



Children's Socio-Emotional Well-being in Low-Income Communities: A Field Study on the Streets of El-Salam City, Egypt

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Abstract. As many low-income families moved to Cairo in search of better living and work possibilities, the number of informal housing units grew, compelling authorities to start establishing low-income residential neighborhoods within the city. The stakeholders were so eager to meet this demand that they neglected the population's social and psychological needs, especially children. Children raised in societies that propagate lawlessness and moral deterioration, like El-Salam City in northern Cairo, instead of becoming the nation's building blocks. Children living in low-income neighborhoods will be interviewed about their connection with the urban street environment. That is, it looks at individual or environmental factors that children perceive as affecting their social and emotional well-being. Indeed, the results found that there is a correlation between children's socio-emotional wellbeing and the street as a place. So, the study recommended that collaborating with urban planners, sociologists, and local governments is crucial to improving children's well-being in their residential communities.

Keywords: Children; Well-being; Sense of place; Residential streets.

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, children's experiences are becoming better understood because of calls for a rethink of how childhood is conceptualized, which has resulted in substantial theoretical achievements as well as an examination of how children's wellbeing is built. Efforts to uncover the essence of child well-being are increasingly located in the present moment, are considered context-dependent. When it comes to social and emotional development, children do not develop in a vacuum; rather, their well-being is influenced by a variety of individual and environmental factors [1] such as a child's temperament, the nature of their parent-child relationship, the context of their family, their school, and the street environment as the closest and most appropriate environment for their economic circumstances to spend their day after school and outside the home. Children who grow up in low-income communities may have different childhood experiences than children who do not grow up in such a setting, and they may face more obstacles throughout their lives as a result. [2] Although great progress has been achieved in our knowledge of children's well-being, there are still substantial gaps in our understanding of certain dimensions of well-being as well as the unique context of children living in impoverished urban areas.

2. PROBLEM DEFINITION

The street in low-income housing is the most available place for children outside the home. This lack of street quality as an open public space in low-income neighborhoods has been a problem. This influences the social and emotional well-being of the children.

3. STUDY AIM

The purpose of this study is to determine the correlation between a child's sense of his or her residential street environment and his or her socio-emotional well-being in low-income neighborhoods. In an attempt to close the gap between users, especially children under the study, and other stakeholders, aiming to create healthy street environments for children and their families.

4. STUDY METHOD

It is necessary to have a theory guiding the selection of research tools to be effective in achieving research objectives. As a result of discussions in literature reviews on theories of sense the street environment as a place and assessments of children's social and emotional well-being, this study is grounded in developmental contextual theory, which holds that human development is inextricably linked to proximal contexts such as neighborhoods. [3]

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1. Children's Social and Emotional Well-being

A child's social and emotional well-being refers to how they "act, behave, feel, express themselves, and interact with others." No single indicator can measure social and emotional well-being. It is commonly accepted that children's behavior is a reflection of their social and emotional wellbeing, acting as a conduit for positive or negative social and emotional experiences. Children's positive social and emotional experiences can help children develop skills that will help them cope with adversity and grow personally [4].

For example, when looking at how social and emotional well-being contributes to behavioral responses, Hamilton and Redmond (2010, p.38) [5] suggest fundamental concepts for informing measures of children's social and emotional well-being. In a dynamic connection, they give a dual view of children's social and emotional well-being.

Personal characteristics are intra-and inter-personal. The intra-personal level is linked to children's temperament, attitudes, and values. This includes children's emotional regulation, or their ability to feel, manage, and appropriately express emotions. Also, self-control, resilience, coping skills, and confidence and perseverance in learning [6]. For inter-personal development, it means developing social skills such as empathy, trust, cooperation, conflict resolution, and the ability to make and maintain connections with others.

The environmental dimension has three parts: family, school, and community. Family factors include child-parent interactions. School factors include excellent relationships with teachers, a quality curriculum, and activities that children like; all are features of the educational environment. The third dimension comprises growing up in caring communities where children are viewed as resources as well as social capital and networks [7]. Culture, social values, human rights, and political regulations must all be considered at a social level. Children's independence grows with age, and their social surroundings and interactions with others outside the family develop.

5.2. Streets for Children's Well-being

Whether a city's environment is good or poor is mostly determined by its streets and the people who live on and around them. Streets provide a public open area as well as a platform for children's social, emotional, and well-being. Because open space is rare in low-income communities, streets are especially important for urban public life. When we talk about streets, we're not just referring to roadways for vehicles. As a cultural phenomenon, street play promotes social contact and the health of children and the local community.

