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Universidad del Zulia
Facultad Experimental de Ciencias
Departamento de Ciencias Humanas
Maracaibo - Venezuela

Understanding the development of peace concept in Children's drawings

Reza Samadi¹

¹Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Semnan University, Iran
samadi.rmb@semnan.ac.ir

Ali Mohammad Rezaei^{2*}

²Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Semnan University, Iran
Rezaei_am@semnan.ac.ir

Ali Akbar Amin Beydokhti³

³Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran
a.beydokht@semnan.ac.ir

Mahmood Najafi⁴

⁴Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran
m.najafi@semnan.ac.ir

Farahnaz KianErsi⁵

⁵Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran

Abstract

This study aimed at finding thinking content of 63 boys at the age of 6-13 who are studying in schools located in districts 3 and 4 of Tehran in terms of the peace concept in drawing using qualitative research methodology of phenomenography. Findings implied that the peace concept included developed and social dimensions in each age group indicating the transformational process of this concept in children. In conclusion, it is essential to pay attention to developmental capacities of peace concept in order to have children with practical and real skills in relation with the peaceful life for a healthy future.

Keywords: Peace, Child Development, Drawing.

Entendiendo el desarrollo del concepto de paz en los dibujos infantiles

Resumen

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo encontrar el contenido de pensamiento de 63 niños a la edad de 6 a 13 años que estudian en escuelas ubicadas en los distritos 3 y 4 de Teherán en términos del concepto de paz en el dibujo utilizando la metodología de investigación cualitativa de la fenomenografía. Los hallazgos implicaron que el concepto de paz incluía dimensiones desarrolladas y sociales en cada grupo de edad que indicaban el proceso de transformación de este concepto en los niños. En conclusión, es esencial prestar atención a las capacidades de desarrollo del concepto de paz para tener niños con habilidades prácticas y reales en relación con la vida pacífica para un futuro saludable.

Palabras clave: paz, desarrollo infantil, dibujo.

1. INTRODUCTION

Children's drawings are unique and can give us accurate information about children. Study of children's drawings goes back to late 19th century; since then, this method is using mainly for clinical and educational aesthetics. Mostly, there are three types of research associated with the emotional aspects of children's drawings. First, paintings are used as indicators for personality traits that was interpreted by Freud in framework of theory of psychoanalysis and its derivatives. Second type that was mainly identified in work of Oguz (2010) who tried to design a classification of emotional indices found in children's drawings. The third type is related to methods in which, ordinary children address prominent personal or emotional themes so their personality or clinical diagnosis can be evaluated by researchers. Children's drawings or

paintings are analyzed in order to analyze their viewpoint about issues in today and the future world (Hashemi & Farokhi, 2011). Breadth of perspective of child has a significant effect on drawing content. Moreover, interest in familiar issues and events is required to draw a painting. Being aware of issues, things, feelings like happiness, anger, discomfort, satisfaction and development of emotions enrich the drawing action. Culture and situation of living place affect the lifestyle of children and educational methods have considerable effect on development in children's drawing (Hashemi & Farokhi, 2011). Some specific factors such as species-specific readiness, maturation, age, intelligence, motivation, general state of stimulation and anxiety, physiological state, prior experiences, individual differences, and child psychology affect children's drawing (Oguz, 2010). Children not only show their visual perception of the outer world through drawing, but also give some clues about their emotional and spiritual state. They express their disappointments, wills, fears, happiness and issues in their drawings. In this regard, drawing can be a part of ordinary life of child and an effective tool to determine cognitive, emotional and social development level in children.

1.1. Development

Cognitive development includes changes in cognitive structures, abilities and processes of person. Piaget believes that children's schemas or rational mental structures will change with an increase in age (Silverthorn, 1999). Child development occurs due to interactions of highly complicated processes between active child and individuals, objects and symbols in an immediate environment. This interaction should happen in a relative period during time in order to be effective (Krishnan, 2010). Bronfenbrenner's

