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EXPLORING CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL WORLDS THROUGH ART: A PSYCHOANALYTIC ANALYSIS OF FREE DRAWINGS IN AN EDUCATIONAL SETTING

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ABSTRACT

Children's drawings provide educators with a window into their emotional development and inner experiences. In school contexts, such creative expressions support early identification of psychological needs and promote holistic student well-being. This study investigates the symbolic, emotional, and spatial elements of free drawings produced by two children, aiming to uncover how these artistic choices reflect their psychological states and underlying emotional processes. Employing a qualitative psychoanalytic case study design, two participants a 7-year-old boy and a 10-year-old girl were purposively selected. Each engaged in individual art sessions (30–45 minutes) within a supportive and psychologically safe environment, producing seven free drawings in total. Thematic analysis was conducted using frameworks from Jungian psychoanalysis, color psychology, and projective art theory. Observations of the children's behaviors, verbalizations, and emotional engagement during the drawing process enriched the interpretive depth. The analysis revealed that warm and earthy tones (e.g., yellow, green, brown) signified emotional security and optimism, while darker shades and enclosed geometric shapes suggested tendencies toward self-protection and latent anxiety. Natural motifs, including mountains, rivers, and homes, emerged as symbolic representations of the children's unconscious search for stability and belonging. Gender differences were notable, with the girl's drawings displaying relational and affective complexity and the boy's artworks reflecting assertive spatial organization and dynamic line work. Free drawing serves as a vital projective tool for accessing children's unconscious experiences and emotional states. Integrating such analysis into psycho-diagnostic and therapeutic practices provides valuable insights into individual psychological realities across diverse cultural contexts.

KEYWORDS: Children's Drawings, Projective Art, Art Therapy, Jungian Psychoanalysis, Emotional Expression, Symbolic Interpretation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Young children use sketches rather than words to express themselves. A child may become anxious, seek protection, or experience trauma if they draw simple symbols, dark colors, and no straight lines. Whether in unexpected or difficult circumstances, these paper canvases depict children's emotional struggles, comfort, and desire to fit in. Psychologists use "Draw-a-Person," "Draw-a-Family," and "House-Tree-Person" to analyze children's artwork. (Danon-Boileau, 2001; Karczmarzyk, 2012) claim that these techniques highlight issues with mental and emotional health. Children can express themselves through drawing (Klepsch & Logie, 2014; Skybo et al., 2007). In therapy and medicine, they reveal children's deepest thoughts and emotions. According to (Cohen-Yatziv & Regev, 2019) projective specialists and therapists can use a child's drawings to gain insight into their emotional worldview and cognitive development.

Ebenezer Cook's 1885 work "Teaching Art and the Nature of the Child" was the first to formally examine children's drawings. It looked at how kids use color, line, and shape to represent their worlds (Restall & Hinz, 2025). According to Loquet, children's sketching skills develop in four stages: visual (12+), intellectual (4-12), failed (3-4), and episodic (2-3). According to (Cannoni et al., 2023) (Fabris et al., 2023) these drawings reveal tensions, fantasies, instincts, and subconscious desires.

Kids' drawings may reveal their unconscious desires, instincts, dreams, and emotions (Abdulhameed & Rashid, 2022). Many researchers have examined kids' drawings' emotions. Florence Goodenough's "Drawing a Person" exam assessed kids' intelligence by having them draw a person. Mind and understanding growth affected the child's capacity to sketch a detailed and accurate human shape (Loomis, 2021). The "house, tree, and person" test, according to (Lo et al., 2025) projects a person's feelings, personality, and mind. (Bowen et al., 2021) How someone paints a house, tree, or person can reveal their emotions, desires, and thoughts. Pictures can convey worry, safety, loneliness, or rage through size, form, and placement. Ziv stated the "Draw a Family" test reveals how youngsters view family dynamics and connections. A child's drawing of each family member, including their size, location, and interactions with others, can reveal how they feel about their place in the family and their connections (Santillo et al., 2025; Zang et al., 2025).