6.2. Study Implementation

6.2.1. Participants

According to Piaget (1964, p.177), a child can distinguish the city by the age of seven. By now, he understands personal reasoning.[15] The research targets were children aged between 7 and 12 years old who live in El-Salam (I), especially in the Zelzal and Al-Abd/B.B.C residential blocks. According to the General Authority for Educational Buildings in Cairo, there are two schools in the study area for primary education stage; one is government and the other is private. The selected school was a governmental school, which included the grades suitable for the study sample, i.e., primary schools. It includes the children living in the study area in which the school is located. Hence, in order to reach children who meet these criteria, the public primary school serving the study area (Suhaib Al-Roumi Primary School) was identified, and the researcher made a presentation to the primary school principal in order to further the objective of the research and obtain permission to conduct some workshops with the children. With his consent, it was arranged to enter three classes at the school at specified times to hold workshops to complete the work of the various qualitative questionnaires: first the Child and Youth Resilience Measure – 28 (CYRM-28), second the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), and finally, the Sense of Place Scale (SOPs). Hence, 63 children—59% girls, 41% boys—filled out the questionnaire and were asked to complete the mapping and survey activities. With the use of a projector, the researcher guided the students through the questionnaire, question by question.

6.2.2. Method

An introduction to the data collection tools followed, including the scales as shown in “Table 1”, aimed at collecting quantitative data from primary school children across the study area. To address research question one, what are the internal and external factors that influence socio-emotional well-being, as articulated by primary school-aged children in low-income residential communities? Information was gathered through quantitative questionnaire, namely the CYRM-28, to determine the psychosocial resources available to children and the behavioral aspects of primary school children in low-income communities, as shown in “Table 2” and to address research question two, what is the child's perception of his or her socio-emotional strengths and weaknesses in light of his or her exposure to the street environment? Information was gathered through a quantitative questionnaire, namely the SDQ, to determine the social-emotional strengths and weaknesses of children, as shown in “Table 3”. In addition, the child was asked to complete the SOPs, as shown in “Table 4”. This scale aimed to gain insight into children's perceptions of their street environment, thereby addressing research question three: How do children perceive the socio-emotional support their street environment provides in relation to their sense of place? while Research question number four: Is there a correlation between a child's sense of the street environment and his or her socio-emotional well-being? This was determined through analysis of the results obtained from all the surveys.

TABLE 1. Scales, Subscales, and a Score Range that Were Used Research

Scale	Subscales	#Qs.	Score Range	Maximum Score	Data Source
SOPS	Place identity	14	1-5 for each subscale	210 (Higher Scores Increased SOP)	Sense of Place Scale Hay, 1998b/ Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001.
	place attachment	14			
	Place dependency	14			
CYRM	Individual	11	1-5 for each subscale	140 (Higher Scores Increased Resilience)	The Child and Youth Resilience Measure – 28 CYRM-28, Resilience Research Centre, 2009.
	Caregiver	7			
	Context	10			
SDQ	Emotional symptoms	5	1-3 for each subscale	40 (Higher Scores Increased Difficulties)	The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire SDQ, Goodman, 1997.
	Conduct problems	5			
	Hyperactivity	5			
	Peer interaction	5			
	Pro-social behavior	5			

TABLE 2. A sample questionnaire for child and youth resilience measure – CYRM- 28

Child and Youth Resilience Measure – CYRM- 28											
Name of the child:..... Grade:.....						1	2	3	4	5	
Individual	Individual personal skills										
	Q2	I co-operate with people around me					1	2	3	4	5
	Q8	I try to finish what I start					1	2	3	4	5
	Q11	People think that I am fun to be with					1	2	3	4	5
	Q13	I can solve problems without harming myself or others (being violent)					1	2	3	4	5
	Q21	I am aware of my own strengths					1	2	3	4	5
	Individual peer support										
	Q14	I feel supported by my friends					1	2	3	4	5
	Q18	My friends stand by me during difficult times					1	2	3	4	5
	Individual social skills										
	Q4	I know how to behave in different social situations					1	2	3	4	5
	Q20	I have opportunities to show others that I am becoming an adult and can act responsibly					1	2	3	4	5
	Q15	I know where to go in my community to get help					1	2	3	4	5
	Q25	I have opportunities to develop skills that will be useful later in life (like job skills and skills to care for others)					1	2	3	4	5
Total Score						.....				
Caregiver	Physical Caregiving										
	Q5	My parent(s)/caregiver(s) watch me closely					1	2	3	4	5
	Q7	If I am hungry, there is enough to eat					1	2	3	4	5
	Psychological Caregiving										
	Q6	My parent(s)/caregiver(s) know a lot about me					1	2	3	4	5
	Q12	I talk to my family about how I feel					1	2	3	4	5
	Q17	My family stands by me during difficult times					1	2	3	4	5
Q24	I feel safe when I am with my family					1	2	3	4	5	