ecological systems theory believes that human development should be beyond the biological examination of the child. According to this theory, children will not developed in isolation, but they develop within various backgrounds and in an environment in which they are interacting. Development not only is formed by immediate environment but also in interaction with a larger surrounding environment (Krishnan, 2010). Time is one of substantial factors in environmental prospect of development. Either person or environment will change with the passage of time and Bronfenbrenner expresses that these changes are vital to understand how various systems affect the person and his/her development clearly. According to the theory of Bronfenbrenner, all of things are related to each other, but this relationship exists in different degrees and times (Christensen, 2016). Chronosystem consists of changes during the lifetime and pattern of environmental events so that created effects by time or critical periods are seen in development and social-historical conditions of the person. With respect to theory of Bronfenbrenner, this system is related to various happenings occurring in the life of individuals and can affect behavioral changes (Eliasa, 2012). Vygotsky assumes that the cognitive development of child generally depends on people who live in his world. Knowledge, thoughts, attitudes and values of person will change when interacting with others. The learning process is either individual or sociocultural. Therefore, perception is not only individual but also relates to social and cultural dimensions of learning state (Kozulin et al., 2003). Since peace is a concept that is meaningful within culture and social structures, it is essential to study development of peace concept among children as they become older and interact with the surrounding environment like home, school, sociocultural environment and time period they are living in.

1.2. Peace

Peace means harmony between humans and nature, dealing with conflicts and sharing resources fairly (Cengelcikose & Gurdoganbayir, 2016). Children and adolescences show a rich and comprehensive understanding of the complicated structure of peace considering social issues (attitude, behavior and value), cultural and religious factors as well as structural, economic and political factors (Feinstein & O'Kane, 2008). Developing understanding of children about the concept of war or peace appears through a set of interactions between person and environment (Schwebel, 2001). Results obtained from study conducted on 23 elementary students in Turkey indicated that these students defined peace as an action taken to prevent war and conflict and to create an agreement and friendship, global values like love, respect, patience, cooperation, solidarity, happiness and freedom. In terms of negative peace, they defined peace generally as an action to prevent from war or fight against negative situations, they also gave some explanations as agreement and friendship as well as global values about positive peace. Moreover, they compared peace with some symbols like pigeon, bird, butterfly, rope, family, friends, sister and brother, earth, world and Turkey. These symbols are metaphors of peace that children used them to express their feelings about peace (Cengelcikose & Gurdoganbayir, 2016). Also, Nepali children think that peace prospect comprises shining sun in a green and peaceful environment, the end of discrimination against girls, disabled children, lower class system or ethnic groups so that all of people are behaved equally and fairly; all of children achieve their rights like school, health, water and entertainment that are accessible for the public; all of girls and boys go to the schools; schools are peaceful areas; there is no poverty; there is not any violence like a sexual threat or abuse against women and children; there is not alcohol and everywhere is safe and secure (Feinstein & O'Kane, 2008).

In another research, most of the children painted multiple positive elements of peace and hope, in particular, negative elements and violent illustrations were more shown in images related to past in drawings related to present time. Violence was more drawn by boys, older children and those who had studied in schools with gender segregation (Fargasmalet & Dillenburger, 2014). In addition, the most common theme in peace drawings of children in another research consisted of peace as interpersonal interactions like being friend, shaking hands or taking hands of each other, giving something to someone or donation or play with each other. The second theme of peace drawings of children was negative peace (what is against peace). They described peace as lack of action, conflict or end of the war (Walker et al., 2003). The purpose of this study was to examine the quality of possible differences in development steps in the field of understanding, the peace concept in children's drawing; it means that how children think about the peace concept and how perceive it during 6-13 years of old (from pre-school age to the end of elementary school) and how they show this understanding in their drawings. It means that what are elements in their drawing content about peace and what is the development in children's drawings in terms of peace them during 6-13 years old.

2. METHODOLOGY

Considering the epistemological goals of research, interpretative method with qualitative approach were employed. Furthermore, since researcher tended to address and classify various experiences and understanding of participants about the concept of peace, phenomenography method was used. Phenomenography is a specialized method to describe different methods used by individuals to understand the world. This research method can be used to study thought individuals, changes in their thought

growth and changes in their thoughts after education (Gall et al., 1996). Sample group: school system of first grade includes grades 1-6 and pre-school course covering age group of 6-13. Therefore, sample group comprises 63 children at age of 6-13 from pre-school to the final grade of elementary school in districts 3 and 4 of Tehran, Iran.