The results show that the drawings accurately depict worry and psychological suffering, especially in diseased children. Researchers observed that

symbols like birds and roots can symbolize freedom or emotional stability, while faces without smiles or teeth show emotional suffering (Manomenidis et al., 2025). Has Child projective drawings' psychodynamic impacts were examined in various circumstances. Projective drawings help understand a child's nonverbal and unconscious experiences, especially in trauma or abuse, (Panesi & Morra, 2018). They can reveal distinctive visual symbols that facilitate communication between the patient and the therapist. Enabling unconscious recognition and understanding in non-speaking children, drawings can indicate alternating expressions, reflecting interactive behaviors and refusal to communicate rather than inability. Mother-child drawings reveal early relationships and clinical concerns and serve as prototypes for future relationship patterns, and children's picture books are essential artistic objects because they provide analytical psychological reflections on early artistic expression (Brafman, 2018; Cohn, 2012).

Since the early 1900s, psychologists have suggested that art and painting might reflect an individual's inner world. Sigmund Freud considered art, especially painting, as emblems of the unconscious and revealing hidden urges through symbolic projections. Freud (1908/1959) (Stepansky, 2015) Carl Jung added to his symbolic analysis that the drawings include "collective unconscious" symbols and archeological shapes (archetypes) that can reveal profound psychological issues (Jung, 2012) Eric Eriksson studied the evolutionary significance of art and painting to understand psychosocial crises in different phases of development (Erikson, 1963) Recently, sketching has become a silent medium that discloses children's inner world, especially when words fail to describe deep emotions. In a study of 34 children living in difficult situations in Spain (Ballús et al., 2023), researchers discovered that half of the drawings showed signs of hidden anxiety and trauma, like missing or misshapen body parts. In parallel, a recent Greek study (Fabris et al., 2023) compared the drawings of 100 youngsters, 50 of whom had chronic conditions like diabetes and cystic fibrosis and 50 of whom were healthy.

Healthy children had 92% more pleasant expressions than patients ($p = 0.001$), whereas patients had fewer apparent roots (0.8% vs. 11.7%), indicating a loss of inner security and stability. The systematic review was global. (Antunes et al., 2024) DAP Twenty-five 2010–2024 studies identified HTP and Family Drawing KFD projection drawing tests. Research on children's psychological representations continues. Over half of the studies lack honesty and

reliability data, underlining the necessity for multidimensional assessment without a single diagnostic tool. When technology advanced, Americans invented (Bhagat et al., 2025). Deep learning recognizes anxiety in children's paintings. The technology has sped up evaluations and reduced human prejudice, suggesting AI could improve psychological exams' correctness and objectivity. A recent Italian study used Drawn Stories and Classroom Draw to evaluate 1,757 primary and secondary school artworks for school belonging and emotional inclusion. The researchers proposed using such exams in school psych intervention programs to detect social and emotional issues early and enhance children's mental health. In a 2023 Greek study on 100 children (50 with chronic diseases and 50 healthy), variation in "smiling faces" and "tree roots" was found: 92% in healthy individuals, 66% in smiling patients ($p = 0.001$), and 11.7% vs. 0.8% in the root plot (Manomenidis et al., 2025).

Drawings are crucial diagnostic and therapeutic tools for children due to the rise in psychological and social issues. Observing children's artwork might indicate anxiety, despair, abuse, or neglect, making it a crucial part of psychiatric assessment (Ballús et al., 2023; Cooper, 2022). Overly broad quantitative techniques risk disregarding the subtle intricacies of personal experience; thus, such interpretations must be attentive to each child's situation.

In Macau, expressive drawing sessions improved social and communication abilities in children with autism, as judged by the SSIS-RS scale (WU & Teixeira, 2024). In the US, Pu et al. (2024) used a social robot to get kids to talk about art, which promoted emotional awareness and self-expression. Virtual reality art therapy has also become a secure area for youngsters to express their worries and feelings (Kumar et al., 2025; Yap & Lee, 2024) created an online comics platform that helped teenagers cope with trauma, demonstrating the power of creative technologies to improve mental health. A mandala therapy case study found that circular symbols helped a seven-year-old with behavioral issues manage emotions and find inner tranquility.

These case studies look into applying art therapy for children with different diagnoses. From their research, art therapy can positively impact children in many ways; for example, it can enhance their treatment compliance, quality of life, language, emotional control, positive behavior, trauma, emotional expression, daily adjustment, and self-help skills. Interventions typically consisted of a period lasting from six up to two years with twenty up to one hundred seventy-one sessions. Lee et al.