Context	Q26	I enjoy my family’s culture and traditions	1	2	3	4	5	
	Total Score		.....				
	Spiritual							
	Q9	Spiritual beliefs are a source of strength for me	1	2	3	4	5	
	Q22	participate in organized religious activities	1	2	3	4	5	
	Q23	community I think it is important to help out in my	1	2	3	4	5	
	Education							
	Q3	Getting an education is important to me	1	2	3	4	5	
	Q16	I feel I belong at my school	1	2	3	4	5	
	Cultural							
	Q1	I have people I look up to	1	2	3	4	5	
	Q10	I am proud of my ethnic background	1	2	3	4	5	
	Q19	I am treated fairly in my community	1	2	3	4	5	
	Q27	I enjoy my community’s traditions	1	2	3	4	5	
	Q28	I am proud to be Egyptian	1	2	3	4	5	
Total Score		.....					
Total Score		.....					

TABLE 3. A sample questionnaire for the strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ)

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)					
<i>Name of the child:..... Grade:.....</i>			Not True	Somewhat True	Certainly True
The Internalizing Score	Emotional symptoms				
	Q3	I get a lot of headaches, stomach aches, or sickness	0	1	2
	Q8	I worry a lot	0	1	2
	Q13	I am often unhappy, down-hearted, or tearful	0	1	2
	Q16	I am very nervous about new situations. I easily lose confidence.	0	1	2
	Q24	I have many fears, I am easily scared	0	1	2
	Total Score		.....	
	Peer interaction				
	Q6	I usually on my own. I generally play alone or keep to myself	0	1	2
	Q11	I have one good friend or more	2	1	0
	Q14	Other people my age generally like me	2	1	0
	Q19	Other children or young people pick on me or bully me	0	1	2
Q23	I get on better with adults than with people my age	0	1	2	
Total Score		.....		
The Externalizing Score	Conduct problems				
	Q5	I get very angry and often lose my temper	0	1	2
	Q7	I usually do as I’m told	2	1	0
	Q12	I fight a lot. I can make other people do what I want	0	1	2
	Q18	I am often of lying or cheating	0	1	2
	Q22	I like things that are not mine from home, school, or elsewhere	0	1	2
	Total Score		.....	
	Hyperactivity				
Q2	I am restless, I cannot stay for long	0	1	2	

Q10	I am constantly fidgeting or squirming	0	1	2
Q15	I am easily distracted; I find it difficult to concentrate	0	1	2
Q21	I think before I do things	2	1	0
Q25	I finish the work I'm doing. My attention is good.	2	1	0
Total Score		.....	
Total Difficulties Score		.....	

TABLE 4. A sample questionnaire for the sense of place scale (SOPs)

