

Looking through the Arts: Examining Children's Feelings Expressed in Drawings Made while under Home Quarantine

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ABSTRACT

Art activities like drawings serve as a mode of response, especially among children and can provide rich data around interests, fantasies, and socio-emotional experiences of children. This study attempted to examine the children's feelings expressed in the drawings made while they were strictly under home quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic. It further, ascertained if there are significant differences in the feelings expressed in the drawings of children in terms of age and sex and assessed the impact of drawings on their emotional well-being. The null hypothesis that there is no significance difference in the feelings expressed through the drawings of children in terms of sex and age was tested. The Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is a qualitative approach, was employed in the study. Participation of 174 children from a suburb community was made possible through the assistance of their respective parents who served as co-facilitators of the researchers. These children were provided with drawing materials, written instructions for drawing activities and food packs through the help of their parents. Facilitation of drawing activities and gathering of outputs took about 6 weeks. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis while numerical data was analyzed through the use of chi-square. Findings revealed that the top 5 most common feelings expressed in the drawings of the children are desire and longing (223 or 20.4%); happiness, joy and excitement (100 or 9.13%); followed by the feelings of appreciation and gratitude (74 or 6.76%); love (50 or 4.57%) and fear and nervousness as well as boredom (which both got a frequency of 37 or 3.38%). It was further revealed that there is no significant difference in the feelings expressed in the drawings of children in terms of sex ($\chi^2=0.165 < 0.864$); however, a significant difference was noted in terms of age group ($\chi^2=81.509 > 0.00$). Both the parents and children-participants confirmed the positive impact of drawing activities on emotional wellbeing of the children. The parents rated the activity as Excellent in all aspects of evaluation: in terms of relevance during this pandemic period ($WM=4.70$), in terms of the benefits it brought to the participants ($WM=4.83$) and in terms of the time allotted to it ($WM=4.65$). Likewise, the children-participants manifested significant increase in positive feelings and notable decrease in negative feelings as they participated in the drawing activities. Before joining the drawing activities, majority of the children, 145 (83.33%) experienced sadness. However, this significantly dropped down to 4 (2.3%) when drawing activities started and almost 100% lost as the activities continued (1 or 0.57%). On the other hand, there was an increase in percentage of children experiencing happiness, from 14 or 8.05% (before participating in the drawing activities) to 167 or 95.98% (when it started) and more enjoyment during the period of art activities (173 or 99.43%). It was then concluded that drawings can be used as a barometer of children's emotional wellbeing because the children's drawings revealed their feelings, thoughts, and inner experiences. It was further concluded that drawing activities can improve the emotional wellbeing of children. Several recommendations were forwarded to concerned entities to promote the children's wellbeing.

Keywords: Children; COVID-19; Quarantine; Art activities

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak has changed the lives of many people in the globe. The world-wide implementation of community quarantines and lockdowns had ceased social mobility that temporarily suspended our economic, social, cultural, and spiritual activities. In times like this, it's not just the youth, adult and old

population who are adversely affected; children, who belong to the most vulnerable population, also suffer the impact of home or community quarantine [1-3]. Accordingly, restrictions and confinements within the four corners of the house create boredom and restlessness among them. For those children from well-to-do families, who own big houses with playgrounds, swimming

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pools, backyards, and other recreational facilities at home, the quarantine may not directly restrict their movements. However, for the typical extended Filipino families with limited space, the home quarantine may have adverse impact on children's social and emotional wellbeing.

Most child experts believed that the medium by which we can determine and understand what children go through may be varied. Since children may not yet have developed the necessary verbal communication skills, it's through the arts and other creative expressions that adults can enter into their world [4]. Wadeson explained that the art can provide rich data around interests, fantasies, and socio-emotional experiences of children. As a matter of fact, most often children find relief when doing art activities, expressing themselves freely and safely, and having their self-expressions respected, valued, understood and accepted without judgment. Rogers witnessed how creative arts empower children to make their small and often-overlooked voices heard by parents, teachers, researchers, policy makers, family experts, health practitioners and other professionals [5]. This study attempted to examine the children's feelings expressed in the drawings they made while they were strictly under home quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Background of the study

The place of the study is a second class municipality in one of the provinces in calabarzon, located south of Metro Manila, Philippines. Based on the 2015 census, this town has a population of 51,475 people. This is composed of 32 barangays, 10 of which are in the Poblacion. The people in this town are known to be creative, friendly, and fun-loving. This paved the way to the culture of seeking and enjoying a lot of festivities and celebrations. Birthdays, anniversaries, baptism, confirmations, and of course, the town fiestas are occasions that shall not pass without social gathering. Drinking sprees are common and it happens even without any reason to celebrate at all. Indeed, most people there are fond of going out, dining out, and staying outside the house. The younger population like the youth and children, imbibing the same culture, follow their respective parents and other older models. Some used to stroll and go to different places, mostly inside the Poblacion. Children love to play on the streets, eat, and do many things outside the house.