Sample size: qualitative methods focus on quality, not quantity (Mohammadpur, 2013). Patton believes that selection of suitable sample size requires a mutual deal between depth and width of research. He expresses that ideal sampling method is a method that continues selecting until reaching to the useless option that there is not any new information after it (Gall et al., 1996). Therefore, a number of participants were calculated based on the saturation principle in sample size; in this case, 63 boys were selected the n assigned to 7 groups of 6-7 years old, 7-8,..., 12-13. Participants took part in the research within a calm and safe space based on their consent and permission given by educators. Participants were asked to draw peace showing what they know about peace. They were assured that their drawings will not be judged in terms of beauty and there will not be any competition so they should draw anything they can and know about peace. At the next step, participants were supposed to express the story of their drawings; the researcher then recorded their explanations. Ultimately, considerable and certain themes in their drawings were extracted classified and summarized based on the summarization and coding principles; then story hidden in their drawings were analyzed and prominent themes of each age group was separated and classified in table related to the age group. Process of summarization, extraction and coding of themes was revised and confirmed by two experts in child psychology with a background in qualitative researches.

3. FINDINGS

Findings obtained from 6-13 years old boys' drawings with peace theme, drawing method and painting descriptions have been summarized in tables related to each age category:

Table 1: Summary of 6-7 years old

	Negative peace	Positive peace
Drawing story	<p>-People are gathering together and the fat man is their head saying them to make peace.</p> <p>- good people reconciled and picked flowers to give them to each other and did not fight against each other</p> <p>-one day children went to riverside to play with each other, but two of them were angry at each other and other were kind with each other. Friends made those two angry children friend and said that it is not a good action and they should befriend then all of them played with each other happily.</p>	I do not know any story and just play with my friend.
Drawing elements		<p>-gathering together, being happy, nature, flower, sky and sun</p> <p>-green nature, plants and tree, cloud and sun; two persons are giving flowers to each other; smile. Flower as the symbol of friendship; swing; two persons are shaking hands and smiling.</p> <p>-nature, sky, mountain, and home</p> <p>-nature, river and fish; children with colorful clothes, taking their hands and smiling</p>

Table 2: Summary of 7-8 years old

	Negative peace	Positive peace
Drawing story	<p>They were first angry with each other because one of them had blasted the ball of the other child then another person made them reconcile. Then there is birthday of one of them and they will be friends forever (they are friends in university).</p> <p>-They are shaking hands, reconciling and smiling at each other</p>	<p>They are two friends, play with each other and are kind to each other.</p> <p>-Two birds are friends; they say hello to each other; there is a great weather and birds are flying.</p> <p>-After one year and after exams in summer my friends and I go to the park and play; we spend a good time with each other we are happy.</p> <p>Children are playing with each other in the park, they bought balloons and ice cream then they went to the home and studied then woke up calmly.</p> <p>- These two children are friends; one of them is giving flower to another one.</p>

	Negative peace	Positive peace
Drawing elements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Celebration and colorful decorations. Hands in hands; two friends and smile -Two children, smile, hands are open for hug, heart image, home, river and bird. -Play equipment: swings and slides. Smile and motion and childish game. -Full of colors. Game devices, nature (figure 1). Fish, grass, tree, mountain, sky, sun and cloud -Sun and cloud, grass and flower, giving gift

Table 3: Summary of 8-9 years old

	Negative peace	Positive peace
Drawing story	<p>Iran and Iraq apologize for war giving flower to each other. You see this country is peaceful and people are living in peace. Peace is better than war.</p>	<p>Two children are playing with ball in park, then they play with swings and when clouds came to the sky ran to the home. All of people are happy and smiling; they are living in peace and children do not cry. People are talking with each other holding their hands and nobody is upset and all of the children are friends. These two friends have flowers in their hands and are going to the building of peace and friendship in order to be friends forever.</p>
Drawing elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bird, sun and cloud. Happy people. House and apartment. -Play equipment, nature, happiness and children's play -Flower. Smile, shaking hands, holding their hands, nature. -Peace and friendship building -These two children say great each other; play with each other and talk. 	