Sense Of Place Scale (SOPs)						
<i>Name of the child:..... Grade:.....</i>		1	2	3	4	5
Street Identity						
Q1	This street is a wonderful place in which to live	1	2	3	4	5
Q2	This street is a good place for children to grow up in.	1	2	3	4	5
Q3	They should knock the whole place down and start again.	5	4	3	2	1
Q4	The environment in this street is bleak and depressing.	5	4	3	2	1
Q5	The quality of life in this street is low.	5	4	3	2	1
Q6	People don't care much about this area, and it's no wonder.	5	4	3	2	1
Q7	This street has a lot of good things going for it.	1	2	3	4	5
Q8	This street is a good place for families.	1	2	3	4	5
Q9	People should be proud to say they live in this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q10	It is dangerous to live in this street	5	4	3	2	1
Q11	In general, I am satisfied with living in this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q12	I think I agree with most people in my street about what is important in life.	1	2	3	4	5
Q13	I believe my neighbors would help me in an emergency.	1	2	3	4	5
Q14	I like to think of myself as similar to the people who live in this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Total Score		.....			
Street Attachment						
Q15	I feel like I belong to this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q16	The friendships I have with other people in my street mean a lot to me.	1	2	3	4	5
Q17	Given the opportunity, I would like to move out of this street.	5	4	3	2	1
Q18	If the people in my street were planning something I'd think of it as something "we" were doing rather than "they" were doing.	1	2	3	4	5
Q19	I feel loyal to the people in my street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q20	A feeling of fellowship runs deep between me and other people in this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q21	I plan to remain a resident of this street for several years.	1	2	3	4	5
Q22	I feel relaxed when I'm on this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q23	I feel happiest when I'm on this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q24	This street is my favorite place to be.	1	2	3	4	5
Q25	I really miss this street when I'm away from it for too long.	1	2	3	4	5
Q26	Living in this suburb gives me a sense of community	1	2	3	4	5
Q27	I feel safe and secure on the street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q28	Everything about this street is a reflection of me.	1	2	3	4	5
Total Score		.....			
Street Dependence						
Q29	I visit my neighbors in their homes.	1	2	3	4	5
Q30	I borrow things and exchange favors with my neighbors.	1	2	3	4	5
Q31	I would be willing to work together with others on something to improve my street.	1	2	3	4	5

Q32	I regularly stop and talk with people in my street	1	2	3	4	5
Q33	This street is a pleasant place to walk	1	2	3	4	5
Q34	If I needed advice about something I could go to someone in my street	1	2	3	4	5
Q35	This street is the best place for doing the things, I enjoy the most.	1	2	3	4	5
Q36	For doing the things that I enjoy most, no other place can compare to this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q37	This street is not a good place to do the things I most like to do.	5	4	3	2	1
Q38	As far as I am concerned, there are better places to be than this street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q39	I can freely move around on the street.	1	2	3	4	5
Q40	My street is the best place to play with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
Q41	I can go anywhere in my area, on my own or with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
Q42	Would you like to live in another area?	5	4	3	2	1
Total Score		.....			
Total Score		.....			

6.2.3. Data Examination

The scales chosen for this study were chosen because of their wide usage in urban research and as tools for measuring social and emotional elements of children's well-being such as feelings of belonging, resilience, and prosocial behaviors. Furthermore, the chosen scales enabled the inclusion of various informants by a whole-child approach. For quantitative analysis, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized.

6.2.4. Results

The findings of questionnaire surveys conducted on children are reported in this part, with the majority of the information presented in figurative form. For the internal and external factors that influence socio-emotional well-being, Results showed that the internal factors that influence socio-emotional well-being could be determined from the questions focusing on individuality in the child and youth resilience measure as shown in "Figure 2," and it was found that the vast majority of children experience high levels of individual peer support, with 95 percent of children believing that they are supported by their friends and 91 percent believing that their friends give them help during tough times. When questioned about the options available to them to enhance their skills to be more successful in the future, they responded with a low score of 33 percent. According to the results of the study, boys and girls differ significantly in their replies to the indications of unique personal skills, particularly when it comes to the method, they choose to address their difficulties. The following were the replies received: According to the results of the study, 63 percent of boys who experience problems turn to violence to resolve them, compared to only 33 percent of girls. Also remarkable is the fact that more than two-thirds of the sample are unaware of their particular strengths.

According to indicators of external influences, for the child's perception of his or her socio-emotional strengths and weaknesses in light of his or her exposure to the street environment. The results for the strengths and difficulties as shown in "Figure 3" were that to evaluate these characteristics, there are five primary indicators. First, when it comes to emotional problems, the findings revealed that more than 90 percent of the sample suffers from anxiety, fear, nervousness, and depression when confronted with new situations, in addition to experiencing headaches and stomach pain as a result of these negative emotions. Second, when it comes to peer interactions, the findings revealed that boys have higher rates of group play and acceptance among friends, as well as dealing with a wider range of people, than girls who stay at home most of the time and do not have the opportunity to learn about their communities around them. However, the findings revealed that bullying by peers occurs at the same rate for both girls and boys, regardless of whether they attend a school or live in a residential community. Third, when it comes to behavioral issues, there is also a similarity in the behavior of boys and girls when it comes to submitting to adults and following commands, but on the contrary, they get extremely agitated and irritated. Boys are more aggressive and

persistent in their attempts to obtain their desires in front of adults than girls, but the overall number of boys and girls does not reach 45 percent of the whole sample. Furthermore, with a 49% success rate, children occasionally resort to dishonesty and lying to achieve their desires. Fourth, with rates of more than 60% of the total sample suffering from hyperactivity, represented by inattention, rapid dispersal, and the inability to finish something with the same level of attention. This is in addition to the fact that less than half the sample thinks before starting something. Finally, indicators of prosocial behavior showed that children enjoy slightly higher than average rates of helping others, sharing belongings, and volunteering to help those around them in their residential environment. Furthermore, an average of 54 percent of those who answered the survey questions did not feel that it was important for them to be involved in the development of their neighborhood.