Given these scenarios, being quarantined at home is something unusual and uncomfortable to all. Such a new experience is assumed to have an adverse effect on the children. Although the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) has affected all, the researchers believed that the younger population might have suffered the most. The longer the home quarantine goes, the higher will be its impact on the overall development of children. This study attempted to examine the children's feelings expressed in the drawings they made while they were strictly under home quarantine. This exploratory research, however, just looked into the feelings as projected in the drawing themes and other art works of children.

Research objectives

This study attempted to examine the children's feelings expressed in the drawings made while they were strictly under home quarantine during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Specifically, this research attempted to:

1. Determine the feelings expressed in the drawings of children under home quarantine due to COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Ascertain if there are significant differences in the feelings expressed in the drawing of the children in terms of age and sex.
3. Assess the impact of drawings on the emotional well-being of the children.

Research hypotheses

In this study, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significance difference in the feelings expressed through the drawings of children in terms of sex.
2. There is no significance difference in the feelings expressed through the drawings of children in terms of age group.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Quarantine is the act of separating and restraining the mobility of persons who are believed to have been exposed to a contagious disease to ensure that if they manifest symptoms of the disease, they may not be able to infect others [6]. Quarantine is different from isolation because the latter separates people with contagious disease from those who do not have. Most of the time, however, the two terms are mistakenly used to mean the same in communication with the public. The term quarantine was first adopted in reference to leprosy that had its outbreak in Venice, Italy in 1127. This term was later on widely applied in response to the Black Death, a pandemic that ravaged Europe between 1347 and 1351, which took a proportionately greater toll of life than any other known epidemic or war up to that time. Three hundred years later, the United Kingdom started to impose quarantine in response to plague [7]. Most recently, quarantine is used in the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID19) outbreak in Wuhan, China which spread throughout the world.

It appears that the imposition of quarantine as a measure for preventing the spread of a contagious disease dramatically depends on how such disease is transmitted and the incubation period of the virus that is causing its transmission. The history revealed that the most prolonged quarantine period implemented in the community was 21 days. This happened in Senegal and Liberia during the Ebola outbreak [8,9]. Indeed, what happened, and is still happening in many countries in the world right now breaks the records. Implementation of home/community quarantine and lockdowns took several months. Those who lifted community quarantine decrees earlier had to re-issue the same order again due to a second wave or even a third wave of the spread of the coronavirus. Metro Manila and calabarzon still

belong to areas under General Community Quarantine until the end of June, 2020; that is, after subjecting the said regions to 2 and a half months Enhanced Community Quarantine.

Many kinds of researches have explored the psychological effects of extended quarantine on human beings of varied ages and status in life. Most of these researches found out that home quarantine results in adverse psychological effects, including stress, confusion, depression, and anger. Things that cause stress ranges from infection fears, frustration, boredom due to longer quarantine duration, inadequate information, to consequential conditions such as inadequate supplies, stigma and experiences of discrimination once one gets infected by the virus, financial loss, and extreme experiences of loss because of death. Brooks et al. found in his review of past researches that extended periods of quarantine have long-lasting effects [10]. They suggested that if quarantine is deemed necessary to be imposed, it should be done no longer than is required. Clear rationale for imposing quarantine and information about protocols should be made clear. Moreover, sufficient supplies should be provided to those who will be quarantined. It will be helpful also if it appeals to altruism by reminding the public about the benefits of quarantine to broader society.

Rubin, mentioned about several studies on the impact of quarantine. One study, focused on hospital personnel who have been exposed to SARS patients, found that having been quarantined for nine days is enough as a predictor of symptoms of acute stress disorder. It was reported that the experience of being quarantined was significantly related to reports of feeling exhausted, tendency to detach from others, certain level of anxiety, irritability, sleep problems, poor concentration and indecisiveness, unsatisfactory work performance, and indifference to work or feelings of resignation. Another study indicated that experiences of quarantine were a predictor of posttraumatic stress symptoms even three years later. Moreover, it was noted that the mean posttraumatic stress scores were four times higher in children who had been quarantined than in those who were not quarantined. Finally, an examination of symptoms of depression three years after experiences of quarantine revealed that 9% (48 of 549) of the whole sample reported high depressive symptoms.

Baghchechi et. al. attested that quarantine could be emotionally and mentally distressful, especially in the adolescent group who are used to socialize in the outside world [11]. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines suggest to keep an eye for signs of stress in adolescents, which can be manifested in the form of excessive loneliness, anxiety, or unbecoming behavior. Accordingly, age-appropriate intervention programs, can help them manage their stress. Moreover, brief physical exercises, such as walking, hiking and running can ease anxiety and are encouraged, as long as minimum health standards are followed. Health care providers should be aware that many people on home quarantine are possibly experiencing social isolation, the adverse impact of unemployment, and homeschooling of children, which may add more weight to an already overwhelming condition.

Reducing media news exposures can accordingly help with coping and can maintain mental health (CDC, 2020).

