

# Exploring the Concept of Hope and Aspirations of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL)



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**ABSTRACT.** Having hope and aspirations can serve as a driving force for children to have a flourishing life. This study aimed to explore the concept of hope and aspirations of Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL). There were 10 CICLs of the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY) in *Urayong, Bauang, La Union*, who participated in the study. A semi-structured interview was used to gather data. Thematic analysis was also employed to analyze the data gathered. Based on the findings of the study, the CICL's concept of hope includes positivity despite adversity, drawing strength from God, and having a positive social support system. Likewise, for CICLs aspirations, two themes were generated: future career and occupational fulfillment; and reform and acceptance. With this, the findings emphasized that despite being stigmatized by society, CICLs are still hopeful about life and aspire to become better individuals.

## 1.0. Introduction

Delinquent behavior among children is one of the most challenging problems in contemporary society. Delinquent behavior refers to a criminal act by a young individual under 18 (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2010). Globally, many Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) are arrested yearly for crimes. The United Nations Children's Fund has estimated that more than one (1) million children are being detained through justice systems worldwide (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund [UNICEF], 2021). Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL) refers to anyone under 18 years old who comes into contact with the justice system due to being accused or suspected of committing an offense (UNICEF, 2018). In addition, "Child in Conflict with the Law" or CICL refers to a child alleged as, accused of, or adjudged as having committed an offense under Philippine laws (Official Gazette, 2006). Having been in such a situation, CICLs worry about their future and how they will achieve positive life changes (Mabasa, 2021). Despite this, they are like any other children with hopes and aspirations about their lives too. Family, community, peer, school, and rehabilitation

centers play a significant role in helping these children see a ray of hope and continue striving towards achieving their life goals (Aguilar, 2016; Manuel, 2019; Mwangangi, 2019).

In the Philippine setting, delinquent behavior among children is one of the major challenges that the country is facing. According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF, 2018), the Philippines is considered one of the countries with a high rate of juvenile delinquency about 28 children between nine (9) and 18 years are arrested daily for committing a crime. With this, members of the Philippine Congress proposed bills intended to create laws in relation to the country's advocacy of juvenile justice. In line with the international policies on the juvenile justice system, the Republic Act 9344 became a law in the Philippines that established the promotion of the well-being of children and their families, involvement of parents and guardians, promotion of diversion, avoiding deprivation of liberty, and protecting the privacy rights of the children (Official Gazette, 2006). Alternative child-friendly measures provided to the CICLs effectively guide these children to transform and be integrated into their families and community as better members of society.

Significantly, CICLs are presumed as victims themselves, and they are not considered criminals; instead, as victims of circumstances

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that are beyond their control. This suggests that CICLs should be treated as individuals because they are the ones who significantly need guidance, support, and assistance to attain positive changes in their lives.

A lot of success stories about CICL have been published, wherein they were able to find hope and live successful lives. Hope is recognized as an essential aspect of human growth, change, and well-being (Turner, 2005). Likewise, Gilman et al. (2006) affirmed that there is a significant and positive relationship between children's hope and desirable outcomes, such as enhanced coping with adversity (Parkins, 2004) and increased self-worth (Barnum et al., 1998; Chou et al., 2013). Despite the uncertainty and disagreeable circumstances, young children are considered resilient, possess a positive attitude, and have a sense of possibility for their futures (laboni, 2017). With these being considered, hope plays a significant role in the life of the child, and it signifies a connection to the growth and well-being of CICL. CICLs still visualize a positive and valuable future despite being in such a situation.

In line with this, aspirations can be defined as an instrumental motivator of what people desire to acquire (Brdar et al., 2009). Manzano et al. (2006) explored the aspirations of CICLs in the Philippines. They found that CICLs have goals such as a positive outlook in life, promise to avert their unlawful ways, and practice self-control once released from the rehabilitation centers. Similarly, CICLs aspire for personal growth, have good and healthy relationships with significant people, actively participate in the community, and have a healthy and longer life, wealth, image, and fame (Batara et al., 2016). This implies that hope and aspirations are significant developmental assets of children. With these being considered, exploring the aspirations of CICL may provide relevant implications on how to best serve and rehabilitate these children. Moreover, exploring CICL's concept of hope and aspirations will better understand how these children plan to live their lives in the future.

