



PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED, LEVEL OF ASPIRATIONS AND COPING MECHANISMS OF SCAVENGERS: BASIS FOR DESIGNING AN INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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Abstract:

This study aimed to determine the problems encountered by scavengers, their aspirations, and coping mechanisms in General Santos as a basis for designing or formulating an intervention program. The study used quantitative descriptive survey research. Survey questionnaires were distributed to a randomly selected sample of 50 scavengers from the Gensan Earth Savers Association in General Santos City. The data gathered was statistically treated using frequency counts and weighted mean. Findings revealed that the most common problems were related to the lack of education, electricity, and access to credit. Other moderately experienced issues included inadequate housing, food insecurity, poor access to health services, and unemployment. Less frequent but still relevant concerns involved water and sanitation, insufficient government support, and children not attending school. Social discrimination was the least encountered. In terms of coping, respondents prioritized health, relied on community support, and recognized the role of women in family welfare. Economic adjustments included reduced consumption, income diversification, and migration. Despite hardships, educational sacrifices were rarely made. Aspirations focused on basic needs such as clean water and regular meals, while a strong emphasis was placed on family goals like children's education and safety. These findings guided the formulation of an appropriate intervention program.

Keywords: educational management, problems encountered, aspirations, coping mechanisms, intervention program, Philippines

1. Introduction

The Philippines is a Southeast Asian archipelago with 7,641 islands, divided into three geographic areas: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. As of the 2020 Census of Population and Housing, the total population of the Philippines was 109,035,343. The population of

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the Philippines continues to grow, signifying the growth of the country and contributing to the dynamism of an ever-changing demographic landscape (Philippine Statistics Authority [PSA], 2021). As a country's population increases, products are created to meet needs and wants; thus, more waste is produced from packaging and disposal.

Solid waste management has emerged as an urban issue, creating new employment opportunities that attract rural migrants seeking alternative livelihoods in the city. In large cities, some poor individuals collect recyclable materials from open dumpsites to earn money for their basic needs. Waste-picking provides income without requiring documentation or formal employment, offering a viable option for many.

Life scavenging among rotten materials and oozing methane gases is a reality with no education or prospects for the future. Scavengers can be found on the streets, in open dumps, or in landfills and their days are spent recovering the material to sell for recycling with the expectation of a good income from the local junk shops where they trade their trash for hard-earned cash.

Scavenging is a common occurrence in numerous developing countries. They sell waste from open dumps. It is a social problem since they work under unsafe conditions. These open dumps threaten public health because, in addition to awful odours and aesthetic problems, they are propagation sites for flies, rats, and other disease vectors, as well as a source of air pollution and surface and groundwater contamination.

These troubles could be controlled if final disposal could be carried out in a properly run landfill, which would also help to prevent pollution. Urban cleaning consists of sweeping, storage, collection, transportation, and final sanitary disposal of solid waste. Since disposal is the last step and economic resources are inadequate, it is critical in urban cleaning services in General Santos City and throughout the Philippines.

Accordingly, the Philippines is the "*third-largest producer of solid waste annually among Southeast Asian nations*" (Romero, 2020). As the population increases in the Philippines, the amount of garbage also increases. Along with the population, there is a rise in waste. The increase in waste is another aspect regarding the rise in trash, which is the increase in the standard of living. Waste is produced at a higher rate for those with higher incomes and better living standards. Urbanization also plays a significant role in this problem. As more people move to cities, the amount of waste in those areas increases, leading to issues with managing all the excess garbage.

There must be more active sanitary landfills throughout the country (Coracero *et al.*, 2021). In small island communities, solid waste is primarily managed through open dumping and burning. Some permitted "controlled dumps" have been built, but only minimal environmental controls are in place. Controlled dumps differ significantly from open dumps because some cover material is used to bury waste. Some progressive communities have implemented composting, recycling, and resource recovery operations. Solid waste is handled at the household level in the country's more remote areas since there are no community-wide disposal services.