The threat to the social and emotional wellbeing

Quarantine could be a threat to the social and emotional wellbeing. This further leads to anxiety, worries, stress, loneliness, and depression. In the Philippines, since the Luzon-wide lockdown was implemented, no mass gathering was allowed, including the in-person teaching-learning mode. COVID-19 prompted the imposition of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) all over Luzon. The Memorandum (Office of the President, 2020), limited movement to frontline workers and to those persons authorized to go out to purchase necessities and services. All the rest are required to stay at home, the length of which was unprecedented for many.

Closure of educational institutions has been a global response to the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted to children spending all of their time at home with parents, siblings and other members of the household. Consequentially, parents who are also forced to Work from Home had to squeeze their job-related responsibilities with the additional workload of homeschooling and monitoring the learning activities of their children. Burgess and Sievertsen related that this increase of stress and burden of parents and the social isolation of children from their friends, classmates and teachers may have adverse effect on the socio-emotional skills of children. Attanasio et al., on the other hand, clarified that children's socio-emotional skills is a determinant of their mental health and general wellbeing. He further stressed that one possible outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic is that psychological issues in children will get amplified by a stressful home environment. This will accordingly be more evident particularly to those children who tend to have lower socio-emotional skills already. Moroni et. al., further pointed out that extreme changes to the children's usual daily routines, and other concerns about their own and their family's health might aggravate their socio-emotional conditions.

Loades et al. scanned through 83 articles (80 studies) about the impact of social isolation on children's mental health. All these studies showed that social isolation and sadness increased the likelihood of depression and anxiety at the time sadness was measured and between 0.25 to 9 years after. The review also revealed that felt sadness is correlated with adverse mental health in children and adolescents. It was further indicated that the duration of loneliness was strongly associated with mental health problems than the intensity of sadness. It was then concluded that children and adolescents are at higher risk of experiencing bouts of depression and perhaps anxiety during and after enforced social isolation ends. It is noted that negative feelings more likely increase as enforced social isolation goes on.

Literature presents a limited evidence indicating specific interventions to prevent sadness or to mitigate its impact on mental health and well-being. M. Baghchechi et. al. however, emphasized that there are tested practical and psychological

strategies that may help ensure child and adolescent mental health even in the midst of enforced social isolation, e.g., during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is accordingly important to lessen the impact of involuntary social and physical distancing by focusing on the structure, quality, and quantity of social networks, and help children and adolescents to receive social rewards, feel that they still belong to a group, and know that there are others they can lean on for support.

Children who have not yet fully developed communication skills, find it hard to express their thoughts and feelings. Thus, most of the times, adults who attend to their needs, also find it difficult to understand them. Child experts then use creative means in order to enter into the children's world [1,4,5]. They have proven that young children are able to express their feelings and thoughts through the use of the creative arts media. This proves the relevance of Psychodynamic Approaches which was originated from Freud's Psychoanalytic Theory (1856-1939). Freud believed that human motives and behaviors are primarily hidden in the unconscious and that there is a need for free association techniques in order to dig into the depths of human being. He further postulated that most unconscious processes can be traced back to early childhood experiences. Thus, the modern proponents of Psychodynamic Theory came up with the use of expressive art therapies as a means to deal with the unconscious.

Brown emphasized that art activities can be very useful in counseling children, primarily because they do not rely on words to express feelings and emotions, or ambiguous or vague concepts when communicating with them. She believed that there are times when words are inadequate, unavailable, or used to conceal, and art activities provide additional means of expression. This approach is the most appropriate when individuals having low verbal skills, struggle to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions, attitude, opinions and so forth. Art activities then serve as a mode of response, especially among children [1]. Wadeson added that each child's art must be understood in the context of child's life situation. He explained that the art can provide rich data around interests, fantasies, and socio-emotional experiences of children. Most often children find relief when doing art activities, express themselves freely and safely, and have their self-expressions respected, valued, understood and accepted without judgment.

The benefits of art activities for children

Besides psychoeducation on the seriousness of coronavirus, children and youth should be given alternative activities as replacements to their missed education from schools. Many experts believe that adults, more specifically, parents should exert their best efforts in continuing the educational process at home. Beyond the educational purposes, providing activities like drawings and other artwork to children, serve as outlets of their inner thoughts and feelings.

Rogers witnessed how creative arts empower children to make their small and often-overlooked voices heard by parents,

teachers, researchers, policy makers, family experts, health practitioners and other professionals. He mentioned about a study that involved children aged two to five years in a daycare service. These children were given a range of creative arts activities to elicit responses that serve as their means to explore their experiences, express feelings about events, and share their desires for better outcomes. The children were also able to share each other's art responses and some were even able to validate respective art themes. It was revealed that an increase in the abilities of the children to verbally express emotional issues that were affecting them was significantly noted.

Carandang and her team also testified how powerful art activities are for children of any age. Accordingly, sketching, drawing, coloring, printing, and the like, serve as outlets of children's thoughts and feelings. Since most children cannot verbalize what is inside their hearts and minds, these become the means to reach them. Thus, if adults want to connect to children, they accordingly, need to use creative ways through expressive techniques like the arts.