The present study explored the concept of hope and understand how these children aspire to live despite being in such a situation. This study was motivated to provide a deeper understanding of the potential of the CICL to transform into better individuals. Despite conflicting with the law, it does not mean that it is the end for them, but they can still be someone who can attain greater things in life. This research may also provide implications on how CICL and the institutions housing them will be able to

address positive changes in their lives.

## 2.0. Methodology

*Research Design.* This research employed the structure of a phenomenological research study. According to Creswell (2013), a phenomenological research design is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The design seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it (Neubauer et al., 2019). Specifically, this study utilized interpretative phenomenology. It is a qualitative approach that aims to provide detailed examinations of personal lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009).

*Participants.* The participants of this study were 10 Children in Conflict with the Law of the Regional Rehabilitation Center for Youth (RRCY) in Urayong, Bauang, La Union, who was alleged as, accused of, or adjudged as having committed an offense under Philippine laws. The participants were selected based on the following inclusion criteria: a) CICL ages 12 to 18 years old, b) CICL who committed an offense at the age of minority, c) center-based CICL, d) schooled children or CICL attending online or modular class, e) participants have at least one (1) year of stay in the center, and f) can understand and speak in English, Tagalog, or Ilokano. Moreover, only those who agreed or provided their consent were included in the present study. The exclusion criteria for the participants of the research study were: a) participants with mental health concerns (including those reported for self-harm or harming others), b) CICL with underlying health conditions, and c) CICL with scheduled court hearing session.

*Instrumentation.* A researcher-made interview questionnaire was used for data gathering in the study. The data gathering instrument consists of semi-structured questions. All research questions were expressed in an open-ended manner to invite the respondents to open up and talk. The interview questions were translated into Filipino and Ilokano languages. In relation to this, the local dialects understandable by the CICL of Region I are Filipino and Ilokano. The researcher-made interview questionnaire was translated into Filipino. The data gathering tool also underwent back translation from Filipino and Ilokano to English by an English professor who is an expert in the field.

The interview guide was prepared so that it was contextualized within the scope of the

study. It comprised two parts, wherein the first part mostly included questions that were helpful for the researcher to build rapport with the participants. While in part two, these were questions about the lived experiences of children in conflict with the law, specifically focusing on their concept of hope and aspirations in life.

*Data collection procedure.* Before conducting the interview, I asked permission from the DSWD Regional Office through a request letter addressed to the Regional Director of DSWD Region I. After this, I received a reply letter from the DSWD Regional Director. It was emphasized in the reply letter that there are requirements set by the DSWD that need to be submitted before data gathering. The following DSWD forms are a.) Research Checklist, b.) Research Request Form, c.) Terms and Conditions, d.) Research Brief, and e.) Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement. I was able to accomplish and submit the required DSWD forms. These forms served as a contract between the center and the researcher throughout the implementation of the study. I also sent another letter for data gathering to discuss the criteria for participant selection in the study. The RRCY staff were in charge of selecting participants, for they have access to the records of the CICL, also considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria provided as a basis for selecting potential participants for the study. Likewise, I included in the request letter relevant details about the role of the Center Psychologist and RRCY staff in guiding the participants during the data gathering process.

After obtaining all the relevant approvals and clearance to gather data, I followed the approved schedule of the interview, which was provided by the RRCY in Urayong, Bauang, La Union. In line with this, the Center Head of RRCY requested for the researcher to conduct the interview in the center to protect the data collected throughout the interview. Before the interview, the center psychologist provided a copy of the *Gabay sa Residente*, which contains the rules and regulations that the CICL should strictly observe inside the center. The center psychologist also required the researcher to read and understand the *Gabay sa Residente* to gain knowledge and insight about the children residing in RRCY. On the day of the interview, the RRCY staff prepared a room that was conducive to the research interview. When everything was settled, I interviewed the participants through Zoom Meeting since an in-person interview with the CICL was not allowed by the DSWD because of the threat of the pandemic.

