

# The Expression of Art Drawing for Children: Psycho-Socio-Cultural Intervention Through Drawing Activities in the Save Street Child Surabaya Community

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***Abstract-***This study aims to describe the activities of street children of Save Street Child Surabaya (SSCS) in expressing themselves in the form of drawings. Visual elements such as lines, shapes, colors, expressions, and symbols of their drawings, as well as the meanings behind them, can be identified as the works of visual images of street children of SSCS. This research is descriptive qualitative. Sources of data used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. This study uses data collection methods such as interviews, documentation, and observation. Analysis of the data used in this research is descriptive analysis. Based on the results of research and discussion, it can be concluded that the expressions of SSCS street children in the form of drawings can be seen from the symbols in their work. Drawing for children is meant as an expression. Each child is different in growing, feeling, understanding, and interpreting his or her environment. Drawing for a child is meaningful like learning, which is to build concepts and take the visible forms of the surrounding environment by creating symbols. This symbolizing process is then arranged into drawings of symbols. Identification of visual elements such as lines, shapes, colors, expressions, and symbols of the works of SSCS street children can be explained that in the process of transferring into the form of drawings or paintings, children's minds are controlled by the subconscious and poured into symbolic forms.

***Keywords:*** *children's drawing expressions, street children, psycho-socio-cultural intervention*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Art as a part of culture takes place and evolves with time. Every aspect of life, as the elements of culture such as technology, science, beliefs, economy, and art, are aspects that complement and affect each other. Art itself is never separated from aspects that surround human life. (Rahim, 2009) Art is one of the elements of culture that consists of the human invention with society as a supporter. If art has belonged to all members of society, the existence of art is dependent on the community where it belongs. A form of folk art will continue to exist when it has a certain function in society (Khutniah and Iryanti, 2012). It shows that art is an integral part of society, whereas society is the holder of a culture. A work of art could describe the cultural development of a country, convey the prevailing tradition happening in a country, or show the living standard that a community has achieved. Art plays important roles in constructing cultural identity and transmitting cultural ideas and values.

Creativity is the nature of every human being, both the normal and the troubled. What's making it different between each person is the level of creativity within each individual. Creativity could be expressed through various media, one of them being art. Art is chosen since it could be commercialized and exhibited. A creative work of art needs an expression of an artist as art is a way to express one's meanings, ideas, messages, opinions, questions, emotions, and many more.

Other than to express forms of ideas, art could also be used as a media to do a psychological therapy; as well as an object to socio-cultural study in which it is an easier topic for the study of art education. Art education in the form of creative activities could

provide educative experiences for children. According to Sumarno (2005), the functions of art education could be divided into three parts: *As a form of expression*, a child could express his or her wishes, feelings, and thoughts through a lot of creative activities. *As a communicating media*, creative activities are ways to communicate with other people, which could be shown through a child's work of art. *As a media to play*, playing creatively could trigger a child's creative part of the brain to work more.

Based on the explanation above, thus, the writer is interested in doing research involving the use of art as a form of therapy for children. The subject of this research is the street children of SSCS. The writer chooses this subject since the number of street children in Surabaya is increasing greatly, resulting in activities that harm others and have lower value. Thus, the writer has organized a painting class as an expression therapy for the children. According to Rustandi (2009:1) painting is one of the most (basic) of art. Painting is closely related to drawing and pictures. Painting is useful for child development, for example, to 1) train a child's imagination; 2) develop talents; 3) play; 4) develop the ability to think. The writer hopes through the painting class, it can help street children of SSCS to develop the children's imagination and talents so that they can have positive and valuable activities to do, as well as to remove the negative impression attached to street children.

There are unique values that could be obtained from the children's strokes in the drawings. It is indicated by their strokes that create such unique and different stories compared to other children their age. Furthermore, for art education, it is important to let children around the age of 8 to 12 express their feelings and to let them pour their creativity into drawings. Also, experiences around those ages are a foundation that would create their personalities during adolescence and adulthood. As explained by Mulyadi (2005), problems occurring during childhood should be solved immediately as the problems could affect children greatly in the future.

