

Report on Children and Youth Drawings during the COVID-19 Pandemic



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ACRONYMS

GDP

Group Development Pakistan

COVID-19

Corona Virus Disease - 2019



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has profoundly disturbed our life, and each country is now trying to define a new way forward. The virus is still under study, and the fast pace at which it has exacerbated all developmental challenges makes this transition towards a "new normal" incredibly complex.

Children and youth¹ have been significantly affected by the virus. They have faced increased abuse and isolation, and even the most protected ones have experienced a profound and sudden change for which they had not been prepared.

To mitigate the effects of the Covid19 pandemic on children and youth during the lockdown, Group Development Pakistan (GDP) and the Federal Ministry of Human Rights organized an online drawing competition. 439 children and youth took part in the competition (338 females and 101 males); winners received a prize, and other participants were awarded a certificate. The winners' selection was ensured by a four-member jury comprising two children (1 male & 1 female), a gender expert, and one artist. Participants were divided into three groups based on their age. Category A comprised children aged 4-10 years, category B comprised children aged 11-16 years, and category C included children and youth aged 17-25. The scoring was based on the clarity of drawing/sketching/painting, use of material and color, the concept behind the drawing, the compelling depiction, and the picture's uniqueness.

The drawings shared by the children and youth were highly expressive, and some of them depicted some vivid emotions. Subsequently, GDP decided to initiate a small study to understand better how the Covid19 has impacted those children and youth in light of the submitted drawings.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the study is to get a glimpse of the impact of the COVID19 lockdown/closing of educational institutions on children and youth's mental well-being. The exercise will also help take stock of children and youth's concerns during the pandemic to make more relevant and informed child/youth-related policy and programming. The analysis will be based on the children and youth's drawings.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

100 drawings were randomly selected from different age categories and various provinces of Pakistan. A psychologist analyzed the drawings. The following features were observed for the psychosocial analysis: colors, the position of the drawing on the paper, details on

¹ For GDP, youth means from 18 to 25 years of age.

certain parts of the drawings, types of tools or people involved in the drawing, emotional aspects, and pattern of body parts whenever represented, etc.

The theory of Erikson is a psychosocial theory in which the researcher has described life's developmental stages. This theory has been used to analyze the drawings. Additionally, Freud's theory helped bring insight into unconscious aspects present in the drawings. The emotional content was studied with the help of a manual written by Gilbert.²

The colors present in the drawings were analyzed using guidance from Farokhi's study on *The analysis of children's drawings: social, emotional, physical, and psychological aspects*.

Eventually, the psychologist and GDP prepared a user-friendly consolidated report to present common and salient patterns identified in most of the selected drawings.

4. KEY FINDINGS

The findings related to the drawings and children and youth's mental health are discussed in the section below.

1. Out of 100 drawings, 20% depicted an element of fear.

20% of the children/youth depicted an element of fear.



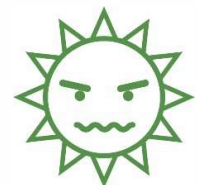
2. More than half of the children and youth's drawings (56%) depicted an element of anxiety. A more significant proportion of boys (68%) have shown anxiety through their drawings than girls (51%).



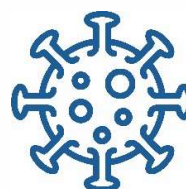
More than half of the children and youth's drawings (56%) depict an element of anxiety.

3. Elements of aggression were found in 26% of the drawings; boys (39%) have shown more signs of aggression than girls (20%).

26% of the children/youth have depicted signs of aggression whereas 22% have portrayed calmness.



4. The drawings' analysis shows that 14% of the children and youth (Boys: 6% and



14% of the children and youth's drawings expressed loneliness during the COVID-19 lockdown

Girls: 17%) felt alone during the COVID-19 context.

5. The study findings show that 22% of the children and youth (23% boys and 22% girls) have shown signs of helplessness through their drawings. The helplessness symptoms have been depicted by drawing small hands and creating situations with no solutions, no power to influence the scenario.

22% of the children and youth have portrayed signs of helplessness.



6. 35% (42% of boys and 32% of girls) of the children and youth' drawings have shown an element of sadness. The sad mood is depicted through the characters' facial expressions.