(2022). From these findings, art therapy seems promising in improving increases in well-being as well as development in children with a wide array of problems. Studies evaluating children's drawings on large samples are plentiful, yet there is limited research on individual case studies, specifically those evaluating symbolic transformations over time within a series of multiple therapy sessions or in the area of extreme life experiences. In favor of statistical predictors as well as quantitative features, a sizeable number of studies ignored each child's individual as well as symbolic prehistory. In order to know how to fill know-how gaps in this area, in addition to complementing therapeutic insight into symbolic meaning in kids' drawings, within the framework for the current study, it looks into a couple of kids' drawings in revealing how their drawings are reflective of their psychological experience in addition to revealing how those illustrations in turn are connected to their drawings.

Understanding children's emotional worlds through their artistic expressions holds great value in educational settings. By integrating projective art analysis within schools, educators and school counselors can gain deeper insight into students' emotional needs, psychological well-being, and developmental challenges. This study highlights the potential of free drawing not only as a diagnostic tool but also as a supportive medium that fosters emotional literacy, self-expression, and psychological resilience in young learner's key components of holistic education.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Research Design

This study used qualitative analysis to show children's artworks' psychological and symbolic relevance. Sampling two youngsters was intentional. One-on-one sessions allowed participants to draw anything expressing their thoughts and feelings without assistance. In a protective mood, community center sessions lasted 30–45 minutes. Students were simply encouraged to use A4 white paper, wax crayons, colored pencils, watercolors, pencils, and pens to express visually. This study used the researcher's observations of children's body language, facial expressions, and sentence internal declarations during art drawing. Each child's artwork's completion time reflected their visual communication interest or reluctance. The artworks were subjected to four-axis projective psychoanalysis after extraction. The first axis explored color's emotional and intellectual meaning and how it affected each child's mood. Psychoanalysis, notably

Carl Jung's, interpreted symbols as unconscious psychological tension and internal dynamics projecting. Continuous, broken, strong, weak lines and space interactions, as well as the child dominating the white paper, show their emotions. Axis four examined artwork distribution and its effects on children's interpersonal contact, sense of protection, and isolation. Jung's school of analytical psychology, where symbols have a meaning more than face value, and artistic projection notions, where free creative expression reveals a latent psychological architecture, following Crumb's approach.

This qualitative psychoanalytic case study was conducted within a school setting to explore children's emotional expression through free drawing. Two students (a 7-year-old boy and a 10-year-old girl) were purposively selected from a public elementary school based on referrals from teachers and the school counsellor, indicating signs of emotional concerns.

Individual drawing sessions (30–45 minutes) took place during school activity hours in a quiet, supportive room on campus. A total of seven free drawings were produced. Thematic analysis drew upon Jungian symbolism, colour psychology, and projective art theory, complemented by behavioural observations and verbal expressions noted during the sessions.

2.2. Participants

The study sample comprised two normal youngsters recruited utilizing purposive selection, as qualitative analytical research explores deep psychological frameworks through free artistic expression. The sample included a seven-year-old boy and a ten-year-old girl from diverse social circumstances to compare age- and gender-related artistic expression trends. The two youngsters were chosen based on strong ethical and value-based standards to ensure their psychological and physical safety, privacy, and free involvement. These criteria included the children's flexibility in individual sessions, their willingness to participate in artistic activities without prior pressure or guidance, and the absence of cognitive or perceptual barriers that could affect their artistic production.

Obtaining written informed consent from the children's parents after they were fully informed of the research objectives and procedures and ensuring the confidentiality of the data and drawings produced showed the researchers' commitment to ethical scientific research. The two children had no history of psychological or behavioural disease, proving that artistic expression may be used to

explore normal children's internal dynamics in a safe, non-therapeutic setting. The gender and age diversity of the sample helped projective psychoanalysis identify gender and individual differences in color, symbol, and element distribution in drawings. The results improved the theoretical understanding of children's art within a humanistic and ethical context.

2.3. Instruments

Two complementary components made up the study tools. The first half provided physical means for uninhibited artistic expression, while the second collected qualitative data through direct clinical observation throughout sessions.

Part One: Art Materials: The youngsters were given tangible instruments to express their feelings and thoughts without assistance during the sessions. This equipment contained white A4 drawing paper, giving kids plenty of space to draw. Each child received pencils and markers for fine detail drawing and shape definition. To let the kids, choose their coloring medium, colored pencils, wax crayons, and watercolors were offered. This option has significant psychological and emotional repercussions for the analysis.

