The Desire for Aesthetics in Children

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand school children’s aesthetic desires. A total of 93 students in standard XI, ranging in age from 15 to 17, participated in the study. The researcher used the tool developed by Lundy et al. (2010). It is entitled as “How important is beauty to you? The Development of the desire for aesthetic scale”. The research study is primarily quantitative. The results from the overall picture showed that the boys expressed a strong desire for aesthetics compared to girls. It can be concluded that the boys differ significantly in their preferences and perceptions of beauty from their counterparts.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Art, Beauty, Desire, Perception

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most difficult challenges in aesthetic education is how to teach youngsters to appreciate beauty and aesthetics. The ability to recognize beauty in children develops spontaneously in their early years. Flowering flora, beautiful environment, brilliant stars, flowing water, the sound of birds, and the affection of pets fascinates children. However, as kids grow older and become more distracted, they lose all of their natural responses, abilities, and interests. As a result, it’s critical to educate children to observe and appreciate beauty in their daily lives.

According to the Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy (1996) the meaning of the word aesthetics is, “The study of the feelings, concepts, and judgments arising from our appreciation of the arts or of the wider class of objects considered moving, or beautiful, or sublime” (Blackburn, 1996, p. 8). Aesthetic refers to a sense of awe and admiration for beauty. It’s a sensibility that employs both the imagination and the five senses. It’s appreciating the beauty of a sunset, hearing bees buzzing, butterflies fluttering, rainfall rhythm, sky lightning, and adoring the expression of laughing on someone’s face. Each youngster has a unique sense of what is and is not pleasing to him or her.

The beauty of the world fascinates children. They are more open to expressing their feelings and ideas through language, song, facial expressions, movements, music, and dance than adults. They love nature and enjoy creating, looking at, and talking about art, as well as expressing their feelings and ideas through language, song, facial expressions, movements, music, and dance. Toys, objects, literature, dolls, natural items, and food are all favorites among young children. They are imaginative, curious, and enthusiastic about art. The ability to create comes long after a child’s aesthetic sense. Even an infant’s experience has an aesthetic component, such as a soft satin-edged blanket, a curled soft toy, seeing a brilliant mobile, or selecting a colorful toy. These selections reveal the children’s individual preferences. They enjoy making things on the spur of the moment with various materials. To learn the art and be creative, you must have a strong sense of aesthetics.

Children learn to appreciate their belongings and the house they share by appreciating aesthetics. They are gentle with their toys, and as we guide them, they learn to put things where they belong without our help. It also promotes self-sufficiency.

Music, literature, visual art, architecture, natural landscapes, and potential companions are all examples of beauty that children cherish. According to Ömeroğlu (2008), in the middle of the 18th century, German philosopher Alexander Baumgarten was the first to adopt the term “aesthetics” to elevate the “science of beauty” as a field in its own right. He further says Alexander Baumgarten delineated the possibilities of observable information and chose the word aisthetikos, which means “sensitive,” to describe the relationship between our approaches and experiences. The study of beauty nowadays is concerned with

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the data gathered through our sensational or rational perspectives. (Bergmann, 1993; Tunali 2001, Linderman 1997, Duncum 2005, Lankford 1990; Sörbom 1993; Okan 2002).

People’s ingenuity, their capacity to display unique aesthetic judgement and look at challenges from new viewpoints are all being emphasized in the contemporary research. Actions such as conversing about other people’s creative attempts and reassuring youngsters to realize these (Senemoğlu & Genc 2001) can help to foster the development of children’s imagination as well as attractive attributes. To this sense, the activity looks to be extremely effective at instilling artistic enthusiasm in children. According to Schirmacher (1986), discussing the principles of craft dealings improves children’s aesthetic awareness. Children can investigate how various elements such as color, character, and composition are combined to generate an expressive wholeness, a process that excites the senses and elicits responses that are equally favorable to a variety of cognitive pursuits (Bell 1997; Rinker 2000; Forrest 1991, Kreft 2002; Funch 1993). Supporting children’s ability to evaluate works of art in this way, according to Epstein (2001), Faraday (1990), and Mulcahey (2002), allows them to adopt new and different attitudes in their life. There have been numerous study investigations on aesthetic comprehension and educational development. Cole (1985), for example, evaluated the effects of an artistic training course designed for art libraries on the development of artistic judgment in children aged four, six, and eight years old. It was revealed that the training resulted in a rise in children’s artistic knowledge.

