# Dissociation And Psychosocial Maladjustment in the Context of Complex Developmental Trauma Among Street Children: A Qualitative Study

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## Abstract

Street children are particularly vulnerable because their lives usually dwell in early childhood traumas. When they experience extreme negative events collectively, they are more likely to engage in psychopathological behaviors like dissociation, which is thought to be a coping mechanism for long-term trauma. Such lived experiences can result in psychosocial maladjustment through behavioral, social and emotional dysregulation. This qualitative study focused complex developmental trauma impacts the emergence of dissociation and psychosocial maladjustment faced by Pakistani street children. Using IPA employed in NVivo software, this study entails in-depth semi-structured interviews with 14 street children, aged 14 to 20 years. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to choose participants considering inclusion and exclusion criteria. Using analysis, results show the emerged themes related to complex developmental trauma, dissociation and psychosocial maladjustment as well as their impact on age groups and both genders. By highlighting the importance of Pakistani culture, the research uncovered and enhance the understanding lived experiences of street children.


**Keywords:** complex developmental trauma, dissociation, psychosocial maladjustment, street children

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