Table 4: Summary of 9-10 years old

	Negative peace	Positive peace
Drawing story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -After war, two Iranian and Iraqi persons reconcile forever. -There is war between Iran and Iraq but then they made peace. -20:30 news: after 100 years peace was made again in Palestine. -Enmity flower that everyone escapes from it and peace flower that everyone likes to have it. -Two persons were fighting and insulting each other. I went and separated them from each other and told them to be friends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Two intimate friends give gifts to each other. - A boy is walking with his friend and reaching to a pine tree.

	Negative peace	Positive peace
Drawing elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Insulting, cursing and fighting and a person who makes peace between fighters. Nature and green and large tree. -Tanks and soldiers who have taken their hands; Iran and Iraq -Two presidents shake hands after war and walk through red carpet; numerous people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Symbol and flag, slogan, gift, smile and friendship, green nature and sky - Peace flower and enmity flower, butterfly that likes peace and escape from enmity but welcome the peace. -Two persons who shake hands; flower and peace encouragement (good job) and lecture about peace

Table 5: Summary of 10-11 years old

	Negative peace	Positive peace
Drawing story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -They are hugging each other; I drew white flag, I drew airplane and tank in peace after war. -Iraq attacked to Iran but Iran's president said that we do not fight; we want peace and comfort for our people; Iraqis burned the car of a man; he is crying and going to think about his problem; this is the result of war and lack of peace. -Two groups of each country gather together and make agreement on no war. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Both put on cloths with same colors and made the peace agreement. -I wish all of countries were friend and people are kind with each other on the earth planet so they live in peace. -Two persons, one of them Iranian and another one Afghani, are happy beside each other holding their flags.
Drawing elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -White flag. Taking their hands. Smile and peace. Peace after war (negative). -War and peace beside each other; both smile and anger 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Symbol of peace is an agreement. Smile and happiness of two persons. -Earth planet and people that are happy taking their hands around it (figure 2). -Nature, people who are gathering together with smiling faces -Nature, smile and happiness, flags of countries

Table 6: Summary of 11-12 years old

	Negative peace	Positive peace
Drawing story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -There was war at first but then they talked and agreed on peace; now they are friends; two countries made the peace. -Anywhere is green when there is peace and nobody thinks of war' doors are open to everybody and everywhere is healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It is Shaban half; Birthday of Imam Zaman (Time). All people should be kind with each other; otherwise, the god do not like them. -Peace, friendship, amity -They are my classmates and friends who are playing with each other and live happily in peace.
Drawing elements		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Friendship, hands in hands, smile, white flag, sun, sky and cloud, colorful cloths. -Decorations and illumination, presence of numerous people in city, celebration, cloud and sun -Heart symbol; there are three hearts beside each other with these words: peace, friendship, amity -Nature, large trees, a building with open door and a way ahead -Many friends who hold their hands in a circle; smile, play

Table 7: Summary of 12-13 years old

	Negative peace	Positive peace
	-Everybody is happy and thanks god. Children are happy. We see peace keepers. People are passing through borders calmly with airplanes in order to reconstruct the country. -Two old classmates were angry with each other but now are friends and made peace. -Two countries tend to make peace. -there is war is a place but there is peace in another city.	-If people are with each other, they will be happier and live in peace. -Two neighbors are jumping on rope; there are singing birds and neighbors enjoy the great weather; one of them suggested to compete with each other and another one did not reject sine he was his best friend. They competed and played happily.
Drawing elements	-Negotiators are shaking hands; people are happy; large crowd are gathering together, airplane is on sky -Flags of two countries (South Korea and North Korea); hands are out of the flags toward the sky (figure 3) Illustrating war and peace in one frame. Peace: happiness of people; flower, balloon, grass and sun; war: tank, killed persons, soil, airplane and weapon.	-Nature and grass, Flower and happy people -Home, nature, two-member play, smile and happiness. -Two boys are giving flowers to each other; there are flowers on the earth.