## II. METHODS

This type of research is descriptive qualitative (Bungin 2007: 68) to be able to explain the expressions of the street children's painting or drawing in the SSCS community. As with the phenomenology approach, we have analyzed the communication awareness activities developed by the SSCS community in guiding, inviting, and educating street children through painting activities. To analyze the children's drawing, we use the theories of Viktor Lowenfeld and Lambert Brittain, namely that a child's artwork in the stage of

representation is a direct reflection of the child itself. In intellectual growth, emotional growth, social growth, perceptual growth, and creative growth of children, the focus is to see a work of art as an important component in the total development of children.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### a. Children's Drawings

The results of expressions are in the form of drawings. It is explained earlier that expression is one's way to communicate one's ideas, meanings, suggestions, messages, opinions, emotions, and feelings. The street children's drawings in SSCS also show the same. The drawings express the following: (1) Personalized symbols, (2) Identified symbols. Symbols are strong tools to broaden the mind, stimulate imagination, and to understand a subject deeper. Symbols in children's drawings are something that signifies the children's expression. Shapes are usually drawn after the children watch their surroundings. They seem to be drawing things they have experienced or at least seen.

Sometimes, symbols that the children draw might be affected by their memory. Certain memories would come up again as something that the children draw. In the drawings, children would draw something that expresses "me" as these experiences dominate the children, yet they are still not able to differentiate their own from others' perspectives. When the ego is shown in the drawings, children would translate their surroundings into drawings by seeing it through their perspectives and feelings. For example, children would draw an object that expresses "me" and after that, drawing other things surrounding the "me" object.

In a drawing or a painting, a child can pour out all the turmoil of his or her soul, so that he or she gets a sublimation. If the mental turmoil of the child is not sublimated, then the child will experience mental stress. If the pressure of the soul is not channeled properly, it can explode in an uncontrolled form. So, painting is one of the media for expressing the innards of a child's soul that can produce a meaningful painting. The same thing is stressed by the painter Soedjojono that said that art is the soul of the knots (Soedarso Supadmo, 2006: 186). Thus, art is an outpouring of the contents of the human soul, so that his or her work can be read and enjoyed by others. Other people can be touched and be impressed.

The main purpose of this research is to foster and develop the functions of the soul, namely: fantasy, sensitivity, creativity, and expression. This is based on the concept of art education for mental and creative

growth proposed by Victor Lowenfeld that there is a harmonious balance of physical and spiritual growth. Art for children is an expression.

The result of a work of art is very much influenced and even determined by the performer of the art itself. In general, it can be said that children's artworks are expressive because their visual works are generally strong and honest expressions, departing directly from the heart and from within. Their works are dynamic that they generally impress something that keeps moving. In the case of colors, for example, children prefer using contrast and sharp or striking colors.

Children's drawings generally show similarities in characteristics, namely: (1) expressive; reflected in their honesty in describing ideas or observations based on their points of view, (2) exaggerating objects that are considered important, (3) having narratives related to stories about themselves and their environments, and (4) follow the pattern of development or children's development period of drawing (Salam, 2001). The description above shows that children's drawing is an image of what they feel, see, and know. Drawing for children is a form of picturing their world and lives in harmony or in accordance with the development period (multiple intelligences) of children that is unique, expressive, spontaneous and individual. Every work of children's drawings has a visual element with interesting aesthetic characteristics to be understood as a visual language that is universally meaningful.

The phenomenon of the uniqueness of the visualization of children's drawings can be analyzed from the study of art, picture themes, drawing stages of children, typology, and the characteristics of children's visual arts. The art study focuses on describing the visual elements that are present in each child's drawing. The visual elements in the children's drawings include lines, colors, expressive shapes, how freely they are in expressing tangible objects, dramatic or non-dramatic objects, as well as the dynamics of their imagination. The periodization study of children's drawing stages refers to the results of a children's picture study conducted by Victor Lowenfeld and Lambert Britain.

#### *b. Art Learning Concept in SSCS*

Save Street Child Surabaya (SSCS) is an independent community with the aim of humanity and moves specifically to save street children and marginal children. It is a community that arises as a result of care and concern for the condition of street children and marginal children who do not have time to play, learn like children who have received proper education and adequate playtime. SSCS emerges as an observer of street

children to be more noticed by the community at large because many of these street children have hidden talents but are limited by the facilities they have. Therefore, this community provides programs for disadvantaged street children, namely providing guidance in the form of education and skills. Basically, SSCS guidance is not enough to just be given a material stimulus, but the most important thing is to be given the right to obtain a change in life. The lives of street children can be changed and initiated if they can obtain education and minimal skills to develop themselves, increase the self-esteem and dignity of street children.

