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Exploring The Common Mental Health Issues Amongst Street Children of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the mental health challenges faced by street children in Pakistan, a population largely underrepresented in psychological research. Using a quantitative, between-subjects design, the study compared 116 street children with 116 non-street (school-going) children on measures of mental health, trauma, resilience, and relationships. Standardized tools, including the Child and Adolescent Trauma Screen (CATS), Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), and Youth Strength of Relationship Scale, were administered. Results from MANOVA revealed that street children experienced significantly more mental health difficulties than school-going children ($p < .001$), alongside higher exposure to traumatic events and weaker relationships with significant others ($p < .001$). Regression analysis indicated that, although no single reason for street migration directly predicted poor mental health, trauma exposure and relationship strength were significant predictors of adverse outcomes. These findings underscore the need for culturally informed mental health interventions and policy development for street-connected youth in Pakistan.

Keywords: street children; Mental Health; Trauma; Resilience; Pakistan