Synthesis

The COVID-19 outbreak has changed the lives of many people around the world. Children are one of the most affected sectors in the sense that they have been restricted in their movements. Even the simplest activities such as playing were restricted for longer period of time that is beyond what might be considered as tolerable. In order to help these children, cope with almost three months of home quarantine, an intervention is conceptualized to reach and help them cope. As child experts have emphasized, we can better understand the experiences of children through the use of arts, like painting, drawing and coloring activities, and many more. Since these children still have low verbal communication skills, it is important to provide them better and more effective media of expression. These activities are believed to enhance the emotional wellbeing of children.

Conceptual framework

Depicts the process that this research endeavor has undertaken. The researcher first determined the background characteristics of the participating children. It is noted that participating children should meet the criteria set prior to the beginning of the process. The process involves delivery of coloring and drawing materials to the target children. With the help of parents, children performed each art activity as scheduled (Figure 1). The duration of the process took about one and a half month (6 weeks) where children have to do the drawing and other art activities on a daily basis. On the last week, evaluation then took place with the use of evaluation questionnaires which were answered by the participating children and their respective parents. Thematic analysis was done by the researcher in consultation with an expert. The following outputs were obtained from the process: the drawing themes, the expressed feelings and emotional status of children as revealed in their respective drawings, and the overall impact of the art activities given to the children

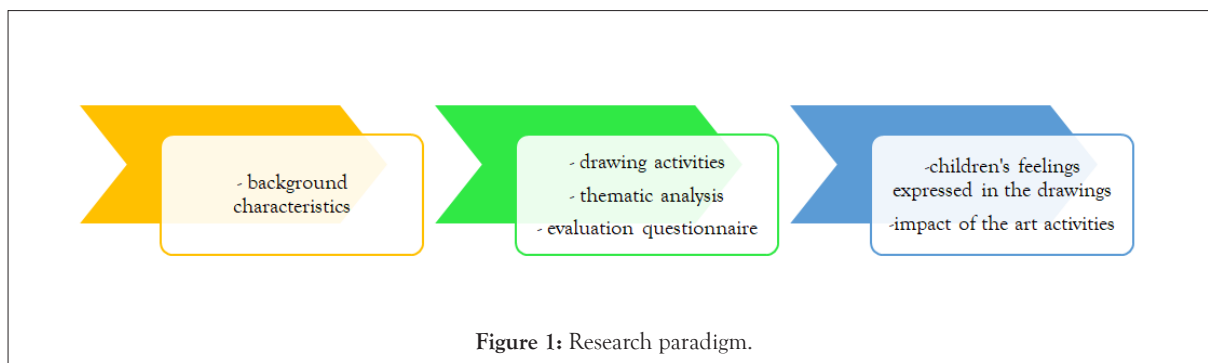


Figure 1: Research paradigm.

METHODOLOGY

This exploratory research employed a Participatory Action Research method. The term “exploratory” is emphasized since the initial objective of the researchers was just to find ways in order to reach out to children during the period of home quarantine and to “explore” if giving art activities to these children would be of help. However, other barangay officials who learned and observed the activities also passed their own requests to conduct the same art activities among the children in their respective areas. Hence, this research served as exploration of the existing phenomena and a plan to pursue this endeavor is already conceptualized. The method employed was Participatory Action Research (PAR), which is a qualitative approach. This research method assumes knowledge is rooted in social relations and most powerful when produced collaboratively through action [12]. Thus, it entailed the participation of both children and parents in the planning and conduct of the research process [13]. Since the purpose of the researcher is to understand what the children are going through during the home quarantine period, they engaged the children in the whole process. The researchers, with the help of the children’s parents acted as facilitators of the children in expressing themselves and their experiences through drawings.

Smith, J.A. upheld the value of qualitative researches most specially in the field of Psychology. A great deal of qualitative researches accordingly aims to provide rich descriptive accounts of the phenomenon under study. Those are interested in exploring, describing and interpreting the personal and social experiences of children. In this study, the researchers, once and for all, presented the richness of meaning of qualitative data in the study of the emotional well-being of children under home quarantine.

The participants

The data from this exploratory research were the outputs of drawings of 174 children with ages 3-12 from three barangays in the Poblacion of the selected municipality. These children were identified and referred by the concerned barangay officials in the area. The research activities were conducted during the time that the Calabarzon was still under Enhanced Community Quarantine and going out of the house was strictly prohibited except from the head of the family who needs to secure a Home Quarantine Pass. There were several criteria considered in the selection of the children-participants: First, these children should be residents of the said barangays. These barangays were chosen because these are noted as populated and crowded barangays in the Poblacion. Since children were not allowed to go out of their respective residences, it is assumed that the impact of crowding is felt and experienced by kids. Second, children should be 3-12 years old. Third, children-participants should at least know how or can use drawing materials. Finally, children could just participate in the art activities upon the permission and guidance of the parents. The researchers initially targeted 300 children with 100 from each identified barangay. This target number of children was reached as indicated by the number drawing materials distributed in the three barangays. However, the retrieval rate turned out to be 58% only because some of the children have not completed their drawings. Due to restrictions posed by the Inter-Agency Task Force for COVID-19 (IATF) in relation to the existing pandemic, the researchers had limited time to go back to respective areas in order to follow up and retrieve the other outputs of drawings and other art activities (Table 1).