Part Two: Clinical Observation Form: The researcher used a qualitative observation tool to record the children's behavior and emotions during drawing sessions. Several crucial questionnaire components enhanced the psychological interpretation of the drawings. Monitored body language includes sitting posture, hand motions, and sketching activity or stress. It also recorded facial expressions of delight, worry, or emotional involvement in art. The questionnaire also recorded the children's self-talk, including words and phrases they used while drawing, to assess their emotional connection to the material. To measure focus and emotional engagement in visual expression, the time spent on each artwork was recorded. Finally, the researcher watched the children's artistic tool use, such as choosing colors, pressing the pen, or switching media, which can reveal their internal state.

Main Analysis Tool: Kids' Drawings In this study, session drawings were the main instrument. Seven free-form drawings were created by the two children in separate sessions. The first youngster (7-year-old male) drew three paintings, whereas the second (10-year-old female) sketched four. Based on symbolic psychoanalysis and child creative projection models, these drawings were treated to in-depth projective psychoanalysis to uncover

psychological frameworks and internal dynamics.

3. RESULT

1. Analysis of children's freehand drawings reveals psychological implications from a projective psychoanalytic perspective.

3.1. Case Details

Maria, 9, attends an international school in one of the Gulf countries where her family works after finishing third grade. Both Maria's parents have advanced university degrees, creating a family that values education and supports children's cognitive and emotional development. Maria and her family lived abroad for years. Living abroad has given her multicultural social experiences, but it can also challenge her sense of belonging and emotional stability. Maria is the middle of five siblings. Her social roles and family dynamics may have been affected by her two older siblings, a brother, and an infant sister. Maria is loved by her parents, who support and appreciate her, which shows in her school behaviour and tendency to express her feelings freely. No psychiatric or organic illness or behavioural disorders have affected her. She showed good linguistic and cognitive skills for her age and a natural tendency toward symbolic expression through drawing and art during preliminary interviews.

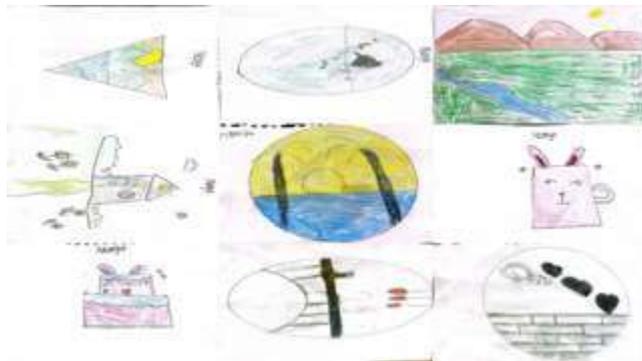


Figure 1: Drawings of the child Maria as they appeared in the free artistic expression sessions.

The following is a projective psychological analysis of Maria's drawings as shown in Figure 1, which represent Maria's drawings, a rich visual reflection of the inner world of the girl child from a projective psychoanalytic perspective. By analyzing each panel separately, psychological, cognitive and social connotations can be derived that reveal their emotional dynamics and unconscious conflicts, supported by relevant theoretical frameworks and previous studies.

The first drawing (1), "Mountains and the Sun within a Triangle," depicts a landscape with three

majestic mountains, a bright sun, a running river, and green terrain enclosed by a big triangle. With continuous and symmetrical lines, the youngster used warm and earthy colors like yellow, green, and brown and the chilly blue of the river to convey confidence and control over the creative composition.

The triangle represents the internal balance between thought, emotion, and will in symbolic psychoanalysis (Jung, 2012) Geometric symbols are projections of the unconscious psychological structure and the self's pursuit of uniqueness (excellence). According to (Wang et al., 2025), mountains represent inner desires or difficulties, whereas the yellow sun represents optimism and positivity. For kids' drawing colors, (Malchiodi, 2022) said that children's drawings of nature reflect their aspirations to find inner stability and self-exploration through familiar symbols.

As shown Second drawing (2), "The Black Bird within a Circle", shows a black bird on a narrow branch in a circular frame. The black bird on a light pink blue background suggests emotional closure or self-protection, while the circle represents psychological limits. (Jung, 2012; Lapsley & Stey, 2011) The black bird symbolizes inward meditation, seclusion, or pent-up melancholy (Farokhi & Hashemi, 2011) Dark mono symbols may represent the child's attempts to hide uncomfortable emotions. The cold colors evoke meditation and momentary withdrawal.