With this, the researcher undertook this study to look into the possibilities of helping the scavengers determine their coping mechanisms and aspirations, develop

their capabilities, and boost their self-esteem by assessing their needs and aspirations. The researcher would then recommend possible interventions to agencies to help them live an everyday life like any other citizen.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) due to its appropriate depiction of the multifaceted nature of scavengers' experiences. This theory acknowledges the impact of family, community, socio-cultural elements, economic conditions, policies, and historical shifts in forming the lives of scavengers and helps us understand how their problems, aspirations, and coping mechanisms are interwoven within the complex systems surrounding them as they navigate a variety of challenging environments.

Additionally, Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory offers a useful framework for this research. Understanding how scavengers manoeuvre through their difficult environment is made easier by Bandura's theory, which highlights the magnitude of cognitive processes, observational learning, and self-efficacy. This theory could be used to explore how scavengers believe in their abilities, the examples they observe within their community, and their expectations about the outcomes of their actions shape their choices and strategies for coping with the unique set of problems they encounter (Bandura & National Institute of Mental Health, 1986).

Furthermore, this study aligns with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Human needs are structured in a hierarchy, starting with basic needs and progressing to physiological needs and self-actualisation, according to Maslow (1943). Food, water, and shelter are the most basic necessities for survival at the top of this hierarchy, followed by safety, a sense of belonging and love, respect, and self-actualisation. The fight for necessities like food, shelter, and safety is crucial for scavengers because of their hazardous living conditions and ongoing exposure to health hazards. These people frequently live in unstable situations where it is difficult to obtain basic necessities.

2.1 Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by a Conceptual Framework (Figure 1) that illustrates the research process flow. It began with identifying the common problems encountered by the scavenger respondents of the Earth Savers Association. These problems served as the foundation for understanding the problems they faced in their daily lives. The framework then looked at the respondents' level of aspirations, which represented their objectives and aspirations to change their situation. After that, the study looked at the coping strategies the scavengers used, focusing on how they dealt with and handled their difficulties. Ultimately, a suggested intervention program was developed as a result of the framework. Based on the knowledge gained from the scavengers' experiences, goals, and coping mechanisms, this program was created to address the issues that were found.

The framework offered a thorough method for comprehending and enhancing the lives of scavengers through this interrelated process.

A conceptual framework serves to clarify the concentration and focus of the investigation by providing a specific context. It enumerates the fundamental concepts and critical elements necessary for comprehending the variables under investigation in the proposed interrelationships. It provides researchers with guidance on formulating research topics, hypotheses, and methodologies for performing their studies.

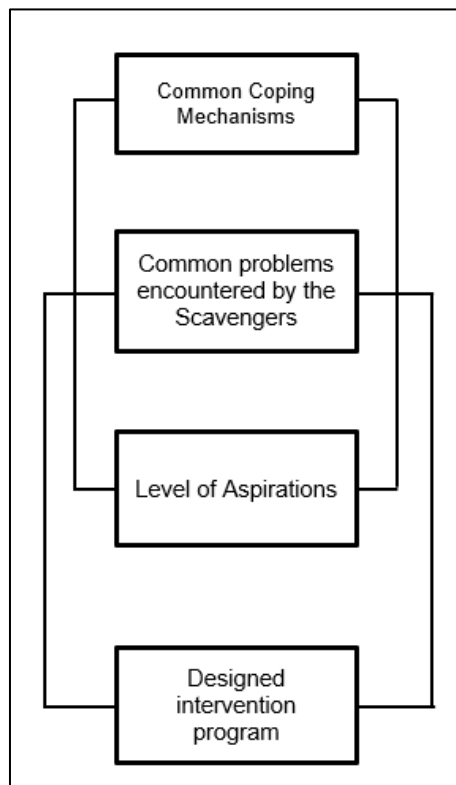


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study

3. Statement of the Problem

- 1) To determine the common problems encountered by the scavenger respondents of the Earth Savers association.
- 2) To determine the level of aspirations of scavengers for a better life.
- 3) To ascertain their common coping mechanisms to overcome their problems.
- 4) To design an intervention program based on the study's findings to address their needs and improve their well-being.

