

Proposed Workshop to Investigate the Psychosocial Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic, on Children playing with Painting and Clay modeling

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ABSTRACT

Children's play welfare is already disrupted due to COVID 19 controlling measures put in place by the government of Kenya. Child's development experts asserted that if a child is inhibited to playing, there are bound to be psychosocial consequences for early childhood development. Various reports on Ngwacho (2020), Nandkar (2020), EdTech Hub Survey (2020), Schleicher (2020), United Nation COVID-19 Report (2020), and UNICEF Report (2020) has documented the dynamics and effects COVID-19 pandemic. Educationists and therapists posit that play with painting and clay goes beyond recreation to include the expression of desires, traumas, and elaboration of their conflicts and emotional healing. The aim of proposed workshop is to re-direct children to playing with painting and clay modeling as way of relieving effect of COVID-19 pandemic. It also intended to re-establish the role of play with painting and clay as a mitigating measure on children psychosocial effected by COVID-19 as school reopens. The researcher will employ a qualitative research approach complimented by quantitative method as seemed appropriate. A case study, population and a sample will be drawn from pre-schools as defined by Competency Based Curriculum CBC (2017) at Embakasi East sub-counties of Nairobi. The workshop will employ probability stratified random sampling on children aged 3-7 year. The evaluation and analysis of data will focus on the psychosocial effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on children playing with painting and clay modeling. The data will be collected using photography, video camera and checklist as guided by the relevant professional expertise. The researcher together with other assistants will participant in the play session. The workshop will consider COVID 19 health protocols and children's right principles during workshop participation. The result of the workshop will hopeful inform the stakeholder in understanding of unresolved psychosocial effects of the COVID 19 pandemic as well positively influence future professional interventions.

Keywords: *COVID-19 pandemic, children welfares, play, Paintings, Clay modeling, psychosocial effects*

INRODUCTION

Even with reopening and closing of school and business, the world is still grumbling with devastation of COVID 19 ravages as predicted in EdTech Hub Survey (2020), United Nations' COVID 19 Report (2020), Schleicher (2020), and UNICEF Report (2020). The reports had foretold a severe psychosocial negative consequence such as upsurge of aggressive behaviours, family conflicts; misunderstand among the member of public and lack of concentration in school among others. Nandkar (2020) associated psychosocial negative consequences of COVID-19 to stress disorder influence by the worries of the futures, economic un-stability, increase of COVID-19 infection, massive death of close member of society, and abrupt change of routine. In schools, UNICEF Report (2020) and Ngwacho(2020), noted that children welfares among them play, were affected by COVID 19. Botelho (2015) and Schirmacher (2002) highlighted that play welfares are among critical component of socialization and communication on growth and development children. The proposed workshop is A Fine Art that is responding to the call COVID-19 mitigation solutions as recommended by United Nations' COVID 19 Report (2020), and UNICEF Report (2020). It is also riding on the urge of Ministry of Education to collaborate with any social support group or discipline such religion and mental health expert to offer the psychosocial support and counseling to children effected by COVID-19 according to Ngwacho (2020). For instance, aftermath of ethno political violence in 2007 decade ago, Non-governmental Organisations in conjunction with the Kenya government utilized drawing as a mitigation tool to children and youths affected by post-election violence according to Wambugu (2015). In that case, proposed workshop acknowledges that despite play with art been regarded as a fun activity; is also an effective vessel for therapeutic healing on depression and aggression behavior among children (Kendall, Williams & Finkelhor 1993).

Statement of The Problem

Once schools and children gathering reopens; intolerance, and emotional responses will always carry the day due to effect of COVID 19 on healthy psychosocial as cited by Ngwacho (2020), Nandkar (2020), EdTech Hub Survey (2020), Schleicher (2020), United Nations' UN Covid 19 Report (2020), and UNICEF Report (2020). They have noted that if COVID 19 psychosocial effect are not mitigated, they bound to cause to a more life time negative consequences to the advancement of humanity.

van de Kolk (1994) and Mcleod (2020) posits that human being are vulnerable to any psychosocial crisis resulting to personal contradiction relayed in various defense mechanism. van de Kolk (1994) and Talwar (2007) explained that a personal contradiction is imprinted in person mind as trauma, playing on emotions, images sensation and muscular reaction. Martin (2009) noted that pre-schoolers' traumas are displayed in symbolic play, aggressive behaviours and art expression due to the formative stage of growth and development. van de Kolk (1994) and Talwar (2007) cautioned that if traumatic experiences are not intervened by either diagnosis of transference, expression or even analytical amplification, they bound to cause greater damage in the development of child well. Therefore, the proposed workshop intends to actualize the theoretical validity of play with painting and clay modeling to children affected by the psychosocial effected of COVID-19 pandemic.

Objective of the Proposed Workshop

The objective that will guide proposed workshop were as follows.

- i)** To identify Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on children in the global crisis.
- ii)** To establish the mitigation employed on the global crisis.
- iii)** To establish the application of art mitigations in local crisis.
- iv)** To apply the play with painting and clay modeling in preschooler within Nairobi county.