Before the start of the interview, one (1) RRCY staff accompanied the participant in the RRCY counseling room. The RRCY staff assisted the participant accessing the Zoom meeting for the research interview. After helping the participant to enter the Zoom meeting, the RRCY staff went outside of the room and waited for the participant until the interview ended. The RRCY counseling room was used for the research interview because it was free from any potential disruptions and noise. It also provided privacy to the participants when they were interviewed.

During the start of the interview, the first part of the interview guide was used to build rapport with the participant. I introduced myself and then asked questions that allowed the participant to share his characteristics, hobbies, and interest. After which, the research questions were asked to the participant to determine his concept of hope and aspirations in life despite having been in such a situation. With this, significant data were obtained, contributing relevant information to achieve the goals of the present study. To gather the participants' responses, the Zoom meeting interview session was audio-recorded as consented to by the participant and his parent/guardian.

*Data analysis.* This study mainly used thematic analysis to process the gathered data. It is a highly flexible approach that can provide a rich and detailed account of data relevant to a research study (King, 2014). Thematic analysis refers to a method of identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes noted within a data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings of the thematic analysis offered a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of data within and across themes.

*Data trustworthiness.* To ensure data trustworthiness, investigator triangulation was also used to analyze the data. According to Denzin (2017), investigator triangulation refers to using more than one investigator, interviewer, observer, researcher, or data analyst in the study. The ability to confirm findings across investigators without prior discussion or collaboration between them can significantly enhance the credibility of the findings. Likewise, investigator triangulation was relevant for decreasing bias in gathering, reporting, and/or analyzing the study data. This process was done with the help of the two (2) co-raters with post-graduate degrees in Psychology who were invited to evaluate and validate the appropriateness of the themes and descriptions that surfaced from the responses of

the participants in the study.

*Ethical Considerations.* This research went through the Saint Louis University (SLU) Research Ethics Committee (REC) for ethics review, wherein all the required documents were submitted. These include a) protocol review application form, b) protocol format, c) protocol summary sheet, d) informed consent, e) appendices, f) project Gantt chart, g) review requisition form, and h) curriculum vitae. After a comprehensive review, I received feedback from REC and then revised the protocol based on the recommendations of the reviewers. Subsequently, I received the approval certificate and notification of the REC decision. With this, I was able to gather data for the study.

Likewise, as part of the ethical considerations in the entire conduct of this study, the participant's right to informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality was observed. In gathering data, the RRCY staff provided informed assent to the participants in the study. The informed assent allowed the participant to be fully informed as to the purpose of the study and what their involvement was. In relation to this, the participant was responsible for making an informed decision as to whether he would participate in the study. With this, the participant's decision about participating in the study and the disagreement or refusal to participate were respected.

This study also guaranteed that the participation of the participants was voluntary. The participants had the right to withdraw and discontinue participation at any time. If the participant chose not to participate in the study, his decision was respected and was not taken against him.

In participating in the study, the participant may disclose some confidential information, or they may feel uncomfortable answering some of the interview questions that will be asked related to their experiences in life. However, participants have the right not to answer, especially if the question makes them uncomfortable.

Furthermore, no personal information of the participant was disclosed in this study. Codes were used to identify each participant in order to maintain their anonymity. If the research findings are to be published, the data will be presented in group form, wherein participants' identities will not be identified.

All the gathered information related to the present study was kept confidential, and no one else except the researcher could access the information documented during the interview. However, after the audio files were properly transcribed, encoded, then deleted, the encoded

copy was kept for reference purposes only. In addition, the recordings and transcripts were stored in a secured computer folder that requires a password to ensure that only the researcher can access the confidential data.

### 3.0. Results and Discussion

#### The concept of hope of CICL

This explains the concept of hope of the participants as explored in the study. It also includes CICLs own perspective of hope.