A blue river flows between a green plain and three mountains with a little sun in the third drawing, "Nature and the Three Mountains". The balanced composition occupies most of the paper, and the natural symbols symbolize vital energy and psychological regeneration, while the triple number of mountains may signify family bonds or various life problems for the girl kid. (Cooper, 2022) Bright colors, especially blue and green, represent inner tranquility and resilience (Wang et al., 2025) It supported this idea by showing that children's free paintings of nature generally reflect emotional equilibrium.

As a basic house surrounded by a field of beautiful flowers and a yellow road going to the house's door is shown in the fourth drawing, "House, Flowers and Road". The home symbolizes safety and belonging. Huang et al. (2025) Flowers and little hearts show the child's need for social and emotional acceptance. The yellow road may symbolize optimism and ambition for a solid and supportive

family. This reading is confirmed by Danon-Boileau (2001) investigations that found home symbols in children's drawings to indicate familial relationships.

Fifth drawing, "Sunset and Palms", shows a big sun setting on a turquoise sea between two palms. Warm colors with vibrant blue and yellow prevail. Sunset symbolizes transition, possibly the child's perspective on the end of a stage or emotional transformation. (Jung, 2012) The palm represents resilience and the vibrant colors represent flexibility and emotional openness (Danon-Boileau, 2001)

See Sixth Drawing (6), "Pink Rabbit Cup", a charming rabbit face on a pink cup with little hearts, Pink symbolizes passion and compassion, while the rabbit represents innocence and kindness (Wang et al., 2025) According Huang et al. (2025) About the symbolic expressions of youngsters seeking emotional acceptance, these symbols show the child's need for support and affection.

In the Seventh Drawing (7), "Rabbit Cake" is a cake mold with subtle details and ornamentation. According to Huang et al. (2025) food symbols reflect the need for emotional security, hence this painting shows the girl's tendency to enjoy positive and personal relationships. Drawing with bright colors and gentle lines shows emotional involvement.

As Eighth drawing, "Brick wall and black hearts", shows a high wall with black hearts and a dim sun. A wall symbolizes emotional protection, whereas black hearts symbolize temporary feelings of separation or disappointment (Lapsley & Stey, 2011) These symbols may represent temporary defenses to establish internal balance.

3.2. Comprehensive Drawing-Based Maria Character Analysis

Figure (1) shows Maria's visual symbols, color distribution, and expression spaces, revealing her deep emotional and cognitive personality. Her work reflects a dynamic interplay between openness to relationships and defensive closure, and between emotional positivity and inner reflection, as Malchiodi (2022) saw in children's free drawing a map of internal conflicts and pent-up emotional needs.

A. Emotional dimension Warm colors (yellow, red, pink) in Maria's drawings (1, 4, 5, 7) show emotional openness and a desire for positive expression, while cold and dark colors (blue, gray, black) in the drawings (2, 8) suggest internal reflection or temporary withdrawal from society. accordance Cooper (2022) This change shows the child's innovative capacity

to handle conflicting emotions.

- B. Cognitive dimension: Maria demonstrated cognitive maturity by using geometric shapes like triangles and circles, and balancing elements in drawing spaces, demonstrating symbolic thinking and idea organization (Broderick, 2023) To indicate early cognitive development in youngsters.
- C. Social Dimension Human relationship symbols like house, road, hearts, flowers, and bunny cake Maria values acceptance and emotional belonging (Drawings 4, 6, 7). accordance Huang et al. (2025) These symbols generally represent the child's urge to communicate and receive emotional support from family and friends.
- D. In some artworks (2, 8), protective techniques like symbolic closure (circle, brick wall) may be used to defend against past emotional demands or experiences. (Lapsley & Stey, 2011) Having these symbols in balance with other happy aspects shows healthy stress adaptation.

Character 1 shows Maria's drawings of a character with enhanced emotional awareness and the ability to symbolically convey interior conflicts and desires. Girls have strong sensitivity, emotional flexibility, and balanced social participation, underpinned by improved cognitive capacity to absorb and organize visual stimuli. This confirms your observations. (2021; 2022) Free artistic expression shows children's psychological, cognitive, and social growth.

3.3. The Case's Details

Mohammed, seven, attends an international school in the Arabian Gulf with his family and just finished first grade. His family is well-educated and multicultural. His parents are multinational teachers and administrators with master's degrees, giving him social and intellectual experiences, He is the fourth child in his country and lives with his parents and siblings. One younger sister and three older brothers. Being middle in the family may alter his social behavior.