Table 1: Background characteristics of children participants.

Age group	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
3-7 years old	32	35.16	30	36.14	62	35.63
8-12 years old	59	64.84	53	63.86	112	64.37
Total	91	52.3	83	47.7	174	100

Presents the background characteristics of the children-respondents. It can be noted that there were more children-participants from the age group of 8-12 years old and there were more male than female children-participants. It is further noted that most children who have not completed the tasks are from the age 3-7 years old.

Data gathering procedure

The data in this participatory qualitative research was gathered through indirect facilitation and conduct of art activities. The researchers first completed all the necessary documents – research-extension proposal and the request letter to concerned authorities. After preparation, they sought permission from the Local Government Office and concerned barangay officials to conduct the art activities. The researchers collaborated with the concerned barangay officials in identifying areas within the barangay where overcrowding of children is most prevalent. The researchers then, visited the areas in respective b Form. Signing of the I arangays and talked to the parents of target children; gave them copies of request letter and Informed Consent nformed Consent Form was done by those parents who are interested and are willing to allow their children to join in the activities. The researchers ensured that the art activities entailed no face-to-face encounter and participation in the art activities were strictly on voluntary bases. Since it is pandemic, distribution of drawing materials and food packs to selected children are directed to parents and other family members. Each house is visited and each household with children who were permitted to join, were given the drawing materials. Since social distancing is a strict policy, the use of written instructions was considered and these copies are given to parents.

The children were asked to perform the drawing and coloring activities in 5-7 days consecutively (1 drawing per day). Outputs were collected every week. On the last week, evaluation of the outcomes of the art activities on children and giving tokens to all participants were done. After consolidation and interpretation of the data gathered from the research, findings were presented to the parents *via* seminar which was conducted for about two hours. In the said seminar, the parents of the children-participants were gathered and a Lecture on Mental Health was given to them. Presentation of the results of the research and the drawing themes derived from the drawing outputs of the children were presented to the parents. Further discussions on how can parents help in ensuring the socio-emotional well-being of their children was emphasized.

Analysis of data

The primary data in this research are the outputs of the art activities of children and the evaluation of outcomes as per the assessment of children themselves and their respective parents. The qualitative data – drawings were analyzed through the identification of themes (thematic analysis). Thematic analysis as used in qualitative research is designed to examine themes or patterns of meaning within the research data. In this study,

qualitative thematic analysis of the drawings and other artworks done by the participating children was employed. Thematic Analysis was applied in analyzing the drawing of the children, in identifying the themes and the feelings expressed through them, in sorting them and then, in linking them [14]. The interpretation of data was participative in that the children themselves were asked about the actual themes of what they have drawn and what they feel about those. The researchers further evaluated the themes of drawings and other artwork of each participating child, using several parameters. These are the actual figures drawn, the ideas that the figures try to convey, the personal account of the children themselves on what they did and the feelings they had about what they did. The researchers first had an independent analysis of each drawing. Since there were 174 participants and each of these participants had 6-7 drawings, there were 1095 drawings which were analyzed all in all. Each researcher had his/her independent analysis of the theme of each drawing. Then, all four researchers compared their independent interpretation of the drawing themes. In cases where different themes came out in the process, these were settled by means of majority rule. After all thematic analysis of the children's drawings were done, these were presented and consulted to an expert, a child psychologist who is an expert in the use of art therapies for children. The latter validated the drawing themes identified by the researchers and suggested ways in order to improve the categorization of the drawing themes. Determination of the socio-emotional status of the children-participants were based on the feelings expressed in the drawings. On the other hand, evaluation of the impact of the art activities to the socio-emotional well-being of the children was done through the use of two sets of questionnaires: one for the adults which was answered by the parents and the other one were answered by the children-participants. The former has two parts: the first part is a 3-item evaluation questionnaire and the second part is a 10-item Likert Scale that assessed the impact of drawing activities on children based on the observation of the parents. The second evaluation questionnaire is a 5-item evaluation instrument specially designed for children where after each question, the child participant simply chose the smiley that best projects his/her feelings towards the activities conducted. In order to determine if there are significant differences in the drawing themes and expressed feelings of the children-participants by age and sex, coding was employed and Chi-Square was used in the analysis. All gathered data were consolidated, analyzed and interpreted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Discussion of findings

In the light of the data gathered in this study, the following findings are hereby presented through the use of tables and figures:

Research objective 1: Determine the feelings expressed in the drawings of children under home quarantine due to COVID-19 pandemic (Table 2).