Learning art is a set of signs that are designed to meet certain targets in the form of results that must be achieved. The signs are in the form of learning objectives and several art learning materials. The function of art activities here is as a component of a learning process. Thus, the learning of art is a business process undertaken to obtain a change in behavior as a result of a person's artistic experience in interacting with their environment to achieve certain goals. The art learning program provided to the SSCS community is based on the concept of art education that directs the learning outcomes to be achieved. There are two concepts of art education, namely contextual and essential approaches. The contextual approach is art learning that focuses on the results of the follow-up effects of the ability to do art. Whereas the essential approach is learning art which emphasizes the ability of art and producing a work of art. So that the art learning activities held in the SSCS community have an impact on sensory awareness, confidence, and imagination intelligence. Sensitivity intelligence includes aesthetic feelings, environmental humanity, and identity (aesthetic impulse).

The most important art learning activity given to the SSCS community is to obtain a change of life. With art, there is at least a change in the values, mindsets, and behavior of street children to be more normative and cultured. The lives of street children can be changed and initiated if they can get minimal education and skills that can develop themselves, increase self-esteem and dignity.

Learning art in this research is through drawing. The strategy used in this activity is where the role of researchers who are assisted by several SSCS informants and instructors, begin by telling the children about their surroundings. This can be obtained from the lives of street children or certain themes according to their wishes. After telling stories, the children are then asked to draw with their creations and imagination. The drawing equipment used includes colored pencils, crayons, and color markers. After the children finish the drawings, we then continue with appreciation of the works.

That is why art learning activities aimed at self-development is implemented to change the mindset,

mental attitude, and values adopted in the culture. One of the changes can be made through art education, both formal and informal, so they are more normative and cultured. In the world of education, art learning has a very important position in order to work on the process of cultural change or transformation. Changes in mental attitudes, behavior, mindset and so on are adopted by street children towards the formation of new cultural values that are more normative and can be accepted by the general public. In this activity learning, arts functions as an educational medium. This can be seen from the initial condition of street children and their results after going through the creative process through learning art. Changes in behavior, mental attitudes, and patterns of street children can be directed through the learning of art to the character formation and personality values of children who are more normative and cultured, which certainly applies in society.

This art learning activity is very useful for the street children of the SSCS community and is a non-formal educational activity. Art has unique and interesting characteristics. The implementation of art learning in the SSCS community places more emphasis on psychomotoric skills, life skills, and affective aspects. Street children who usually hang out around the Red Bridge Plaza and Bungkul Park participated in this activity. Learning art is recommended as the best alternative because art is very universal, multilingual, and multicultural.

The study of typology and characteristics of children's fine art is intended to describe the tendency of the types or styles of children's drawings which are full of the uniqueness of children's art, the characteristic impressions of the space they display and are individual. Each form of the children's drawings has universal uniqueness as a form of language with certain symbols it

displays. In this case, the child's image is an expression of his or her message, ideas, and emotions by using visual symbols according to the style characteristics of each child. The elements or visual elements in a child's drawing consist of lines, shapes, colors, textures, space, and light and dark values, which can express aesthetic feelings. Lines are the most dominant visual elements that appear in the drawings. Streaks of free, expressive, spontaneous, and repetitive lines have become part of the children's drawing papers.

The aesthetic diversity of SSCS street children's drawings is a representation of creative ideas, uniqueness, individual expressions, children's self-expression of experiences, reality, imaginative worlds that are culturally meaningful. Each child's drawing has a specific aesthetic value, interesting, dynamic, straightforward, and does not have the same impression between one drawing to another. The aesthetics of children's drawings relate to themselves, nature or the environment, culture and the arts, the animal world, experiences, activities, natural events, objects as public places, imaginative themes, and others. The aesthetics of the uniqueness of the children's drawings show that each child basically experiences a period of development of visual expression according to his or her innate abilities or talents, even though the level of talents varies. The development period of drawing for every child does not always seem to coincide with his or her age. Not every picture shows conformity to the child's drawing development stage, but some do. There are children who can draw faster than their periodic age, and conversely, there are also some who are slow. Some drawings have a clear impression of the drawing stage, and some of the other drawings suggest that it is not clearly visible.



Figure 1. some of the paintings of street children of SSCS

Drawings in the Pre-Schematic stage are marked by streaks of free, unique expressive individual lines that form simple charts of objects and the shapes that describe them. Its characteristics are the forms of expression of various objects in the form of charts as simple figures, straightforward, incomplete parts, but can be recognized as drawing expressions according to the

creations of elementary school-age children.