**Positivity despite adversities.** Hope gives the participants the inner strength to overcome life's difficulties and challenges. They have stated that hope can foster one's perseverance, confidence, and determination to remain strong and positive. At the same time, the participants expressed that hope encourages them to look at the bright side of life.

#### *Encouragement to face the challenges of life.*

It has been documented that the participants recognize how hope significantly encourages, motivates, uplifts, and inspires them. Some of those who participated in this study claimed that hope offers strength and inspiration to thrive despite adversities.

"...because that is hope which gives me courage. When I say hope, it means I can surpass all the challenges or obstacles that may come along my way. So just keep going, you will achieve what you want and your dreams in the future." (Alab, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"Hope, for me, gives inspiration to continue with my life in spite of the challenges for there is a better life waiting for us." (Dakila, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

Meanwhile, one participant acknowledged that hope is a brand-new start and hope is what keeps him going.

"...because if there is hope, it means there is a new day to continue and to fight." (Bayani, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

Findings revealed that despite being in such a difficult situation, hope drives them to have strength, courage, and determination to conquer adversities. Snyder et al. (1998) concluded that

there is always hope in children. King (2014) affirmed that despite the negative outcomes that children experience in their lives, hope is still sustained. The result also supports the claim of laboni (2017), which contends that despite the uncertainty and disagreeable circumstances, young children are considered resilient, possess a positive attitude, and have a sense of possibility for their futures.

*Second chance to change.* The participants expressed that hope allows them to change and to be better. They believe that despite difficulties, they can still change and make a difference.

"...every time I hear the word hope, I feel more invigorated because I know that it is not yet the end for me to change and become a better person one day." (Gabriel, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"This is hope, like now that I have a problem, I know that there is a chance for me to change. I know that hope is a big help to me because I believe that it is not yet too late." (Crisanto, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

Research has shown that hope is recognized as an essential aspect of human growth, change, and well-being (Turner, 2005). Thus, it is noteworthy to highlight that most of the participants show strong determination that they can still make a significant transformation in their lives.

*Optimistic self-belief.* Participants indicated that having positive self-belief gives them the potential to overcome the problems and challenges of life. They expressed that sustaining positivity pushes them to be hopeful. One participant narrated that hope is a perspective that problems have solutions.

"...despite the problem I am facing, I always tell myself that there is still hope for me to solve these problems, that I will not think of anything but to think that there is still hope that I will also reach what I want to achieve." (Isagani, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

In like manner, the same idea was portrayed when one participant shared his thoughts that even in the face of hardships, hope springs positivity and goal-orientedness.

"...there is hope that I can overcome all the problems and challenges that come into my life. I also think of being positive and focus on my goal." (Hari, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

Participants in this study highlighted that hope is an optimistic self-belief that offers positivity and strength to overcome difficulties. The findings suggest positive thoughts about their abilities to attain their goals. This is supported by Snyder's hope theory, which emphasizes that human behavior is goal-oriented (Snyder et al., 1991).

**Drawing Strength from God.** Participants narrated that hope strengthens them to have faith and trust in God. It presents how the participants bear adversities through prayer and belief in God. Participants pointed out how hope nourishes their faith and lifts their spirits, knowing that God will guide them in every way.

"...because when the word hope comes in my mind, it is as if I feel better. It is like God telling me that I can do it, that He is just on my back guiding me." (Alab, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"...it is God who gave me hope because there is nothing impossible if you would lean on to Him." (Ernesto, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

In a study by Sandage and Jankowski (2010), people who believe in God are reported to be more hopeful. Most of the participants' responses highlight a strong faith and trust in God, which significantly guide them to cope more effectively with adversities. This is supported by the study of Alcorta (2006), claiming that religious belief is one factor that facilitates effective coping with life stressors and aids in promoting mental well-being.

**Having a positive social support system.** This theme was inspired by the participants' narratives wherein they view hope in the presence of significant people. For them, these are the people who continuously motivate and inspire them to keep going and never give up. The identified social support system of the participants includes family, RRCY staff, and RRCY residents. Some participants shared that hope is having a supportive family who encourages them to remain determined and motivated in life.