4. Method

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to take a comprehensive look at the problems encountered by the scavengers, their level of aspirations, and how they cope with those challenges, intending to develop an intervention program based on evidence. As explained by Ghanad (2023), quantitative research is a methodical process

that aims to measure and quantify variables in order to respond to research questions like "how long," "how many," or "to what extent." Its main goal is to collect numerical data that can be statistically analyzed to find trends, evaluate connections, or validate theories. By gathering information from a representative sample and using statistical or mathematical tools to interpret the findings, it aims to produce objective and generalizable conclusions.

Furthermore, in order to generate statistically sound and broadly applicable conclusions about a population, quantitative research usually uses large sample sizes. Researchers can be sure that their results are a good representation of the general population by including many people, which makes it less likely that bias or random error will happen. If the sample sizes are too small, the results might not accurately reflect the reality of the target group. This would make the conclusions less valid and valuable. As Price and Lovell (2018) emphasize, the strength of quantitative research lies in its ability to measure and compare data across large groups, which is essential for drawing accurate and meaningful conclusions in fields such as health and social sciences.

Meanwhile, the appropriate design used in this research paper under the quantitative research is a descriptive survey design. The fact that the study used standardized and structured research tools makes it clear that it was quantitative. These tools make it possible to objectively measure variables by ensuring that data collection is always the same and reliable. The focus is on a large, randomly chosen sample, which makes the results more generalizable and valuable to a broader range of people. The study seeks to address particular hypotheses precisely by formulating a straightforward research question, increasing the research design's rigour (Tres Reyes, 2019).

As stated by Ansari *et al.* (2022), a descriptive research design is a research approach aimed at systematically collecting information to describe the characteristics of a specific object, situation, or population. It focuses on answering questions such as what is happening, when and where it occurs, and how it unfolds, rather than exploring the reasons behind it. This method does not change any variables; it just watches and records data as it happens. It often uses different research methods, like surveys, interviews, observations, and case studies, to get accurate and complete information.

Furthermore, this design is appropriate when the primary goal is to summarize and present factual information in a structured format without manipulating any of the variables involved. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain, descriptive research allows researchers to analyze existing conditions using statistical tools to organize, describe, and interpret numerical data. Researchers might gain insights into its target population's characteristics, behaviors, or responses, making it a foundational approach in many empirical studies through this method.

The survey design method was used to collect rich information from a sample of scavengers through structured questionnaires. The survey design was helpful because the researchers were systematically able to gather information using a set of standardized questions. According to Tessler *et al.* (2019), the survey design method relies on self-reported responses so that the researchers may investigate specific variables such as

attitudes, behaviors and experiences. Questions are typically provided as checklists, rating scales or multiple-choice items.

Likewise, when conducting descriptive research, the researcher already has a well-defined population or sample in mind and a clearly stated research problem. The purpose is to gather detailed information that helps describe the current status or nature of the group being studied. This could mean using surveys, interviews, observations, or existing data (Thomas & Zubkov, 2023). Descriptive studies also help show a clear and accurate picture of certain variables or conditions in a population, which can help us understand patterns or general trends (McCombes, 2023).

The descriptive survey design is considered appropriate when the primary goal of the research is to assess and document the current status of a particular phenomenon. As emphasized by Paler-Calmorin and Calmorin (2010), this approach is most fitting for studies that aim to collect data to determine existing conditions or realities being investigated (as cited in Tamban, Lagarto, & Malabayabas, 2021). This design facilitates a systematic examination of present phenomena, enabling the researcher to draw conclusions based on factual representations of the situation.

Furthermore, Paler-Calmorin and Calmorin (2012) highlighted that the descriptive survey method is especially suitable when study participants differ in their characteristics and the researcher seeks to understand the degree to which particular situations or conditions exist. This reinforces the idea that the word "survey" means getting information that shows how things are right now and helps us understand patterns or differences in a group of people (Anayatin, 2023).