Significance of the Proposed workshop

The proposed workshop will be a source of mitigation tool for education stakeholders in helping the community to understand the inner conflict feeling of learners in the midst of COVID 19 pandemic. The result of the workshop will inform the general public to understand unresolved psychosocial effects of the COVID 19 pandemic as well positively influence future professional interventions of any global crisis in the community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Play with Painting and Clay modeling

According to Ogutu (2021) play is activities that involve the freedom of mind that is; found outside ordinary life. He pointed that play is characterized on non-seriousness that absorbs the player's mind. He also explained that symbolic play is mostly associated with painting and clay modeling are represented in the form of abstraction and ambiguous pictures of child

expression. A lot of symbolic play in children are expressed in scribbling (age 1-3) and schematic (age 4-7) in the artistic development stage, according to Lark-Horovitz (1967).

Ogutu (2021) pointed out that painting and clay modeling are among art materials/elements used to express feelings or perceptions of the children's' world. Muyanja (2011) defines painting as a method of executing artworks using colour pigments known as paints on distinctive enduring surfaces, while clay as a malleable soil material obtained from the swamp that is manipulated by hands. On the other note, Muyanja (2011) demonstrated that clay has a smooth tactile feeling that makes it easy to manipulate any abstract representation of three-dimension basic forms. He concluded that the process of painting and clay modeling is an exciting and overwhelming process. Lark-Horovitz (1967) concluded that play that involves art painting and clay modeling among others are instruments for a child to gain a great understanding of their personality, emotions, and environment

The History of Global Crisis

Milne (2012) and Erik(2003) explained that influenza pandemic killed more than 20,057 people, and made more than 800,000 people ill. He estimated global death from the influenza at death rate of 40 to 100 million people, and infected between one 1st - 5th of the world's population. They noted that the influenza swept around the world in three or four waves over the two-year period, making it the largest of all known influenza pandemics. Freh (2015) and Erin, (2015) posited that between 1945 and 1992, there were more than 149 major wars, killing more than 23 million people. They pointed out that warfare such as world war II, terrorism and other pandemics such as HIV/AIDS have significantly affected children. They concluded by approximating that 2 million children were killed; 4-5 million disabled, 1 million orphaned and 12 million dislocated from their home. The proposed workshop has established from World Health Organization (March 2020- July 2021): WHO COVID-19 Dashboard the similar predicament of COVID-19 to previous influenza pandemic. The WHO COVID-19 Dashboard has recorded 188 people infested illness, and 4 million on death mortally leaving several children orphans as screened on World Health Organization (March 2020- July 2021). However, various continuation statistic reports released by World Health Organization (March2020-July 2021), and Ministry of Health (March2020-June2021) is still recording high infection increase of COVID 19 and mortally death rate term as first, second and third waves.

The display of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as result of Global Crises

Briere (2015), Freh (2015), Erin, (2015), Milne (2012) and Erik (2003) identified some major psychosocial disturbances pigged on global crisis such as World Wars II, terrorism, and Spanish flue among others to humanity. Briere (2015), and Freh (2015), mentioned posttraumatic stress, cognitive distortions, altered emotionality, dissociation, impaired self-reference, disturbed relatedness, and avoidance. Gil, (1991), narrowed psychosocial discription to symptoms such as a posttraumatic stress disorder (fear and anxiety), aggression, depression, and aggressive behaviors once when subjected to any crisis. Freh (2015) and Erin, (2015) demonstrated negative consequences that children living in war zones are vulnerable to develop some form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on their life time. Freh (2015) highlighted that children exposed to war-related, terrorism, crime and pandemic manifests in post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychiatric morbidities including depression, disruptive behaviors, and somatic symptoms.

For instance, the underplaying of psychosocial on a group of 94 Iraqi children; whom exposed in the bombing of the Al-Ameriyah shelter 1991, found to have developed Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder PTSD symptoms according to Freh (2015). They realized that majority of children experienced depression, anxious and afraid of losing other members of their family. Another the interview connected to the experience of the Spanish influenza pandemic in Ireland, found that the flu caused human tragedies such orphaned children, the widowed spouses, and changed economic circumstances according to Milne (2012). It is therefore clear that psychosocial effect of COVID-19 on children relates and depicted into PSTD among children subjected to bombing, warfare, influenza pandemic among others. Similarly, Schleicher (2020), United Nation UN Covid 19 Report (2020), UNICEF Report, (2020), Ngwacho (2020) and Nandkar (2020) has highlighted the similar Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder PSTD and negative consequences of COVID 19 on current situation among the children.