"...every time I talk with my family, I feel more courageous to continue. I should not lose hope because I could feel the support of my family despite of their distance to me." (Bayani, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"...my family is the one who strengthens me; they are always there for me. Even if sometimes I do not obey them, they are still there, and they still love me. No matter what the problem is, they are always there for me. They show their love because they are the people who will always be by my side despite adversities." (Crisanto, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

The findings of the study revealed that family plays an integral part in the lives of the participants. As seen in their narratives, having a supportive family promotes hope amidst the obstacles in life. This will support the study of Leung et al. (2016) about family as one factor that can influence children's hope; it was found that adolescents with supportive parents were more optimistic and hopeful.

It is also interesting to note that participants revealed that hope could be anchored with the rehabilitation center and RRCY staff, which provides comfort, guidance, and support to them. Participants highlighted that their stay in the rehabilitation center has been significantly beneficial because it allowed them to develop good character and improve their lives.

"...this is also where my personality changes and develop, so the center is really a great blessing for me because it will serve as the path to a better future." (Juan, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"This center helps us to hold on to our hope. They are also guiding us for our betterment." (Hari, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

Remarkably, a participant expressed that he had been staying in the center for almost six (6) years. There were times when he felt hopeless and unmotivated; however, he valued the rehabilitation center as it brings hope that things would be better.

"...I will always be grateful to the center because it is here where I realized that there is hope. This is where you will really change, especially during the sessions where you would reflect. Their pieces of advice moved me deeply." (Dakila, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

Most participants expressed that the rehabilitation center helps them recover and change for the better. O'Connell et al. (1999) claimed that rehabilitation center is intended for CICLs to make them good citizens of society. As supported by Manuel (2019), rehabilitation is valuable for juveniles to achieve positive transformations in their lives. Results of this study revealed that despite having committed an offense at a young age, they still aim for change and improvement.

Notably, some participants also explained that hope draws strength from the RRCY residents, who support and inspire them to remain hopeful. Having friends allows the participants to acknowledge that they are not alone, and some people believe and trust that they will achieve good things in life.

"...my friends here in the center, because I know that I am not alone, and we will help each other to rise up." (Dakila, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"...and my good friends here in the center, they are the people who strengthen and boost my morale to continue with my life." (Ernesto, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

Participants in this study revealed that they experienced positive treatment from their fellow residents in the center. The result of this study supports the claims of Stephanou (2011), stating that the significant role of good friendship in children's life promotes hope. Based on the obtained results, most participants shared that their friends inside the center are significant persons in their lives. They emphasized that the RRCY residents give them hope because they are the ones who helped, accepted, and supported them in their rehabilitation journey.

### The aspirations of CICL

Despite the situation faced by the participants, they revealed what they want to achieve in the future. This elucidates their aspirations in life.

### Future career and occupational fulfillment.

This theme captures how the participants visualize their ideal life.

*Professional career.* When asked about their aspirations, the participants highlighted the profession they intend to pursue throughout their careers. All participants shared the professional career they wanted to be in their future life.

"I really want to graduate and become a seafarer. Then I want to be a seaman and go to different countries and travel." (Hari, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"...I dream of becoming a soldier because I want to help the oppressed." (Isagani, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"...I also dream of serving the public and helping especially those in need." (Ernesto, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

According to Steger et al. (2006), aspirations reflect long-term goals and are considered one of the most relevant components for human beings to give meaning and purpose to their existence. Notably, all of the participants in this study had given importance to aspiring for a professional career. Agbo et al. (2008) claimed that career aspiration is the professional career path one wishes to follow and maintain.

*Financial wealth.* Participants in this study postulate the idea of being wealthy to help their family and not to do wrong things again. When asked about their goals, they aspire to have a good amount of money so that they will not do bad things again and be able to provide financial assistance to their family.