35% of the children/youth' drawings depicted signs of sadness whereas 28% have shown signs of happiness.

7. 48% of the children/youth (equal proportion of boys and girls) have expressed safety concerns. This has been demonstrated by elements that highlight a concern for the family, the country, and earth safety.

48% of the children/youth' drawings have depicted signs of concern for the safety of their family, country, and earth.



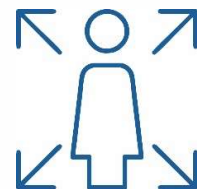
8. 19% of the children/youth have demonstrated signs of poor social health, which is uniform across genders. 32% of the children (26% of boys and 35% of girls) enjoyed good social health. Some children have depicted social isolation.



32% of the children/youth' drawings depicted signs of good social health whereas 19% showed that the children/youth' social well-being had been negatively impacted

9. 60% of the children/youth (65% boys and 58% girls) were aware of the safety protocols followed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This awareness has been depicted via personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves, coats, and sanitizers.

60% of the children/youth' drawings depicted signs of awareness of the COVID-19 preventive measures



10. 20% of the children/youth (16% of boys and 22% of girls) have expressed optimism in their drawings, while 7% (6% of boys and 7% of girls) have voiced pessimism. Those who have shown signs of optimism have drawn schools and a return to everyday life, whereas pessimism has been depicted by the earth endangered by the virus attack.



20% of the children/youth' drawings shows signs of optimism whereas **7%** have shown a pessimistic trend.

11. 31% of the children/youth (35% of boys and 29% of girls) who were selected for the analysis have a good cognitive ability and could draw the concepts clearly.

31% of the children/youth' drawings demonstrated a good cognitive ability.



12. 62% of the children/youth' drawings have depicted signs of distress. The drawings had elements reflecting emotional and psychological challenges faced by children during the COVID-19 pandemic (children crying, being in the dark, etc.).



62% of the children/youth have expressed some emotional or psychological distress and are in need of care and support.

5. CONCLUSION

This children/youth' drawing analysis does not claim to analyze the overall emotional state of children and youth in Pakistan during the Covid19 pandemic and partial or complete lockdowns. It however, presents a trend out of a small indicative sample (100 drawings and 100 children/youth). Overall, this trend shows that children and youth have been emotionally impacted by the Covid19 pandemic, especially boys. Many children and youth felt lonely, sad, anxious, distressed, and expressed safety concerns that seem more directed towards their family's good health (some children and youth expressed the fear of people dying around them) and the country's population welfare. Many children and youth are also concerned about environmental challenges. A majority still shares messages of hope and optimism. Still, the findings identified via this analysis suggest that there is a serious need to focus even more on children's mental health and emotional support due to the Covid19 pandemic. The fact that boys show more anxiety and more aggressivity than girls also underlines the need to engage and support boys to counter gender-based violence. Lastly, the government's efforts to sensitize this category of children and youth on the Covid19 preventive measures seem efficient: most child and youth participants were aware of them.

5. ANNEXURES



Children & Youth
Art Competition

Category A
(Age 4 to 10 Years)





2 **1** **3**

GHALIA
Age 10 Years
Karachi

HIBA SHARIQ
Age 10 Years
Karachi

ZIKRA IDREES
Age 7 Years
Peshawar

2nd Prize **15,000** 1st Prize **20,000** 3rd Prize **10,000**



Children & Youth
Art Competition

Category B
(Age 11 to 16 Years)





2 **1** **3**

UFFAIFA
Age 13 Years
Karachi

HAMNA FAISAL
Age 13 Years
Rawalpindi

MANO KHAN
Age 16 Years
Islamabad

2nd Prize **15,000** 1st Prize **20,000** 3rd Prize **10,000**



Children & Youth
Art Competition

Category C
(Age 17 to 25 Years)





2 **1** **3**

RAMEEN WAQAR
Age 18 Years
Lahore

RIDA ZEHRA
Age 22 Years
Islamabad

UMAIMA BANO
Age 25 Years
Karachi

2nd Prize **15,000** 1st Prize **20,000** 3rd Prize **10,000**