Figure 1: Mohammadreza 7 years and 10 months



Figure 2: Amirhosein 10 years and 7 months

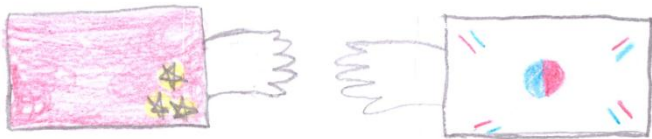


Figure 3: Mohamadmahdi 12 years and 4 months

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to address children's understanding of peace and its visualization in their drawings with involvement of 63 boys at the age range of 6-13 then the results were analyzed based on the age classification using phenomenography method. Interpersonal interaction of peace understanding can be seen in 6-years old children's drawings that mainly include two persons or two friends or there are two members who have reconciled after struggling in terms of negative understanding of peace; however, in the age range of 8-9, the negative definition points to the war and peace with Iran; in this case, positive peace covers a broader society than two members including country and peace organization. Peace building and organization are also seen in this case. At age range of 9-10, the effect of media and regional conflicts are seen, the focus is on the war and peace in neighboring countries due to the definition of negative peace in framework of their issue, children point to the lecturing symbols and red carpet for reconditioning between country heads, it is also social development and broad relation between culture and contemporary history as well as the effect of touchable experiences on peace understanding. Age range of 10-12 includes developments in understanding peace concept in drawings broader experiences and symbols of social interactions between countries and more development in symbols like earth planet and hear that shows intra and interpersonal calmness. At age range of 12-13, global issues and international peace in framework of positive and negative peace points to the peace of two Koreas indicating development in globalization of

peace concept. In addition, there is attention toward peace symbols like flag, peace flower and war flower, and lover butterfly.

In general, peace symbols were observed in drawings of 6-13 years old children; these symbols were as follows:

6-7: gathering together, being happy, nature, flower, sky and sun, plant and tree, cloud and sun, smile, flower as friendship symbol and two persons with hands in the hands of each other, swing, house, river and fish.

7-8: ceremony and colorful decorations, taking hands and smiling friends, heart image, house and river, bird, play equipment like swing and slides, childish game and motion, colorfulness, nature, fish, grass, tree and mountain, sky, sun and cloud, giving gift.

8-9: bird, sun and cloud, happy people, house and apartment, play equipment, natures, happiness and children's play, flower, smile, shaking hands, nature, peace and friendship building, dialogue between two persons.

9-10: flag, slogan, gift, smile and friendship, green nature ad sky, peace and enmity flower, butterfly loving the peace, peace encouragement (good job), lecture about the peace, green tree and nature, countries' leaders on the red carpet.

10-11: an agreement is the symbol of peace, smile and happiness of two persons, earth planet and people around it hand in hand with happiness, nature, smiling face, countries' flags and white flag.

11-12: friendship, hand in hands, smile, white flag, sun, sky and cloud, colorful cloths, decorations, group ceremonies, cloud, heart, nature, trees and buildings.

12-13: negotiators are shaking hands, people's happiness, large crowd beside each other, flying airplane, flags of two countries (South Korea and North Korea), and the hand of flags toward each other, flower, balloon, nature and sun, house.

Drawing can be an effective tool to determine cognitive, emotional and social development of children. Research findings were in line with the results obtained from studies conducted on turkey's children by Cengelicose & Gurdoganbayir (2016), study of Fargasmalet & Dillenburger (2014) and findings obtained by Walker et al. (2003) about children's understanding of peace. Moreover, development process of peace understanding has been seen when passing developmental steps of age indicating self-development of peace concept based on the Piaget's cognitive development theory; according to Bronfenbrenner's theory of ecological system, surrounding environment, history and time have an effect on children's understanding of peace and sociocultural theory of Vygotsky indicated that drawings of children painted in the field of peace are influenced by

social and cultural events related to children who participated in the research.

The considerable point is the deep effect of religious culture teachings given in family school and society on the life of children and adolescences and their definitions of peace.

The content of peace drawing is affected by the time after the experience of war with Iraq and geographical situation including conflicts in neighboring countries.

Furthermore, teaching peace and developing a peace culture based on the children's understanding at different ages can be more considered in curriculums and family programs so that some hours and lesson contents can be assigned to this field in order to expand awareness of peace replacing violence with peaceful responses. With promoting these concepts, there will be a life in a peaceful world. In this regard, factors related to perception of peace in developing periods of children should be found and addressed more than before.

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