In a similar line, Pariser and Berg (1997) used an artistic encrypting graph to assess the aesthetic potentials of drawings by children, minors, and adults, finding that the artistic grades of children’s drawings were significantly higher than those of other persons. In another study, Aylward et al. (1993) gave 17 kindergarten children a one-and-a-half-hour weekly craft training session for 10 weeks. During this session, the kindergarten kids learned about the art world, processes, and memoirs of Jackson Pollock, Morris Louis, Andy Warhol, Piet Mondrian, and Henry Moore. Before and after this training, the researchers evaluated the involvement of youngsters in art as well as their creative preferences. The researchers discovered that by the end of the training, the kindergarten children had learned the distinction between composition and carving. The youngsters were also able to compare the artists’ creations, and their interest in and preference for craftwork boosted their self-esteem.

According to Lundy et al. (2010), some people are probably more committed to the aesthetic lifestyle than others, with some “living for it” and others only having a passing interest. Through the empirical construction of the Desire for Aesthetic Scale, the current study aimed to quantify individual differences in children’s aesthetic motivation (DFAS). A guiding assumption was that a person who is highly motivated by one aesthetic domain (for example, literature) will be similarly inspired by a diverse range of aesthetic domains (e.g., films and music). The researchers in this study wants to understand the school children’s desire for aesthetics.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE INVESTIGATION.

The purpose of the present investigation is to understand school children’s desire for aesthetics.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in the Shamshabad district of Telangana state, India. The sample included 93 children aged 15–17 years of age from standard XI. The sample was purposefully chosen. This research study is based on a descriptive research design to comprehend the school children’s desire for aesthetics. The analysis is purely quantitative. The desire for aesthetics shows that children who are extremely driven by one artistic area (e.g., literature) would also be driven by an extensive selection of similar areas (e.g., movies and songs). (Lundy et al. 2010, p. 74). This research work looked at any art or nonart objects or activities that people might come across in everyday life and find “moving, attractive, or sublime.” These were thought to be pleasurable affective experiences that were enjoyed just for the sake of contemplation and disinterestedness, with no regard for practical considerations or utilitarian usefulness. Thus, the DFAS scale items were chosen intuitively, based on the above concept, with a key assumption being that beauty is the driving force behind the aesthetic motive, whether in the form of art or nonart objects, as well as the resulting intrinsic value or meaning that some people are especially likely to derive from these kinds of experiences, across multiple sensory and perceptual modalities (Lundy et al., 2010).

The Desire for Aesthetics tool comprises 36 items in total. The Desire for Aesthetics tool developed by Lundy et al. (2010) was used in the study. The questionnaire is on a 5-point scale. The number 5 indicates “Very High,” the number 4 indicates “High,” the number 3 indicates “Average,” the number 2 indicates “Low,” and the number 1 indicates “Very Low.” The minimum score in the questionnaire is 36, and the highest is 180.
A. Data Presentation and Interpretation

The researchers ran a pilot study to assess if this instrument was appropriate for Indian culture. The tool’s reliability was tested in the field using the test-retest method. The pilot test involved 40 students from a government school in the Shamshabad area of Telangana. After a twenty-day break, the school children were evaluated again in a pilot study. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to coordinate and evaluate the schoolchildren’s achievements. Because the reliability coefficient (r) value was determined to be .87, the test was judged to be suitable for use in India. In light of this, the instrument was kept in the main study as well.