4.1 Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher gathered data using the methods outlined in Igwenagu's (2016) book, "Fundamentals of Research Methodology and Data Collection." The process involved several key steps: first, determining what data needed to be collected; second, establishing the duration for data collection; third, selecting the data collection strategy; fourth, collecting the data and analyzing it; and finally, drawing and applying conclusions. Before obtaining the list of respondents, the researcher sought permission to gather information for the study. After obtaining the necessary permission, the data was collected and analyzed statistically.

The data collection process involved using a structured questionnaire administered by the researcher, and she went to areas around the dumpsites. Site visits occurred in two series: one in late October 2018 and another in late December 2018 at the sanitary landfill in Bawing, General Santos City. The first series aimed to investigate issues and document practices related to the dumpsite, including interviews with nearby residents. During this series, approximately a hundred scavengers were observed collecting materials from the dumped waste. The second series assessed households' socio-demographic and socioeconomic conditions and the factors influencing their dependency. Detailed information was obtained from respondents, with half of them interviewed upon consent. In total, the study involved 50 scavengers as respondents.

4.2 Validation of Instrument

Experts in the field of education were consulted to evaluate the content and structure of the questionnaire. Based on their recommendations, necessary revisions were made to refine the instrument. Once validated, the researcher gave the questionnaire to the chosen participants in person, ensuring that the instructions were clear and that ethical issues like informed consent were strictly followed.

4.3 Data Analysis and Statistical Tools

To analyze and interpret the gathered data, appropriate statistical tools were used. Frequency count and percentage were used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents. A weighted mean was used to identify the extent of the common problems encountered by the scavenger. A weighted mean was used to describe the level of aspirations of General Santos City scavenger respondents. Weighting and ranking were used to identify the coping mechanisms of Scavenger respondents of General Santos City.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1 Common Problems of the Scavengers

Table 1 presents the prevailing problems encountered by the respondents. It is shown that the common problems encountered by the respondents are: lack of education of household heads (3.63), lack of electricity (3.60), and access to credit (3.53).

While they sometimes experienced lack of shelter and housing (3.33), lack of food (3.30), insufficient supply and access to community health services (3.20), unemployment (3.13), uneducated and malnourished children (3.10), lack of water and sanitation (2.97), lack of essential services (2.50), lack of support from the government (2.43), children are not in school (2.27), and the lowest mean which is social discrimination (2.17).

Table 1: Problems of Scavengers in General Santos City

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Description
1	Lack of electricity	3.60	Often
2	Lack of education of the household head	3.63	Often
3	Lack of access to credit	3.53	Often
4	Lack of shelter and housing	3.33	Sometimes
5	Lack of food	3.30	Sometimes
6	Lack of water and Sanitation	2.97	Sometimes
7	Unemployment	3.13	Sometimes
8	Insufficient supply	3.20	Sometimes
9	Uneducated and malnourished children	3.10	Sometimes
10	Lack of basic services	2.50	Sometimes
11	Lack of support from the government	2.43	Sometimes
12	In access to community health services	3.20	Sometimes
13	Children not in school	2.27	Sometimes
14	Social discrimination	2.17	Sometimes
Overall Mean		3.03	Sometimes

5.2 Common Coping Mechanisms of Scavenger-respondents for Quality of Life

Table 2 shows the common coping mechanisms of the respondents in dealing with their difficulties.

As shown, the coping mechanisms of the respondents when confronted with problems are specified in Table 1. They often prioritized their health (3.53), with the highest weighted mean among the indicators. Additionally, they frequently sought external community support (3.50) and relied on women as family welfare providers (3.50). However, they reported addressing their financial difficulties less frequently through debt (2.63). In terms of economic aspects, they often reduced their consumption of essential goods (3.90), diversified their sources of livelihood (3.87), and considered migration as an option (3.83). Meanwhile, the least utilized coping mechanism in terms of the economic aspect was reducing the proportion of school-age children attending school (2.60).

