

Children are Turning to Drawings During the Lockdown – What Can We Learn from them.

Children's drawings are a mirror to their mind.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/247513687_Children's_Drawings_A_mirror_to_their_minds

It is a reflection of their feelings, emotions and their cognitive development.

The early works of psychologists dating back to the 1920's were focused on children's drawings as a measure of their intellectual abilities. This was generally based on the principle of counting the number of body parts drawn against a prescribed list (e.g. head, eyes, arms) and arriving at a score reflecting the child's intellectual ability. However, whilst this aspect of children's drawings appears to be straightforward, it was largely thanks to the work of Elizabeth Koppitz that led to the evaluation of children's drawings not just by counting the number of body parts but also considering the manner in which it was drawn. For example, according to Koppitz an exaggerated size would indicate greater interest by the child in the topic drawn, use of shading as a sign that the child has specific feelings for what has been drawn, or any additions to the drawings as an indication of the extent to which the child has an interest in the topic drawn. As a result of these early observations a growing body of research during the past decades aimed to examine the extent to which children's drawings could be a measure of their feelings, fears, likes and dislikes, anxieties, family relationships and so on. For example, in our studies we looked at children's drawings in the context of interest in sport from a cross-

cultural perspective and how interest in football may manifest itself in how children draw a football player.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5590530/>

We further speculated that certain features of a child's drawing may be a predictor of their sporting ability.

<https://www.psychreg.org/children-sporting-ability/>

There is, however, another aspect of assessment of children's drawings, namely when it is done during the time that the child is undergoing or has gone through unpleasant life events. In one of our recent works we reported how children affected by ethnic divide may reflect in their drawings their feelings towards "others" in an ethnically divided society.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330912505_Images_of_the_other_The_Turks_in_Greek_cypriot_children's_drawings

Prior to the above, we studied children in a hospital school recovering from a long term illness and how their feelings are reflected in the manner in which they draw themselves and their best friend.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14635240.2011.10708203>

It is with this line of research in mind that one turns to the current worldwide virus pandemic and many countries experiencing lockdown. It seems that children's drawing could once again be seen in these unique and very difficult

circumstances as a reflection of their feelings and emotions towards themselves and others. For example, the drawing of a picture of sunshine and the rainbow is now a reflection of children's appreciation for medical staff in their battle with the pandemic. Similarly there have also been reports of how children have expressed their feelings in their drawings about themselves and their family during the lockdown. For example, drawing of a "giant, sparkling heart that coronavirus can't penetrate" by an Italian child.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/24/superdads-and-magic-potions-italian-kids-life-in-lockdown>

It seems that children worldwide, during this virus pandemic and lockdown are expressing their feelings and emotions in their drawings about themselves, their family, friends and key members of their society, in particular medical staff.

Valuable insight can be gained from examination of the children's drawings as an expression of their feelings and emotions and the extent to which the current events have affected them. The question, however, is to what extent could our current understanding of children's drawings help in our evaluation of the drawings? Could we still make reference to measures such as size, shading, additions and so on as reported in the past studies to help with evaluation of what has been drawn under this lockdown situation? Or would this lockdown manifest different and unique forms of expression of feelings and emotions in children's drawings worldwide?