Mohammed is brilliant, handsome, and loved by his family and friends, His parents' respect and emotional support have made him more gregarious and expressive. Mohammed's physically, mentality, and behavior are fine, Mohammed showed early promise in language and thinking for his age in interviews, His sketching and drawing skills were very natural, How well he handled creative materials showed his capacity to adapt to diverse cultures and control his emotions.



Figure 2: Child Muhammad's Drawings as they appeared In the Free Artistic Expression Sessions.

The first drawing, "The House, the Hill, and the Tree," shows a two-story home with a green door and blue-grey windows, a brown hill with a green tree in the midst, and a meandering road going to the house. The child utilized straight and curved lines to distribute green, blue, brown, and gray hues. According to symbolic psychoanalysis, the home symbolizes security and family (Huang et al., 2025) The twisting road symbolizes a difficult psychological trek to safety. The hill may represent Muhammad's internal struggle (Jung, 2012) The house's gray roof indicates ambiguity or an imprecise emotional condition toward belonging. This painting's psychoanalysis portrays Mohammed's need for security and emotional belonging, with defensive anxiety shown in the chilly, neutral colors. The second drawing, "The Letter in the Frame," shows two triangles with divergent colored angles and a red square with the letter "In" on an orange backdrop. Choose warm hues like red, orange, green, blue, and grey with crisp lines and corners. Symbolic analysis suggests the character may cross. In A sign of Muhammad's self-expression and solitude (Broderick, 2023) angled lines indicate internal tension or defensiveness. This painting's psychoanalysis depicts a struggle to locate a core of self and open up to the outside world against the anxiety of new experiences. The third drawing, "The Child in the Field," shows a youngster standing in a large green field, raising his hands as if waving or begging for something, with a little tree and a yellow sun in the background. The picture is mostly green, with gray, yellow, and blue hues. The open field represents freedom and self-exploration, while raised hands signify a desire to connect or receive emotional support. Malchiodi (2022). This drawing's psychoanalysis shows the child's urge for communication and belonging and his eventual opening up to his surroundings to overcome caution

and emotional closure. The fourth drawing, "The Dark Tunnel," depicts a tiny path inside a gloomy grey tunnel with a dim white light as a symbol of hope. The child used gray in varying tones to give the tunnel depth and closure. The tunnel symbolizes psychological change or addressing interior fears, according to symbolic interpretation (Jung, 2012) Hope or psychological answers to hidden worry are shown by the dim light at the end of the tunnel. The psychology of this picture reveals that Muhammad is suffering an internal struggle or difficult emotional experience, yet he can find light to escape. The fifth drawing, "The Fruit Tree and the Sparrows," depicts a bare-branched tree with a giant yellow fruit and several birds flying. Shades of yellow and gray are employed. The enormous fruit represents his ambition to attain a major life objective, while the birds represent his desire to break free and expand (Malchiodi, 2022) The psychoanalysis of this artwork shows that Muhammad has ambitions and recognizes the psychological and environmental restrictions that may limit him. The sixth drawing, "The Bird and the Message to the mother," depicts a blue bird on a branch with a crimson heart and the English text "I love you, Mom." The hues are blue, red, pink, and gray. The bird symbolizes kindness and care, while the written word shows affection and emotional dependency for the mother (Malchiodi, 2022) This painting's psychoanalysis shows Muhammad's strong bond to his mother and his favorable thoughts toward people who protect and encourage him. "Night and Day" is the eighth drawing, which depicts a night with stars and the moon and a day with the sun and a beautiful sea. The hues are black, blue, yellow, and gray. The cycle of day and night symbolizes an emotional tension between withdrawal and openness or internal quiet and exterior activity, according to symbolic interpretation. (Lapsley & Stey, 2011) This painting's psychoanalysis shows Muhammad's knowledge of mood swings and ability to accept contrasts in his environment and relationships. The ninth drawing, "Sunset on the Beach," depicts a palm tree, grass, and birds soaring over a beach at sunset. The palette is mostly gray with yellow highlights. In symbolic analysis, sunset represents the conclusion of one phase and the beginning of another, while the palm tree represents psychological endurance. (Jung, 2012; Malchiodi, 2022). The psychology of this artwork reflects Muhammad's meditation and his desire to adapt to environmental or romantic changes.