"...I hope in the future, I would have a good amount of money for me not to be tempted to do bad things." (Gabriel, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"...I want my money to grow for me not to do bad things and for me to be able to buy my needs and my

family and one day, we will not borrow money anymore." (Hari, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

Some participants shared that they had experienced hardships and difficulties in life resulting in committing offenses. Due to the low economic situation, some children aspire for financial wealth to provide for the needs of their families. Kasser et al. (2004) claimed that financial aspirations had been highlighted for it is related to satisfying the basic needs of individuals. Several studies also emphasize that debt and financial problems are linked or associated with delinquency (Hoeve et al., 2016; Zara & Farrington, 2010). Some participants shared the past experiences that they took risks to earn money, however, in the wrong way.

*Popularity.* This sub-theme is focused on the participants' aspirations to become famous and popular. One participant shared that he learned how to sing and play a musical instrument during his stay in the rehabilitation center.

"...I learned here how to sing and how to play the guitar that is why I am already dreaming of becoming a famous musician someday." (Alab, personal communication, February 4, 2022)

On the other hand, another participant wanted to become a famous artist and prove that he could achieve great things in life,

"...I also dream of becoming a well-known artist for me to experience what I was not able to experience before." (Bayani, personal communication, February 4, 2022)

Based on the obtained results, it was revealed that the participants were driven by the skills they learned to pursue their goal of becoming well-known individuals. Uhls and Greenfield (2012) found that popularity has become a more significant aspiration among adolescents and has been chosen as the most relevant value for future goals.

**Reform and acceptance.** The majority of the participants want to become improved persons to attain acceptance from the community. They also have goals about helping their loved ones, wanting to have their own family, and contributing to society.

*A better self.* Despite being in a difficult situation, some participants in this study aspire to be transformed and accepted by others. For them, being a CICL does not hinder them from achieving their goals in life.

"...I want to change the perspective of people on me. I want to show them that in spite of my mistakes in the past, I could still reach my dreams." (Bayani, personal communication, February 4, 2022)

"...I want to erase from their perspective my former self, and I want to show them how good I am today." (Dakila, personal communication, February 4, 2022)

Aspirations enable prospective thinking and allow an individual to direct his actions and organize his cognitive and affective processes in the present time (Seligman et al., 2013; Baumeister et al., 2016). Participants highlighted that despite committing an offense at a young age, aspiring for a better self helps them recognize that they can still change and prove to others that they can improve themselves.

*Healthy and meaningful relationships.* Participants emphasize that their aspirations are centered on having their own families in the future. Despite the hardships they experienced, they still aim to establish a family, which gives them a sense of direction in their lives.

"...I dream of building my own family one day—a family that is happy and away from problems". (Gabriel, personal communication, February 4, 2022).

"...I want that one day, I would be able to build my own family that I will love and take care of." (Ernesto, personal communication, February 4, 2022)

Aspirations to have healthy and meaningful relationships with others are relevant to seeking deep-rooted connections and establishing a sense of belonging to individuals in society (Deci et al., 2008). The findings of the previous studies can explain their aspirations to help their family and their desire to build a family of their own in the future. Moreover, Myers (2000), as cited in Madson (2013), affirmed that having meaningful relationships can make a person live longer and remain healthier.

*Significant contribution to the community.* Some participants aspire to share their significant life experiences. They wanted to inspire other people to keep going in life.

"...I want to be a good example to all also to given them sound pieces of advice which I have learned here in the center." (Ernesto, personal communication, February 4, 2022)

"...it is my goal to widen or encourage the children to change, be better, and avoid violating the law. I also want to become a good example to them." (Dakila, personal communication, February 4, 2022)

The research findings show that through the rehabilitation programs implemented in RRCY, participants were exposed to influential models that taught them positive behaviors and values in life. It is also noteworthy to highlight that their learnings in rehabilitation inspired them to actively participate in the community. Bandura (1973) claimed that most behaviors of individuals are learned observationally through modeling, which can occur from observing others wherein an individual can form an idea of how new behaviors are performed, and on later occasions, this coded information is used as a guide for action.