### TABLE I: DISTRIBUTION OF CHILDREN WITH RESPECT TO THEIR DESIRE FOR AESTHETICS

| Gender | Desire for Aesthetics (DFA) | Total |
|--------|---------------------------|-------|
|        | Low | Moderate | High |       |
| Boys   | 9   | 14       | 23   | 46    |
| % within Gender | 19.6% | 30.4% | 50.0% | 100.0% |
| Girls  | 11  | 24       | 12   | 47    |
| % within Gender | 23.4% | 51.1% | 25.5% | 100.0% |
| Total  | 20  | 38       | 35   | 93    |
| % within Gender | 21.5% | 40.9% | 37.6% | 100.0% |

The following conclusions can be taken from this table: A low desire for aesthetics was stated by 21.5 percent of children, a moderate want by 40.9 percent, and a high desire by 37.6 percent of children. According to the gender-specific analysis, 19.6% of boys have a low desire for aesthetics, 30.4 percent have a moderate desire for aesthetics, and 50.0 percent have a strong desire for aesthetics. 23.4 percent of girls said they had a low want for aesthetics, 51.1 percent said they had a moderate desire for aesthetics, and 25.5 percent said they had a high desire for aesthetics. The table above shows the discrepancies in responses from males and girls when it comes to their desire for beauty. To determine if boys and girls differ statistically in their desire for aesthetics, an appropriate statistical test was used to analyze the difference between boys’ and girls’ desire for aesthetics.

**H1:** Boys and girls differ significantly with respect to their desire for aesthetics.

To test this hypothesis the following null hypothesis is formulated.

**H0:** Boys and girls do not differ significantly with respect to their desire for aesthetics.

The above null hypothesis was tested with Mann-Whitney non-parametric statistical test. The results are furnished below.

### TABLE II: CHILDREN’S DESIRE FOR AESTHETICS: MEAN RANKS AND MANN-WHITNEY-U

| Gender | N   | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|--------|-----|-----------|--------------|
| DFA    |     |           |              |
| Boys   | 46  | 52.08     | 2395.50      |
| Girls  | 47  | 42.03     | 1975.50      |

### TABLE III: DFA: DESIRE FOR AESTHETICS

|             | DFA             |
|-------------|-----------------|
| Mann Whitney U | 847.500         |
| Wilcoxon W    | 1975.500        |
| Z             | -1.925          |
| Assymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.054 |

From the above table, it is observed that the mean rank for boys is 52.08, and for girls, it is 42.03. The Mann-Whitney test statistics analysis shows that the U value is 847.500, the Z score is -1.925, and the p-value is 0.054. The p-value estimates the magnitude of the testimony of data opposing the invalid proposition. The lower the p value, the greater the specimen indication for rejecting an invalid proposition. The p-value indicates that there is only a 5.4% chance of accepting the null hypothesis. Hence, the specimen outcomes are not reliable with the invalid proposition that is accurate. Since the p-value is adequate, it is concluded that the specimen is unsuited to the invalid proposition that one can discard the invalid for the whole populace. Hence, it can be inferred that boys and girls differ significantly in their desire for aesthetics. In other words, based on the strong evidence (p-value < 0.05, i.e., 0.054), the invalid proposition is excluded, and the other proposition is acknowledged. As a result, it is stated that the difference in demand for beauty between boys and girls is statistically significant.
IV. CONCLUSION

The study revealed individual differences in aesthetic interest. As predicted by the Lundy et al. (2010) the scale adopted in this study was served as a large representative subset of the universe of potential aesthetic enjoyment, as it would be almost impossible to tap into all possible aesthetic manifestations. Furthermore, children with a significant interest in one field of aesthetics can be predicted to have some interest in other aesthetic worlds if given the opportunity. In other words, given enough time and familiarity, a person with a high score on this scale should feel enthusiastic about most aesthetic options. As a result, this scale approximates a person’s aesthetic interest in a broad sense. The boys showed a significant need for aesthetics in this study. Boys’ great need for aesthetics can be related to a variety of factors, including differences in preferences and perceptions. Furthermore, in some societies, boys are more extroverted than girls, moving freely from one area to another, exploring new daring spots. Gardner et al. (1975) and Parsons et al. (1978) claimed that the intellectual disparity was at the root of the differences in composition choices, impressions, and acknowledgment. Another factor that influences the development of aesthetic judgment is the environment. Nonetheless, Taylor (1971) used the Taylor Helmstader Pair Comparison Aesthetic Judgment Scale to compare the artistic fondness of 5 year olds in a schoolroom setting that was premeditated artistically with compositions of art and in a conventional schoolroom setting, and found no significant differences between the twin clusters’ artistic fondness. The current restraint of this study is that it did not take into account the students of college and universities. The study also did not involve a varied sample of cultures and age groups to enable comparative findings that would add to the benefit of future studies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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