3.4. Complete Drawing-Based Personality Analysis of Muhammad

Figure (2) shows that Muhammad's diverse visual symbols, usage of colors, and spatial distribution indicate a sensitive and emotionally complex personality. According to (Jung, 2012; Malchiodi, 2022) children's free drawing reflects internal conflicts and pent-up emotional needs in a symbolic visual form.

- A. Emotional dimension Muhammad used bright colors (red, orange, and yellow) in drawings (2, 6) to show his positive thoughts, especially about love and family, as in the painting "I Love You, Mom." However, the repeated use of cool and gloomy colors (blue, gray, black) in paintings (4, 7, 8) shows introspective reflection and temporary emotional withdrawal to cope with environmental or internal demands. accordance Cooper (2022) The child's artistic expressions show how they can handle conflicting emotions.
- B. Muhammad showed exceptional cognitive development by integrating complicated symbols like the tunnel (4), cage (3), and day/night (7). The balanced distribution of elements and geometric shapes (triangle, square) in the second drawing indicates healthy cognitive development in children at this age by showing the ability to symbolically think and organize internal ideas (Broderick, 2023)
- C. Social Dimension Muhammad's drawings, like The House and the Road (1), The Bird and the Heart (6), and The Flying Birds (5, 8), depict human relationships and family. These symbols represent emotional attachment and the search for family and community approval. accordance Huang et al. (2025) Such symbols often indicate the child's need for emotional support and psychosocial support.
- D. Defensive dimension Although Muhammad shows emotional openness, drawings like "The Dark Tunnel" (4) and "Sunset on the Beach" (8) show psychological defensive strategies he may utilize to avoid fear or environmental uncertainty. Barrier symbols like Cage (3) represent attempts to regulate uncomfortable emotions. According to (Jung, 2012; Lapsley & Stey, 2011) When children adopt defensive techniques throughout emotional growth, such symbols reflect internal tensions.

As shown in Figure 2, Muhammad's paintings depict a figure with strong emotional sensitivity and a growing understanding of internal conflicts and emotional demands. The youngster is emotionally flexible and adaptable, with a strong symbolic

orientation that enables him to express himself via art. The evidence supports their conclusions (Crocker & Carr, 2021) Free painting helps kids comprehend their psychological, social, and cognitive dynamics.

3.4.1. The Significance of Children's Free Drawings in Revealing their Personalities, Talents and Psychological and Social Trends.: The First Child Maria

Maria's drawings reflect her emotional and cognitive maturity, which is consistent with Piaget's macroscopic stage of concrete, where children think logically and understand spatial relationships (Piaget, 1970). Maria balanced elements and used geometric symbols to organize concepts in drawings like "House, Flowers, and the Road," which the researcher saw during projective sessions. In "Rabbit Cake" and "Sunset and Palms*," warm colors like yellow and pink signified emotional openness and connection, while dark colors and defensive symbols like the "brick wall" suggested temporary isolation as healthy adaptive strategies (Jung, 2012)

According to the researcher's clinical observation during technical sessions, Maria's emotional expressions, symbol repetition, and introspective questioning showed emotional flexibility and adaptability during drawing. According to Erickson's theory, Maria goes through a period of perseverance versus inferiority (industry vs. inferiority) and gains confidence in her talents. According to Freud, her drawings are consistent with the latency stage, where cognitive and social skills are developed, while Kohlberg believes they indicate the beginning of her transition to the traditional stage of moral development, where social values are frequently represented.

3.5. The Second Child (Muhammad)

According to Piaget (1952), Mohammed's drawings show a sensitive emotional and cognitive personality during the transitional era between symbolic thinking and concrete processes. Muhammad's use of meditative symbols like "dark tunnel" and "night and day" and his tendency to repeat and withdraw during painting may reflect an internal conflict between openness and protection, according to clinical observation. Warm hues like orange and red in "The Bird and the Message to the Mother" showed his need for emotional connection, but protective symbols like the road cut and cage demonstrated his adaptability to environmental or family stress (Cooper, 2022)

The researcher believes Mohammed is creative in artistic expression and visual narrative but needs a

supporting atmosphere that affords him emotional security and unfettered self-expression, based on clinical observation. According to Eriksson, Mohammed is beginning a period of endurance against inferiority and seeking social support. According to Freud, defensive symbols indicate the latency phase, while clinical examination shows Muhammad's outstanding emotional sensitivity, making him a candidate for self-confidence-boosting support. Muhammad stays pre-traditional, focusing on family acceptability in his morality, according to Kohlberg.