Table 2: Coping Mechanism of Scavenger-respondents for Quality of Life

Coping Mechanisms of Scavengers		Mean	Description
Personal Aspect			
1.	External community support	3.50	Highly Agree
2.	Women as family welfare providers	3.50	Highly Agree
3.	Preventive health	3.53	Highly Agree
4.	Debt	2.63	Moderately Agree
Economic Aspect			
1.	Diversified sources of livelihood	3.87	Highly Agree
2.	Migration	3.83	Highly Agree
3.	Reduced consumption of basic goods	3.90	Highly Agree
4.	Reduced the proportion of school-age children attending school	2.60	Moderately Disagree
Overall Mean		3.42	Highly Agree

5.3 Level of Aspirations of the Scavenger-respondents for Quality Life

Table 3 presents the respondents' aspirations for quality of life. It is shown that they highly aspired for a quality life based on the average mean of 4.46.

In particular, in terms of personal-related aspirations, they highly aspired for clean or potable drinking water (3.83) because water at the dumpsites was possibly unclean, and they longed to eat thrice daily (3.43). However, they moderately desired to protect themselves from rain and sun (3.40) and sleep 6 – 8 hours daily (2.73). Meanwhile, the ability to provide for their physical needs (2.40) was rated low.

Meanwhile, in terms of family- oriented aspirations, they highly desired or longed for the luxury of their family (3.90); to give their family at least a vacation in a year (3.80), they highly long to provide their family their material needs (3.70), give their children a proper education as well as protect their family from danger (3.67), and provide their family basic needs (3.56).

Table 3: Level of Aspirations of Scavenger-respondents for Quality Life

Aspirations of Scavengers		Weighted Mean	Description	Verbal Interpretation
Personal-Related Aspirations				
1.	Eat three times a day	3.43	Often	High
2.	Drink clean and potable water	3.83	Often	High
3.	Sleep 6-8 hours a day	2.73	Sometimes	Moderate
4.	Protect self from rain and sun	3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
5.	Can provide physical needs	2.40	Seldom	Low
Family-Oriented Aspirations				
1.	Provision of family basic needs	3.56	Often	High
2.	Give children a better education	3.67	Often	High
3.	Provide family material needs	3.70	Often	High
4.	Ability to protect family from danger	3.67	Often	High
5.	Luxury in life	3.90	Often	High
6.	Family vacation	3.80	Often	High
	Overall Mean	3.46	Often	High

5.4 Proposed Intervention Program

5.4.1 Program Title

Pathways to Dignity: Empowerment and Sustainable Livelihoods for Less Privileged Community

5.4.2 Program Description

It is designed to empower less privileged individuals or scavengers by enhancing their livelihoods, promoting education, and strengthening community support systems. This program recognizes these marginalized groups' unique challenges while working with them to access the resources, skills, and support they require to better their socio-economic situation. This program aspires to create sustainable change that improves the quality of life and dignity of participants through provision of training, access to resources and partnerships with communities.

5.4.3 Program Objectives

- 1) To provide skills training and resources that enable participants to engage in sustainable economic activities.
- 2) To increase access to education and awareness about rights, health, and environmental sustainability.
- 3) To build networks among community members to foster mutual support, collaboration, and resilience.
- 4) Conduct health, nutrition, and hygiene workshops to improve overall well-being.

Marlyn M. Kellawan
 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED, LEVEL OF ASPIRATIONS AND COPING MECHANISMS
 OF SCAVENGERS: BASIS FOR DESIGNING AN INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Activities	Persons involved	Time frame	Budget	Expected outcome
Microfinance and Grants	LGU Barangay officials Microfinance Corporations DSWD NGOs Corporate sponsors	Five-year-round	As needed	- Established a microfinance program that provides small loans or grants for starting or expanding small businesses.
Vocational Training: training in handicrafts, agriculture, waste management, and eco-tourism.	LGU Barangay officials Microfinance Corporations DSWD NGOs Corporate sponsors	Three-year-round	As needed	- Participants learned new skills that can be a source of income.
Workshops on health, nutrition, and rights awareness. This focus on education aims to improve overall well-being and empower them to advocate for themselves.	LGU Barangay officials Microfinance Corporations DSWD NGOs Corporate sponsors	Three-year-round	As needed	- Increased access to education and health resources. - Strengthened community networks and resilience. - Enhanced awareness of rights and sustainable practices