Table 2: The children's emotions/feelings as derived from the drawing themes.

Feelings expressed in the drawings	F	%	Rank
Happiness/Joy / Excitement	100	9.13	2nd
Sadness	12	1.1	6th
Fear/Nervousness	37	3.38	5th
Disappointment/ Frustration	6	0.55	9.33
Anger/Irritation	4	0.37	12.5
Worry/Anxiety	7	0.64	7.5
Pleasantness/ Calmness	6	0.55	9.33
Boredom	7	0.64	7.5
Appreciation/ Gratitude	74	6.76	3rd
Love	50	4.57	4th
Empathy	3	0.27	14th
Preference/Desire/ Longing	223	20.4	1st
Pride	4	0.37	12.5
Encouragement	6	0.55	9.33
No feeling expressed	635	57.9	1.5

Presents the different kinds of feelings manifested in the different drawing themes of the children-participants in the study. It can be noted that majority of the drawings, with a frequency of 635 (57.99%) did not express any feeling at all. Those were plain drawings with no hint of any feeling or emotion indicated, even in the description. However, the rest of the data presents varied forms of feelings, some of which are positive and some are negative. The top one most common feeling expressed in the drawings of the children is that of desire and longing, which got a frequency of 223 (20.4%). Most drawing elements comprise the things that the children-participants would like to have, to do or to experience. It became obvious that children long to have things that they do not yet have and to do or experience many different things from which they have been restricted. Sample self-descriptions of drawings include, "Gusto ko (I like)", "Miss na miss ko nang...(I really miss...)" and the like. The second category of feelings that were expressed in the drawing themes is happiness, joy and excitement with a frequency of 100 (9.13%). One common description related to this is "Masaya ako. (I'm happy)" Third in the ranking with a frequency of 74 (6.76%) is the feeling of appreciation and gratitude as indicated in the statements, "Maraming Salamat Po (Thank you very much)." It can be noticed that such feelings of appreciation and gratitude is oftentimes directed to God and to the frontline workers like doctors, nurses, other hospital personnel, policemen and other

personnel who are in line of duties in the midst of pandemic. Children also have a sense of appreciation to those people who engage in charitable work during pandemic. The fourth feeling expressed in the drawing themes of children is love with a frequency of 50 (4.57%). This was oftentimes associated with the family and is usually supported with such statement as "I love you." The fifth in the rank of expressed feelings is fear and nervousness as well as boredom which both got a frequency of 37 (3.38%). Feelings of fear and nervousness is associated with the corona virus as revealed in the statement, "Always put your face mask to your nose and mouth; protect the COVID 19 and always wash your hand. Keep safe;" while boredom is associated with the desire to go out and to do the things that they are accordingly missing to do, as noted in the following account, "Gusto ko na pong makapasyal ng SM kasi nakakainip na gawa ng COVID-19 (I already want to go to SM because I already get bored due to COVID-19)." The next in the list of feelings expressed in the drawings is sadness, with a frequency of 12 (1.1%). Again, this feeling is associated with COVID-19 pandemic. Other feelings noted in the drawing themes and descriptions of the children were negative feelings of worry and anxiety (n=7; 0.64%); disappointment and frustration (n=6; 0.55%), and anger and irritation (n=4; 0.37). Nevertheless, positive feelings of encouragements and pleasantness/calmness (both with n=6; 0.55%), pride (n=4; 0.37%), and empathy (n=3; 0.27%), were also noted even at a minimal percentage.

These findings just pointed to us that drawings indeed, serve as psychological outlets of the children-participants. Through the simple activities of scribbling, creating images and coloring them, the children were able to reveal what were inside their hearts and minds. They were able to reveal consciously or subconsciously what they are going through and what are their current needs and resentments. Just like the adults, they have their own share of the crisis brought about by this pandemic. These findings support what the experts have previously proposed that art work are indeed, expressions of inner thoughts and feelings of children; and through arts children are helped to go through the process and make sense of the whole experiences [5,15].

Research objective 2: Ascertain if there are significant differences in the feelings expressed in the drawing of the children in terms of age and sex (Table 3a).

Shows the interface between sex and feelings expressed through the drawings of children. The feelings expressed were categorized as positive, negative or mixed feelings. The data shows that in general, there are more positive (272) than negative feelings (122) noted in the drawings of the children (Table 3b). On the other hand, presents the interface between age group and feelings expressed through the children's drawings. Once again, it shows that there were more positive than negative feelings noted in the drawings of children. One interesting finding revealed was that there were more feelings expressed in the drawings of children belonging to 8-12 years old than the children belonging to 3-7 years old. To determine whether these observed differences are significant, chi-square was used in analyzing the data (Table 4).

Table 3a: Sex and feelings expressed interface.

Sex	Feelings Expressed				Total
	Unidentified Feelings	Negative Feelings	Positive Feelings	Mixed	
Male	325	63	155	22	565
Female	310	59	117	44	530
	635	122	272	66	1095

Table 3b: Age group and feelings expressed interface.