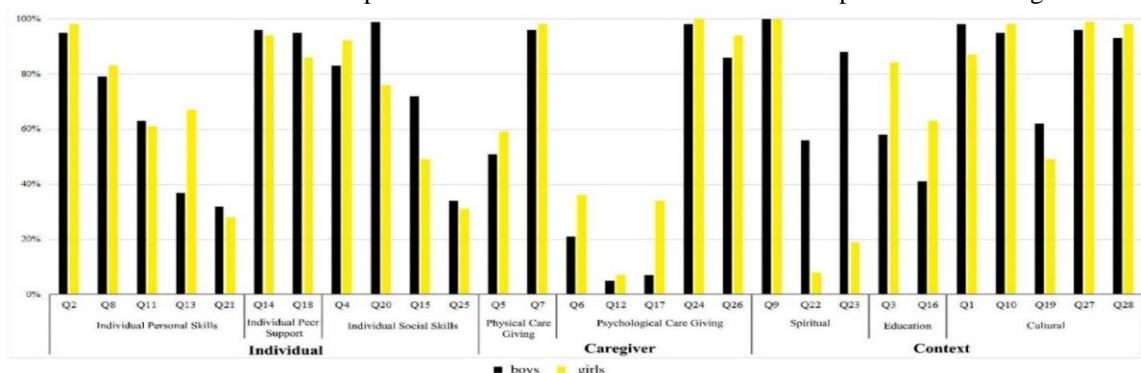


Fig2. Child and Youth Resilience Measure.
Source: Author.

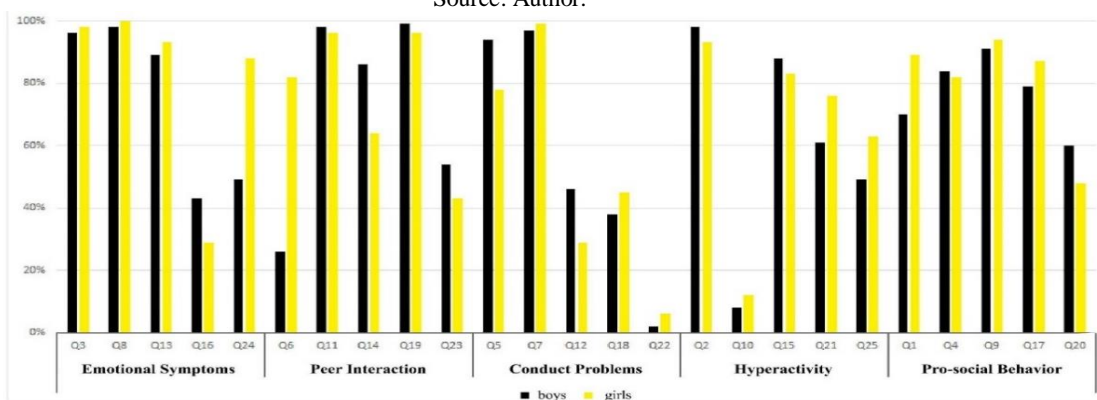


Fig.3. Strengths and Difficulties Measure.
Source: Author.

According to the results as shown in "Figure 4," the children have a sense of place attachment. This reflects directly on their feelings of belonging, loyalty, relaxation, and happiness, and the street is their favorite place to be. The most important factor for children is a sense of safety and security in their streets. However, because it is linked to children's behavior, place dependency is regarded as the most important factor of all. It is one of the most indicative indicators of social and emotional development because it reflects on the daily life behaviors of children. Children don't have a pleasant, safe residential street to walk and play on, and they can't make strong bonds with all the ages in the street. They can't move freely around the area and haven't the opportunity to work with others to do something to improve their streets.