The researcher drew conclusions from his intensive clinical observation during the projection sessions with the two children, using symbolic analysis of the drawings and artistic production behaviors such as hesitation, persistence, and verbal and nonverbal expression. This integrated method supports his claim (Crocker & Carr, 2021) Clinical observation enhances technical analysis, revealing the child's personality, proclivities, and developmental needs.

4. DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicated that the use of warm and ground colors such as yellow, green, and brown reflects children's sense of emotional security, optimism, and their desire for family and social belonging. This finding is consistent with the findings of (Abdulhameed & Rashid, 2022; Crocker & Carr, 2021; Danon-Boileau, 2001; Karczmarzyk, 2012) Which showed how colors indicate psychological equilibrium and seek reassurance. It complements Ericsson's view of early childhood security and Jung's symbolic theory, which views colors as unconscious projections of emotional states and underlying psychological processes. Free visuals can probe children's internal psychological representations and guide early therapeutic interventions, according to the study.

In the drawings, the children used closed shapes (circles and triangles) and repetitive natural symbols (mountains, rivers, and houses) with clear gender differences. The child expressed richer emotional relationships, while the child focused on spatial organization and bold lines. Studies support this result. (Antunes et al., 2024; Kumar et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2022; Skybo et al., 2007) which stated that closed forms may signify psychological defensiveness and self-protection and that natural symbols convey an unconscious craving for stability and belonging. This confirms Freud's defense mechanisms (symbolic isolation and contraction) and Jung's use of symbols

to comprehend internal conflicts. Considering individual and gender differences in artistic expression, symbolic analysis and clinical observation improve knowledge of children's inner worlds, according to the researchers. This study supports symbolic psychoanalysis by showing that children's drawings can detect emotional conflicts and that incorporating this approach into psychological assessments can help promote early and accurate therapeutic interventions.

This study showed how art-expressive therapy can identify and analyze latent skills and better understand personalities. The findings showed that the artistic process can help children identify their unique personalities by expressing their creative and skillful abilities and detecting emotional conflicts and psychological needs. This supports what was said by (Cohen-Yatziv & Regev, 2019; Cohn, 2012; Malchiodi, 2022) Art therapy encourages self-discovery and unspoken potential in a safe atmosphere. Jungian symbolic psychoanalysis holds that creative production represents uniqueness (individuation) and helps children form an integrated identity. According to the experts, integrating expressive art therapy into psychological examinations can help build educational and social programs that foster children's talent and creativity.

4.1. Limitations

The results of this study's in-depth projective analysis of two typical children's drawings backed by clinical observation should be interpreted with caution. First, the study was limited to two examples in a specific age group, making it impossible to extend the findings to all children at the same developmental stage or in different cultural and social contexts. Second, despite rigorous clinical observation, the study used non-standardized qualitative approaches like visual symbol and color analysis in drawings, which may be influenced by the researcher's perceptions and theoretical background. Third, quantitative methods were not used to examine trends, tendencies, and talents, which could offer depth. The drawing sessions were limited in time and place, which may not reflect the child's artistic expressions in more natural situations.

4.2. Recommendations

Given these limits, the study advises larger, more diverse age, gender, and cultural groups to improve validity and generalizability. Future researchers should integrate qualitative methods like free drawing with quantitative assessments to better examine children's creativity. Free-drawing as a

diagnostic projective tool and clinical observation during sessions to analyze the artwork's symbols and behaviors to better understand the child's condition are stressed in the study. According to the study, parents and teachers should encourage youngsters to express themselves freely in a secure and supportive atmosphere and look for changes in visual symbols and colors that may suggest psychological or social issues that need further exploration.

5. CONCLUSION

This study reveals that free-form drawing helps kids understand themselves. It indicates cognitive, social, moral, psychological, and emotional maturity. Analyzing Mohammed and Maria's drawings in light

of numerous developmental theories revealed Piaget's phases of development, Erikson's requirements for belonging and competence, Freud's psychological protection mechanisms, and Kohlberg's moral reasoning indications. Based on clinical observation, the researchers believe projective drawing analysis provides rich information about a child's personality, preferences, and latent skills and helps develop support options. The study recommends using different methods to study how artistic expression affects children's development in different cultures and combining art analysis with clinical observation in clinical and educational practices.

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