Age Group	Feelings Expressed				Total
	Unidentified Feelings	Negative Feelings	Positive Feelings	Mixed	
3-7 years old	290	26	53	7	376
8-12 years old	345	96	219	59	719
	635	122	272	66	1095

Table 4: Analysis of differences in the feelings expressed through the drawings of children in terms of sex and age.

Variables	Chi-Square	P-value
Feelings Expressed * Sex	0.165	0.864
Feelings Expressed * Age	81.509	.000***

***significant at .01 level of significance

The next shows the result of the statistical analysis of differences in the feelings expressed through the drawings of children participants. With the computed value of 0.165 (p-value=.000) the first Null Hypothesis was accepted at .05 level, thus, pointing out that there is not significant difference in the feeling expressed through drawings of the children-participants with reference to sex. However, with a computed value of 81.509 (p-value=.000), the second Null Hypothesis is rejected, suggesting a significant difference in the feelings expressed in the drawings of children-participants in terms of age groups. Going back to the raw data, the researcher observed that most of the younger children, with ages 3-7 years old, did not show many feelings on their drawings. Moreover, with the relatively limited drawing and writing ability, these younger children might not have been so successful in projecting their feelings through the drawings or any art work, compared to their older children-counterparts. This gave rise to the issue as to whether drawings as emotional outlet is more favorable to children during their intermediate years and not so much for primary years, which is still subject to further investigation

Research objective 3: Assess the impact of drawing activities on the emotional well-being of the children

To answer the above research objective, an evaluation of the drawing activities was conducted. Both parents and children participated in the assessment. On the part of the parents, a questionnaire with two parts was given while on the part of the children, a 5-item brief questionnaire was used (Table 5).

Presents the first part of the evaluation questionnaire for parents which are designed to determine the overall impact of drawing activities on the emotional well-being of the children. As it is indicated, majority of the parents rated the activity as Excellent in all aspects of evaluation: in terms of its relevance during this pandemic period (WM=4.70), in terms of the benefits it brought to the participants (WM=4.83) and in terms of the time allotted to it (WM=4.65). The parents believed that the activity relieved the children from boredom and sadness brought about by home quarantine.

The second part of the evaluation which consists of 10-item Likert Scale determined the specific benefits that the drawing activities had for the children (Table 6). Presents the parents' evaluation of the impact of drawing activities to their children. It shows that parents responded strongly agree to the positive statements such as statement #1. The art activities conducted are important for the children's current situation; #.3 the art activities brought much satisfaction to the children; #5. The coloring and drawing activities lessened the restlessness of the children; #.7 The art activities helped a lot as a recreation to the children and as a reliever from boredom of staying home for so long; and #9. I noticed that coloring and drawing activities can be a remedy for loneliness. Consistent to these findings, the parents expressed strong disagreement to negative statements such as #2, #4, #6, #8, and #10. Deriving from these responses, it was revealed that the parents found the art activities very beneficial to their respective children.

Table 5: Overall impact of drawing activities on the emotional well-being of the children.

Parents' Evaluation Part 1	5	4(VS)	3(S)	2(f)	1(P)	WM	DI
The objectives of the activity are relevant to the condition of children who are currently under home quarantine due to COVID-19 pandemic.	112	21	11	0	0	4.7	E
The drawing activities are beneficial because they can ease the children's boredom at home.	125	13	6	0	0	4.83	E
There was sufficient time allotted for the drawing activities.	108	22	14	0	0	4.65	E
Total number of parents	115	19	10	0	0	144	
4.01 - 5.0	Excellent						
3.01 - 4.0	Very Satisfactory						
2.01 - 3.0	Satisfactory						
1.01 - 2.0	Fair						
Weighted Mean (WM)	Descriptive Interpretation (DI)						
0 - 1.0	Poor						

Table 6: Parents' evaluation of the impact of the drawing activities to their children.

Parents' Evaluation Part 2	LS(SA)	S(A)	HS(D)	LHS(SD)	WM	Interpretation
The drawing activities conducted are important for the children's current condition.	124	20	0	0	2.86	SA
The drawing activities became a burden to the children.	0	0	25	119	2.83	SD
The art activities brought much satisfaction to the children.	144	0	0	0	3	SA
The drawing activities were just a waste of time and money.	0	0	44	100	2.69	SD
The drawing activities lessened the restlessness of the children	135	9	0	0	2.94	SA
The drawing activities conducted among the children is nonsense.	0	3	42	99	2.67	SD
The art activities helped a lot as a leisure time activity to the children and as a reliever from boredom of staying home for so long.	131	5	8	0	2.85	SA
It is better to do the household chores than to do the drawing activities.	0	10	10	124	2.79	SD
I noticed that drawing activities ease children's loneliness.	133	11	0	0	2.92	SA
The drawing activities caused much boredom and irritability among children.	0	0	3	141	2.98	SD
Weighted Mean (WM)	Descriptive Interpretation:					
2.28-3.0	SA - Strongly Agree					
1.52-2.27	A - Agree					
0.76-1.51	D - Disagree					
0-0.75	SDS - Strongly Disagree					