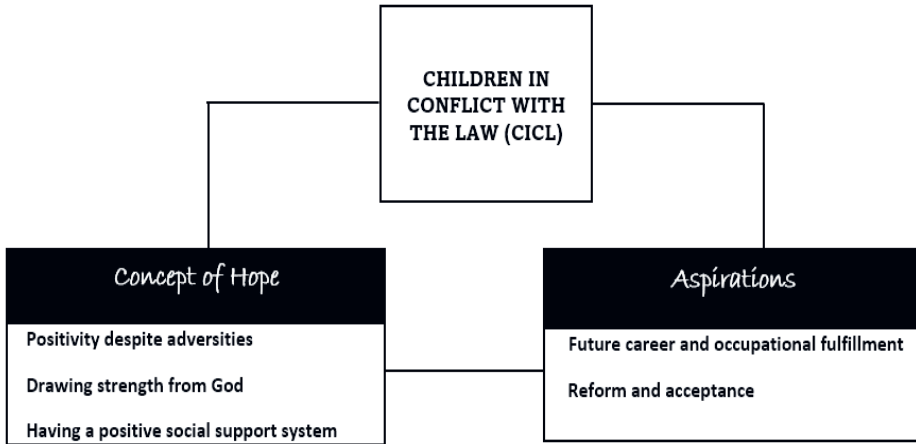
Figure 1 shows a concept map of the CICL's concept of hope and aspirations. It provides a picture of how CICLs define what hope is and their aspirations for the future. This also illustrates the findings of the study that despite having been in such a situation, CICLs are still hopeful about life and aspire to become better individuals in the future.

#### 4.0. Conclusion

Children in Conflict with the Law experience challenging circumstances in their lives and exploring their concept of hope and aspirations is relevant. The obtained results have given significant insights into the potential of these children to transform into better individuals. Despite being in such a situation, CICL can still achieve greater things in life.

The findings of this study revealed that CICLs have different concepts of hope. The theme of positivity despite adversities shows that hope fosters perseverance, confidence, and determination for the CICL to remain strong and determined in life. Likewise, participants indicated that hope is drawing strength from





**Figure 1.** *Concept map*

God. This reflects that hope strengthens CICLs to have faith and trust in God, which inspires them to remain motivated and hopeful despite hardships. It also presents how the participants bear adversities through prayer and belief in God. Lastly, CICLs view hope as having a positive social support system that includes significant people who continuously motivate and inspire them to keep going and never give up. It also comprises the CICL’s family, RRCY staff, and RRCY residents, who provide support, strength, and motivation for them to continue in life.

The present study also aims to explore the aspirations of CICL. Just like the other children, they also aspire for their future life. The findings of the study illustrate that the CICLs have the strength and courage to seek what they dream for their life. Based on the study, CICLs aim for future career and occupational fulfillment, including professional career, financial wealth, and popularity. Likewise, the CICL aspire for reform and acceptance, highlighting their aspirations for a better self, healthy and meaningful relationships, and significant contribution to the community.

**5.0. Limitations of the Findings**

The study provides relevant insights into the CICL concept of hope and aspirations. However, participants of the study are limited to schooled CICLs. With this, it would be significant to consider non-schooled and community-based CICLs to widen the scope of participants for the study. This will also allow the researchers to gain relevant data for future research about the life

of CICL. Likewise, future researchers might also widen the age range of the participants to provide adequate data and results. Another limitation I acknowledge is that all of the participants of the study are CICLs in Region I. As a result, the participants may not represent all CICLs in the Philippines. It might also be worthwhile to consider a wider population for future research. Lastly, it would also be fascinating to include and examine demographic factors like sex to determine if there is a difference between the lived experiences of male and female CICLs.

**6.0. Directions for Future Research**

Based on the findings and conclusions, future researchers may delve deeper into the life experiences of CICLs by considering other factors aside from their concept of hope and aspirations in life; look into and provide additional information that would widen one’s knowledge on this significant aspect of the present study’s findings; and use Filipino Psychology research approaches and methods, such as *pakikipagkwentuhan* and *ginabayang talakayan*.

**7.0. Declaration of Conflict of Interest**

The author reported no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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