6. Discussion

Based on the data gathered, among the fifty respondents, it was evident that the majority were middle-aged, no less than 50 years old. The gender ratio was approximately even. The B'laans respondents were the largest group, with the T'bolis coming second. Their educational backgrounds varied: some had no formal schooling, others reached different grade levels, and a few finished elementary or high school. Family sizes also differed: some had 1–2 children, others had 7–8, some had 9–10, and a few had 11 or more.

The study showed that the most common problems faced by the scavenger respondents are primarily related to the lack of education, electricity, and access to credit. These top concerns highlight fundamental challenges that can significantly affect their households' overall well-being and opportunities. Other problems, such as the lack of shelter and housing, food, access to community health services, and unemployment, are experienced to a moderate extent, indicating ongoing struggles with basic needs and services. Meanwhile, issues such as the lack of water and sanitation, essential services, government support, and children not attending school are encountered less frequently but remain notable concerns. Social discrimination was identified as the least

encountered problem, and was found to be the least common problem, suggesting that even though it does occur, it is not as common as more tangible socioeconomic problems.

These findings were corroborated by Sioco & Alabanza (2025), indicating that scavengers frequently earn inconsistent incomes substantially less than the minimum wage, and the COVID-19 pandemic restricted this livelihood during various lockdowns and closures of dump sites, exacerbating their income and instability (Bueta & Domingo, 2023). Many scavengers rely on exploitation from middlemen, have no safety nets (such as health insurance, pensions, etc.), and have no steady income streams. Nyathi, James, and Maclonga (2018) noted that scavenging is driven not just by poverty and homelessness but also by the absence of potential alternative work opportunities and protections in the labor sector. Scavengers lived in vulnerable housing situations or on the street, often lacked access to food, water, and sanitation, exacerbating significant ongoing health problems, and stigma (Ekumah *et al.*, 2020; Sridhar *et al.*, 2020).

Furthermore, the studies revealed on the educational disadvantage of scavengers and their children align with Dalugdog and Abordo (2025), who observed that children in scavenger communities are often forced to drop out of school to help with income generation, thereby perpetuating cycles of poverty. Despite attempts to improve their conditions through waste bank initiatives, many scavengers are excluded due to a lack of formal documentation or capital (Dizon & Despojo, 2025). These barriers reinforce their marginalization and hinder access to programs to uplift their socioeconomic status.

Regarding their coping mechanisms, the respondents strongly prioritized their health when facing problems. They also frequently turned to their community for support and recognized the role of women as key providers of family welfare. Financial coping through debt was less commonly practiced, possibly due to limited access to credit or a reluctance to take on financial obligations. Economically, respondents adjusted by reducing their consumption of essential goods, diversifying their sources of income, and considering migration as a potential means of improving their situation. The least utilized coping mechanism was reducing the number of school-age children attending school, which suggests a strong commitment to maintaining educational opportunities despite economic hardship.

Celeste and Halog (2024) corroborate this finding by discussing how scavenger communities will often depend on each other when ill or injured and use their pooled resources to meet their medical needs in the absence of formal health services. These informal safety nets are an essential source of emotional and material support; without institutional help, scavengers can still depend on each other to cope with financial or health issues. Moreover, Becerra *et al.* (2020) found that waste pickers often rely on informal social networks and local organizations, which pose a risk in trying to improve the quality of their lives.

Furthermore, Dizon and Despojo (2025) emphasized women's economic contributions through small-scale businesses like sari-sari stores and street vending. These efforts not only increase household income but also strengthen the role of women in ensuring family stability. Whereas Celeste and Halog (2024) authored such limited

access to formal credit, the majority relied primarily on informal systems like paluwagan, a rotating savings club to assist with emergency essential needs and create a social or relational experience.