The children also evaluated the impact of the drawing activities to themselves through the use of smileys (Table 7). Presents the children-participants' evaluation of the impact of the drawing activities on their emotional wellbeing. It can be noted that before joining the art activities, majority of the children, 145 (83.33%) experienced sadness, 12 (6.9%) experienced fear, and 3 (1.72%) experienced anger. On the other hand, there were 14 (8.05%) who were not affected much by the pandemic and in fact they were happy. When the art activities started, most of the children who experienced boredom and sadness found the

drawing activities enjoying. Thus, the increase in percentage of children experiencing happiness (14 or 8.05% (before) to 167 or 95.98% (when it started) and enjoyment became apparent during the period of art activities (173 or 99.43%) and even after it was finished. Moreover, sadness that prevailed before the drawing activities (145 or 83.33%) significantly dropped down (4 or 2.3%) when drawing activities started and almost got lost as the activities continued (1 or 0.57%). It just indicated that though simple as it seems, the drawing activities helped increase the emotional well-being of the children.

Table 7: Children’s evaluation of the impact of the drawing activities on their socio-emotional status.

What did you feel	Sad	Afraid	Happy	Angry
When there were no drawing activities yet?	145 (83.33%)	12 (6.9%)	14 (8.05%)	3 (1.72%)
When drawing activities started	4 (2.3%)	3 (1.72%)	167 (95.98%)	
Every time that you have drawing activities?	1 (0.57%)	2 (1.15%)	173 (99.43%)	2 (1.15%)
After coloring and drawing activities?	3 (1.72%)	6 (3.45%)	169 (97.13%)	5
If there is no more drawing or art activities?	120 (68.97%)	23	45 (25.86%)	
Total responses	273		568	
				n=174

Children may not directly and clearly articulate their feelings most specially when the circumstances they are facing is something new to them, just like the experience of enforced long home quarantine due to pandemic. Once again, the use of art therapies more specifically, drawings were proven to be an effective tool by means of which the children were able to express what they feel under this new normal. Unstructured drawings give the children enough freedom to express themselves regardless of sex. However, it appears that this means of expression is proven to be more effective to older children, at least, 8 years old and above than the younger ones – less than 7 years old. The researcher assumed that younger children are still on the first couple of stages of emotional development and consequently, they may not yet be able to express what they feel. It has been evident in the drawings of the younger children that it was more of imitations and resemblances of things that they see around. Older children on the other hand, already have an increasing social sensitivity and awareness of their emotions. Thus, they are at a better position to relay emotional messages in the arts that they created. Nevertheless, findings of this research have proven support to the previous investigations made by the experts from the time of Freud’s Psychodynamic Theory to the international and national expressive therapy experts of the 21st century. That is, arts remain an outlet of the human soul, even the younger ones [16-19].

The researcher however, recognizes some loopholes in the conduct of this study, mostly in the area of methodology because pandemic situation has set boundaries as to what should have been done and what should have not been. Some extraneous variables might have played while the drawing activities were being facilitated. Since it was the parents who directly handled the art materials and written instructions to their children (due to restrictions related to the pandemic), the researchers did not have the chance to verify the uniformity of the procedures observed in the drawing sessions. They did not even have the means to verify it all those drawings were really done by the intended participants. Another issue has something to do with the thematic analysis of the feelings expressed in the drawings. The researcher recognizes

that there might have been an element of subjectivity in the appreciation of the theme of the drawings done by the children. Nonetheless, attempts were made to address this issue by having a group of experts scrutinize the drawing themes.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings derived from the data gathered in this research, it was concluded that drawings can be used as a barometer of children’s emotional wellbeing because the children’s drawings revealed their feelings, thoughts, and inner experiences. It became evident in the children’s drawings that they also suffer the same effects of home quarantine such as worries, sadness, boredom and disappointments just like the adults do. It was further concluded that drawing activities can improve the emotional wellbeing of children.

Based on these conclusions, the following recommendations are forwarded

For those who are working for the cause of children

Facilitate and promote more programs and activities that serve as media of expression of children. Children, like adults, also needs to be heard, understood and assisted in whatever journey they are going through during this pandemic time and during the new normal.

For the parents

Provide more media for emotional expression of their children through giving them drawing and writing materials for them to release and express their deep-seated feelings and inner experiences.

For guidance counselors and teachers

Reach out to children even when they are in their respective homes; extend emotional support to them to help them maintain their sanity in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic. Tele-counseling and tele-therapy using art therapies can be facilitated to reach them out.

For the dwsd and other concerned government agencies

Create and institute programs and activities for children's welfare and emotional well-being. Partnership and collaborations can be made with the Department of Education or Commission on Higher Education and State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) to facilitate these programs and activities;

For other interested researchers

Replication of this research maybe done. Improvement of the techniques of data collection and data analysis should be considered.

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