesive and enduring relationship between individuals who exhibited strength, endurance, and resilience when confronted with obstacles or hardship.
<p><i>“Kapag po may problema, chine- cheer-up po kami.” (When there’s a problem, they cheer us up.)</i> – IDI-AO7</p>			
<p><i>“Magcocomfort tas yung pagiging friendly ganun” (They’ll offer comfort and being friendly.)</i> – IDI-AO3</p>	Emotional Support		

<p>“Tas yun po pag nakikita po namin yung bawat isa na ganun din, parepareho naman po kami ng ginagawa ano kami na lang po yung nag “<i>uy kaya nyo yan</i>” gaganun po kami.” (And when we notice each other facing similar situations, we’re all like, ‘Hey, you’ve got this.) – IDI-AO3</p>	<p>Friendly and supportive of one another</p>		
<p>“Magcocomfort pati rin naman po yung mga houseparents sinasabi nilang “<i>okay lang yan, madami pa kayong pagdadaan</i>” ganun kaya pa yan, ganun po sila, magcocomfort po</p>	<p>Uplifting each other Comfort and Reassurance from house parents</p>		
<p>“<i>silang, so feeling po namin malakas kami, kaya naming lahat.</i>” (They also provide comfort, even the houseparents would say, ‘It’s okay, you’ll go through a lot more, they comfort us like that, making us feel strong, like we can handle everything)– IDI-AO3</p>			
<p>“Pinalaki naman po kaming maayos.” (We were raised properly.) – IDI-AO3</p>	<p>Proper care and guidance</p>		<p>Indicate a positive upbringing and care</p>
<p>“Naturuan naman po kami ng maayos kahit papaano.” (We were taught well, at least to some extent.) – IDI-AO6</p>	<p>Positive Upbringing</p>	<p>Positive upbringing and care</p>	<p>and guiding a child during their early years to promote healthy emotional, intellectual, and physical growth.</p>
<p>“Inalagaan po kami.” (We were taken care of.) – IDI-AO3</p>	<p>Positive care and support</p>		<p>Refer to a sufficient distribution and supply of necessities needed for the daily use of the institution</p>
<p>“Kumpleto naman po yung mga gamit namin as in sobra sobra pa nga po” – IDI-AO1</p>	<p>Sufficient Commodity Provision</p>	<p>Sufficient Commodity Provision</p>	<p>Refer to a concept of providing individuals with the opportunity and means to gain knowledge, skills, and information through formal or informal educational channels.</p>
<p>“Pinaaral po.” – IDI-AO3</p>	<p>Education and Learning Access</p>	<p>Education and Learning Access</p>	<p>Refer to appreciating and valuing the importance of interpersonal connections that are marked by emotional connection, support, and mutual trust.</p>
<p>“Friendship, nagbalak balak pa kasing pa-reunion-reunion pag sakaling naghiwa-hiwalay na daw po kami.” – IDI-AO4</p>	<p>Valuing friendships</p>	<p>Valuing friendships</p>	<p>Indicate an emotional experience of feeling accepted, loved, and connected in a group, community, or family.</p>
<p>Hindi po nila kami itinuring na iba, minahal po nila kami na parang sarili nilang anak – IDI-AO3</p>	<p>Sense of Love and Belongingness</p>	<p>Sense of Love and Belongingness</p>	
<p>“Yung mga tinuro po dito, pagiging mapagmahal po sa kapwa, tapos gumalang po, matuto pong tumulong sa mga tumulong sa amin, pag may trabaho na po ako, pwede ko po tong balikan, yung tinulong po nila sa akin maibalik ko po sa kanila” – IDI-AO6</p>	<p>Positive Attitude and Paying It Forward</p>		<p>Refer to intentional efforts made to instill positive values, principles, and practical insights in persons, usually throughout their upbringing and schooling.</p>
<p>“Yung mga lesson po na nakuha namin sa mga houseparents, yung mga sinabi po nila na positive, pwede pong baunin, ano po yung pagiging responsible po tapos sa ano po laging mag thank kay God, pagiging ano maunawain ganun po.” – IDI-AO3</p>	<p>Positive Life Lessons and Values</p>	<p>Fostering Positive Values and Life Lessons</p>	

The study concludes that emotional support and encouragement play a vital role in the lives of adolescent orphans, significantly contributing to their well-being and resilience. Peer support and camaraderie provided these young individuals with a sense of belonging and understanding, while the guidance and reassurance from house parents created a stable, trusting environment. These diverse forms of support enabled orphans to express their emotions openly, develop resilience, and manage their challenges more

effectively. Positive parenting and care further shaped their development, providing essential emotional and mental support. Financial stability, educational access, and the cultivation of friendships and a sense of belonging were also crucial, offering stability, purpose, and assurance for the future. Overall, the study underscores the importance of nurturing supportive relationships and comprehensive support services in enhancing the well-being and personal growth of adolescent orphans.

Discussion

This study delves into the multifaceted experiences of adolescent orphans, highlighting themes such as parental abandonment, emotional struggles, and the transformative power of support systems. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of adolescent orphans, fostering a sense of community, and recognizing their resilience in overcoming adversity. Additionally, it explores the challenges faced by these individuals, including emotional suppression, academic stress, and negative interactions with caregivers. The critical role of emotional support from peers, caregivers, and professionals is underscored, along with the significance of peer support groups in addressing emotional and behavioral issues. Overall, the study emphasizes the necessity of cultivating supportive relationships and providing holistic support to promote the well-being and development of adolescent orphans.

Conclusion

This research highlighted the critical importance of addressing the emotional and spiritual needs of adolescent orphans, emphasizing the role of belonging and resilience in coping with grief. It emphasized their search for understanding, the qualities they cultivated, and the significance of faith in their journey to recovery. Despite facing significant challenges, such as emotional difficulties stemming from neglect and abandonment, these adolescents demonstrated remarkable strength. Their experiences revealed struggles with controlling emotions, envy, anger outbursts, and self-esteem issues, impacting their sense of self-worth. Traumatic past experiences contributed to behavioral problems, social isolation, and difficulties adjusting. However, emotional support from peers, caregivers, and professionals played a crucial role in their well-being, highlighting the importance of fostering connections and providing comprehensive support services for adolescent orphans' resilience and development.

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