Economically, Barford and Ahmad (2021) observed similar patterns among scavengers, who often took on multiple informal jobs such as construction work or laundry services to sustain their households. NGO partnerships, such as those initiated by the Mother Earth Foundation, have also empowered scavengers through training and cooperative systems that improve income and provide recognition (Celeste & Halog, 2024; Dalugdog & Abordo, 2025). Although reducing children's school attendance was the least preferred coping mechanism, it demonstrates the respondents' resilience and commitment to preserving education despite economic pressures.

In terms of their aspirations, the data revealed that the respondents prioritized basic necessities, especially access to clean drinking water and the ability to eat three full meals a day. While they also expressed a moderate desire for protection from rain and sun and adequate sleep, their aspiration to meet their physical needs consistently was comparatively low. On the other hand, family-oriented aspirations were generally high. The respondents strongly desired the luxury and material needs of their families. They also highly aspired to provide their children with proper education, protect their families from danger, and meet their families' basic needs, indicating that, despite personal hardships, their aspirations were deeply centered on the well-being and upliftment of their families.

Similarly, the findings made here are consistent with existing literature that describes the aspirations of waste pickers and scavengers as linked to their wishes for better social and economic conditions, especially for their families (Opoku *et al.*, 2018; Wilson *et al.*, 2005). Prior studies found that scavengers often articulated strong wishes to improve their living conditions, educate their children, and find alternative sources of income, exhibiting a desire to escape poverty and social exclusion (Anggriawati *et al.*, 2020; Sun *et al.*, 2019). While educational access, income irregularities, and dangerous working conditions exist as systemic barriers (Paul *et al.*, 2012; Gumasing & Sasot, 2019), many regularly show resilience and agency to seek better future outcomes.

Furthermore, there is significant evidence that interventions that provide social inclusion, vocational training, and a sense of empowerment can shift waste pickers into more sustainable and secure employment (Xue *et al.*, 2018; Fidelis *et al.*, 2019). These ways in which aspirations are expressed can be understood through both economic need and emotional and social aspects, such as wanting to care for family, escaping marginalization, and seeking respect and dignity within a society (Oriol *et al.*, 2020).

7. Conclusions

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were formulated:

The common problems encountered by the scavenger-respondents of the Earth Savers Association include a lack of education, electricity, and access to credit. Their level

of aspiration is high. In terms of coping mechanisms, they rely on external community support for personal reasons, with preventive health as their priority. Economically, they prioritize reducing consumption of basic goods as their primary survival strategy.

7.1 Recommendations

The following recommendations were established based on the findings of the study:

DepEd may coordinate with the DSWD to enforce the law concerning school-age children, ensuring they can access education without financial barriers. Completing school should be supported by the inability to pay school fees. Providing scholarships or allowances for these children would motivate them to attend school. Encouraging adults to return to school is also recommended, as education is a lifelong process regardless of age, gender, or ethnicity.

The city government may provide scavengers with sustainable livelihood opportunities through government-managed material improvement projects, waste screening facilities, or support for private junkshops. This approach will help them find gainful employment and break the cycle of poverty. Additionally, relocating the remaining scavenger families to more suitable areas where they can continue to make a living should be considered.

Recognizing that GSC Scavengers have aspirations in life, whether individual or family-related, it is recommended that their hopes and aspirations be given due consideration. Despite being part of a minority group, they deserve opportunities to have their basic needs met and to pursue their aspirations.

Subsequently, the coping mechanisms identified among GSC-Earth Savers Scavengers demonstrated that people from all societal classes employ similar strategies to protect themselves and their families from harm or danger. They must be granted equal rights and support from relevant government agencies, including the DSWD.

Additionally, despite their status, scavengers deserve the same rights and privileges as others. They may be offered alternative personal development and growth pathways that benefit their families.

Lastly, it is recommended that the local government unit utilize or adapt the proposed intervention program to help empower these marginalized groups and to give them opportunities to live sustainably.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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Marlyn M. Kellawan
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OF SCAVENGERS: BASIS FOR DESIGNING AN INTERVENTION PROGRAM

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