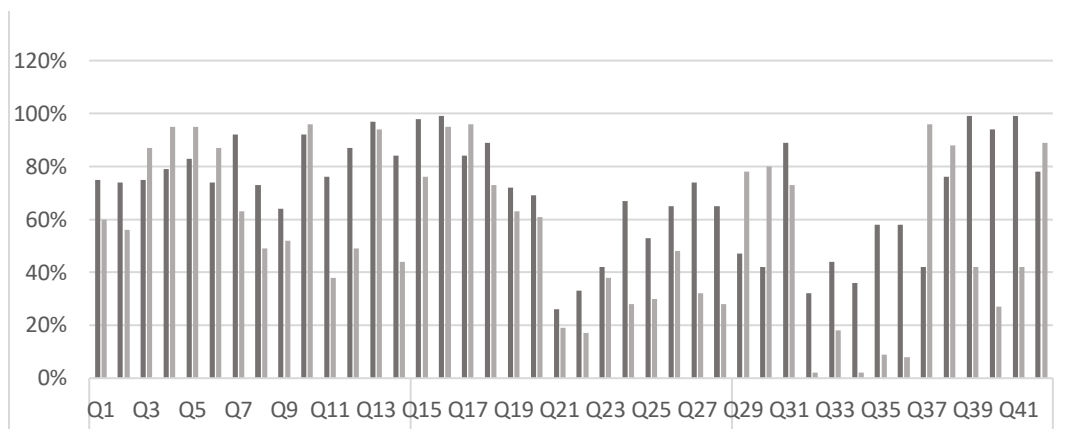


Fig 4. Sense of Street as Place Measure. Source: Author.

Taking into account the different results of the research, we find that there is a relationship between how children perceive and be a part of their environment and their well-being, especially social and emotional well-being. This relationship could be understood through the matrix shown below in "Table 2," which illustrates that if the residential street environment supports children with an identity, children will have achieved high levels of resilience and make good relationships with their communities.

TABLE 2. Correlation Matrix between Children SEWB and Sense of Street as a Place

The Scales Including both Individual Dimensions and Environmental Dimensions for Children's well-being	SDQ	PSOC_BEH			Q1, Q4, Q9, Q17, Q20	
		HYP_ACT.		Q2, Q10, Q15	Q21, Q25	
		CON_PR.		Q5, Q22	Q7, Q12, Q18	
		PEER_PR.	Q11, Q14		Q6, Q19, Q23	
		EMO_PR.		Q3, Q3, Q13, Q24	Q16	
	CYRM	CONT.	Q1, Q3, Q9, Q10, Q23, Q28	Q16, Q19, Q27	Q22,	
		CAR_REL.	Q5, Q6, Q7	Q17, Q24	Q12, Q17, Q26	
		IND.	Q11, Q20, Q21, Q25	Q14, Q18	Q2, Q4, Q8, Q13, Q15	
			IDEN.	ATT.	DEPE.	
			Q1: Q14	Q15: Q28	Q29: Q42	
		Cognitive Domain Beliefs and Perceptions	Affective Domain Feeling and Emotions	Conative Domain Behavioral Intentions		
<i>Sensing the Street as a Place</i>						

Source: Author.

7. CONCLUSION

According to the literature and the field study, the sense of a specific place as the street that a child develops as a result of street-child interaction is known as "street sense." Physical factors, activities, and related concepts associated with these streets are complex factors that influence street sense configuration. Together with street-child interaction, they combine and a place sense is created. The emotional street-child interaction is influenced by life experience and personal, sensitive, cognitive, and behavioral structures. Research findings clearly show that as a child's cognition of that street's features (physical, performance, and meaning) increases, the child's street sense becomes stronger and more effective. But if a child has a negative sense about a street, he might be indifferent to that place or he might avoid it, while when a child feels a positive sense about a place, it means that they love that place and want to be there and communicate with it. Therefore, the fate of the street as a place becomes important to him, and he feels responsible for that place.

The streets have the potential to be a double-edged sword. For children to grow and develop properly, their surroundings must be healthy. The reverse is also true. Therefore, while constructing residential areas, planners must pay close attention to the needs of inhabitants, particularly children, to ensure that the neighborhoods meet their requirements.

8. Future Research Work

In light of the findings and problems identified throughout the research, there are potential opportunities for further research. Among these are: The research can be repeated on a large scale using both quantitative and qualitative indicators to investigate other factors contributing to children's well-being in addition to the ones identified via sensing the streets.

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