Pre-Schematic objects are people, animals, plants, the natural environment, objects that are attractive to children in the form of simple charts, visual symbols that are incomplete but have the characteristics of stick figures. Drawings of children during the Chart /

Schematic stage display objects of humans, animals, nature, cultural objects with a variety of charts that are more complete, intact, more detailed, and more perfect. Variations in the chart creation of repeating patterns can strengthen the characteristics of the chart made, for example, the chart of people, trees, flowers, animals, houses and others. Images in the Realism stage reveal the real conditions experienced and felt which are then depicted with real, detailed, and more complete drawing techniques.

Children's pictures can give an impression based on clearer concepts, critical and realistic attitudes of children affecting the objects of their drawings into tangible forms. The drawings are based on real circumstances, realistic shapes, efforts to adjust to their environment, have begun to recognize the concept of color according to reality, commonality, and spontaneity of expression decreases. The picture in the Pseudo Naturalism stage shows the impression of being realistic and tends to be more natural. It can be identified that this period of naturalism is still artificial or not yet true. The drawings are based on natural forms so that there are considerations of proportions, perspectives, color suitability, far and near positions, large and small sizes, and techniques of finishing images carefully and thoroughly so that the impressions are closer to their original states.

*c. The Socio-Cultural Approach in the Context of Art Education in the SSCS Community*

The handling and approaches of street children are not enough just to be seen from social and economic aspects alone, but also needs to pay attention to cultural aspects. Art as an element of culture has an important role and function as a means and infrastructure to civilize and empower them through art learning. Moreover, their parents who are economically deficient, unfortunately, involve their children to help them make a living. Most of their children work as buskers, scavengers, and hawkers. The activities carried out by street children are considered jobs and the same as working. However, ethically their work is not feasible, let alone by children. They need protection and attention, especially from parents. Children working on the streets violate children's rights.

Art and social have a symbolic relationship to be combined as an integrated curriculum. The social approach requires an understanding of humanity and human experience. Art provides an opportunity to understand the human experience well. Art also plays an important role in human development, in fact, it can be considered as an agent of social change. Education received by humans, realized or not, has put art in its proper place. Education about art has been started

since the age of children where they begin to know about the instruments of play in various shapes and colors. Likewise, in the context of coloring on paper, children will use the color choices they like. These color strokes give birth to ideas that lead to their creations. This needs to be nurtured and fostered with the best so that the children can become self-reliant and confident in themselves. This is because children make symbols that are easy and concise following the stages of mastery and environmental factors. If examined carefully, the forms of paintings will have meanings that are quite deep without us knowing (Herbert Read).

The environment in which children live affects their lifestyle. Children who live on the streets with community values make them their approach and attitude towards their creation of art and its environment. They produce works that show the images and expressions of individuals who are happy, cheerful, or sad. They learn from experience about life in their society. Art activities are also not limited to age ratings because learning is lifelong. Art education can be learned or produced by children and adults. This is where the role of parents and their community environment understand and appreciate art, then art activities can be carried out without burden. Apart from using free time, these activities can also improve skills. For example, in painting activities, a person can increase his knowledge and skills and make this field of art a job to add income. In addition, this activity can foster a disciplined attitude, be patient, responsible, and so on. The theme also plays a role in the teaching of Art Education because it has a relationship with the community and is also influenced by the ideologies of various cultures where each community has its own artistic style.

Rohendi in the book "Art Expressions of the Poor" about art expressions of children explains that cultural behavior is formed from patterns and are organized, in the sense that activities or events that take place repeatedly as a habit is a process of maturing children that are governed by the norms of society around it. This cultural planting activity is experienced by every child through the process of conditioning, both conscious and unconscious, as well as from controlled and spontaneous interactions that occur in their daily lives. For example, parents who consciously direct their children to tidy up their toys after they are used so that children can take responsibility for whatever they do, to spontaneous interactions like how the surrounding environment greets them in daily life. These activities lead to, among others, the formation of attitudes, values, control of feelings, cognitive orientation, and aesthetic tastes in daily life (Cohen, 1971).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Art for children is meant as an expression. Children use art as meaningful as learning, that is, building concepts and taking shape that is visible from the surrounding environment by creating symbols through a symbolizing process and arranged into picture symbols in a depiction. By starting and making a symbol, the child discovers and makes a symbol in his or her own unique way. They can creatively make symbols from simple to complex. Children do not have to have full skills to be creative, but the various forms of creativity are emotional freedom, freedom for adventure, experimentation, and expression. Children need to be given the freedom to express ideas and thoughts when drawing so that the values of creativity will appear in children. Assistance is needed so that communication occurs during the drawing process, so the supervisor knows the development of expression and creativity in the children. There needs to be learning methods that free the children's imagination so that the values of expression and creativity will develop personally in each child.

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