The Mitigation employed in Global Crisis

Schleicher (2020), United Nation UN Covid 19 Report (2020), and UNICEF Report, (2020) analyzed the past global crisis as revealed by Freh (2015), Milne (2012), Erin, (2015) and Erik (2003) and then recommended mitigation approaches in order to intervene psychosocial consequence. The aim was to respond to reduce stigmatization and discrimination as result of global crisis among the children's mental health for well a longer-term. In Kenya, Ngwacho,

(2020) has applauded the effort of Ministry of Education in supporting the COVID-19 psychosocial support, counseling and COVID-19 programmes in schools. CNN, BBC, CCTV News, Al Jazeera, among others (March 2020-June 2021) have reported various government agencies, religious leaders, politicians and psychologist have been offering mitigation and social support in the community effected by COVID-19. Therefore, the proposed workshop is among the mitigation tools of solution as recommended by United Nation UN Covid 19 Report (2020), and UNICEF Report, (2020) and Ngwacho (2020) among others. It has also responded to 3rd annual conference 2021 at Machakos University under the theme: *Responding to Emerging Global Challenges through Research, innovation, and technology for Sustainable development*;- with aim of employing fine art discipline to provide a solution the current global crisis in community especially schools.

Application of Art mitigation on the Local Crisis in Kenya

Apparently, the proposed workshop connects with Wambugu (2015) art mitigation study, whose aim was to investigate the effect drawing on children affected by aftermath of ethno-political violence in 2007. The study was conducted on the children of age 7-12 within primary schools in Nairobi county. It also slightly connected to Omuyoma, (2011)'s art mitigation measure, whose aim was to use psychodramatic role-playing on communication to youth in Msambweni sub-county in Kwale-Kenya, affected by psychosocial effects of HIV/AIDS. Both studies from *The school of Creative, Performance Arts, Film and Media Studies, at Kenyatta university* have ascertain the mitigation role of play and art as vital clinical diagnosis and therapeutic healing to children or youth affected by psychosocial effects on any global crisis. Gil, (2002) and Malchiodi (1998) emphasized that children or youth affected by psychosocial effect of any crisis; are bound to express trauma, elaborate emotional conflict and healing through art creation or playing with art. Ogotu (2021) concluded that play with paintings and clay modeling are sources of therapeutic healing, development for self-attachment and behavioral dysregulation to children. The proposed workshop is satisfied that is relating to previous application mitigation art tools, and It will shift its objective and attention to target the current crisis situation of COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, it will employ painting and clay modeling on investigating the effect of COVID-19, due to accomplishment nature of its element/ material (Painting and Clay) which has been theoretical applauded by experts to have overwhelming therapeutic healing in play process.

METHODOLOGY

The proposed workshop will employ mixed research design (qualitative and quantitative), considering that the study will involve play within a school set up and number of children. The mixed research design will vary on its' objective, literature review and the validity of psychanalysis instrument. The quantitative research will consider the number of sample and numeric collection of data. The study will be carried out in middle class income within Nairobi County; -Embakasi East sub counties as indicated in Kenya National Bureau of Statistic (2019). However, the researcher is mindful of COVID-19 unpredictable dynamic and it elusive nature on psychosocial effects among low, middle, and upper social as reported on daily statistic by Ministry of Heath (March 2020-July 2021).

The target population and primary data will be the children of age 3 -7 years as noted by Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) due to the availability of preschool in schools and symbolic expressive nature of preschooler. The sampling technique of target populations will be probability stratified random sampling, whereby the number and population of school in Embakasi East will be identified, defined and then subdivided based on age into groups for sampling. The data will be collected using photography, video camera and checklist as guided by the relevant professional expertise. The researcher will develop un-structure focus group of 6 participants on each play session. The assessment of psychoanalysis will be purely guided with a help of relevant professional expertise.

The researcher will seek an authorization consent from the relevant administration. It also intended to upheld high professionalism standard in conducting the workshop, analyzing the data, writing a report and recommendation. The researcher will continue to seek an assistance of relevant professional expertise to help in interpretation of the data and analyzing observation. It will strictly follow the COVID-19 protocol as laid by the Ministry of Health and concerned school administration. The proposed workshop will seek an assistance from Project management for accountability, transperance and successful workshop.

CONCLUSION

The global crisis such as COVID-19 pandemic, warfare, HIV/AIDS and terrorism among others has been found to perpetrate acts of violence, which affects the welfare of children. Children are vulnerable recipient of psychosocial effected of any global crisis, due to their formative development stage of development on communication and socialization. Play with arts is an effective mitigation tool for traumatized children affected by any crisis. It permits

children to express their constricted feelings of anxiety, emotion, fear, confusion, or loyalty conflicts.

As the government of Kenya reopens school with caution from COVID 19 protective measure as noted by (Kenyatta, May 2021), the proposed workshop should be actualized not only to ascertain theoretical validity of play with painting and clay modeling on the children effects by COVID-19, but to offer a therapeutic healing to the traumatized children in our community. The proposed workshop will be successful if it receives the partnership and support from various stakeholders. Lastly, adequate monetary funds should be availed to facilitate the cost expenses of the workshop, material and equipment and emergence response cover of COVID-19. This because COVID-19 is an elusive and unpredictable pandemic as stated by Ministry of Health (March2020- July2021) reports.

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