

Effect of Art Therapy on Depression Among Single Parent Children

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Abstract

The study aims to determine whether art therapy helps single-parent children with depression. The present research was divided into two parts. Firstly, a sample of 50 Single Parent Children (25 Boys and 25 Girls) from the age of 8 to 14 years were selected. Children's Depression Scale was used to identify the level of depression among those children. After the interpretation of scale scores, eight children were selected (4 Boys and 4 Girls) who were on a high level of depression. They were taken for the Art therapy. Art therapy sessions were conducted to identify the problem of depression and help them to manage their problem. IPA was used to analyze therapy sessions to understand in-depth Psycho-social issues of children. Then, the depression scale was again administered to those children to check the efficiency of art therapy techniques. After the post-analysis of the childhood depression scale, it was concluded that the scores of depressions in children were low compared to pre-therapy analysis. It reveals that art therapy is essential for depressive single parent children.

Introduction

The world today is changing rapidly owing to several factors, such as technological advancement, modernization, and the role of media. In a state like Pakistan, where norms, values, and culture have always played a pertinent part, it is now heading towards being a more modern and secular society. People eventually, including men and women, are becoming more aware of their rights in a better way which has both positive and negative influences in terms of traditional family patterns and systems.

Moreover, Pakistan's socioeconomic conditions are such a state that most people are languishing in poverty and circling class disparity. In light of such numerous issues, we as an NAA nation are becoming highly intolerable towards handling problems in a graceful manner, which is not only increasing the issues on a societal level but also on a personal level.

Divorce rates have risen in recent years due to a variety of factors, including poor communication, constant fighting, weight gain, unrealistic expectations, a lack of intimacy, and unequal treatment of partners. (Warren, S.,2017) These issues are causing more and more families to have single parents, but there are many kinds of single-parent households as well, such as those headed by a parent who is not yet married or is a single parent out of choice or a widowed parent.

Several studies (Huntley et al., 1987) suggest that the level of depression is mostly high in those children who belong to single-parent families. Because of depression, they can be poor in terms of their family situation, school, and work problems. Hostile with feelings of mixed loyalties and loneliness.

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Most of the time, the adverse effects of a single parent are apparent, like economic problems and trust issues. On the other side, there are also some positive effects on children. Spending one-on-one time with the child of a parent creates a unique or strong bond. Strong bonding can affect the children's personality positively. (Huntley, Phelps, Rehm 1987).

Aaron Beck believed that depression predisposed people to change their positive self-schema. They have a set of largely unfavorable and gloomy beliefs and expectations about themselves. According to Beck, a traumatic incident in infancy might lead to the development of negative schemas. (McLeod, S. A. 2015).

Other than the two biological parent households, children of single-parent homes have disadvantages. The social scientists discovered that single-parent households face several concerns connected to low economic conditions and parenting practices. (Tish Davidson, A.M., 2004).

It is crucial to investigate why children in single-parent homes may exhibit more issue behavior given the rise in single-parent households and the increased likelihood of problem behavior in kids. Parent-child attachment is one of the factors hypothesized to contribute to the development of maladaptive behavior in single-parent families. (Carlson, Sampson, & Sroufe, 2003). "Loneliness is the predominant feeling, especially amongst single mothers." (Dr. Nargis). Art is a lie that reveals the truth to us," said Pedro Picasso.

In art therapy, clients work with an art therapist to explore their emotions, resolve emotional conflicts, foster self-awareness, manage behavior and addictions, develop social skills, enhance reality orientation, lessen anxiety, and boost self-esteem. Art therapy is a mental health profession. One of art therapy's objectives is enhancing or restoring a client's functionality and sense of personal well-being. The life-affirming delights of creating art may also be enjoyed as part of art therapy.

Art Therapy is also a psychotherapy technique used creatively for better expressiveness and efficiently disputing hostile psychological problems. Art therapy is influential and has a positive effect on improving mental and mental health (Stuckey, H. L., & Nobel, J. 2010).

Art Therapy is an admirable method to stretch and control feelings and gives them a safe channel to direct their hidden emotions. Through art therapy, the person constantly communicates fear, anger, and guilt. Art therapy helps children discover psychological issues and traumas that help their lives (Hussan, 2016).

Literature Review

One-quarter more single-parent households had children in 2000 than they did in 1960. A third of all births were to single moms. According to Susan Pollet, Esq.'s paper was published in the New York State Unified Court System in 2000. Men who are single parents make up around 16% of the population. Of the 16 percent, 57% had divorced, and 43% had lost a spouse. Women who are single parents make up around 84% of the population. The 84% of women who are single parents included 44% divorced or separated individuals and 56% widowed individuals. (Pollet, 2000).

According to World Statistics (2011), countries with the highest ratio of single-parent children are the United States 25.8%, Ireland 24.3 %, New Zealand 23.7%, Canada 22.1%, and the United Kingdom 21.5% (Pollet, 2000). According to World Statistics (2007), In Asia, the percentage of single-parent children is Pakistan 13%, India 10%, Bangladesh 12%, China 15%, White 22% (Pollet, 2000).

The study explores the lives and problems of children living in single-parent homes for the last three years. The sample used in the study was 11 children of almost age of 18 years. The results revealed that interaction between parents and children can play an essential role in the impact of parents on child and their concept of the family structure (Cherry, 2016).

The study highlights the internalizing problems such as anxiety and depression among autistic children with group and art therapy or visual arts-based approach. A significant component of the study was the prominence of social skills. The study theorized that children who have completed the CREATE (Children Relating to Each Other as Artists through Education) program would reveal improvements in social skills and decrease internalizing behavior problems. Results showed that a strong focus on building the participants' self-confidence and helping to develop coping strategies for anxious thoughts and feelings helped them cope with the problem (Dehnel, 2015).

The study found that single-parent children had low confidence levels and were more aggressive and passive than two-parent children. The study compares the behavioral problems among single-parent children and two-parent children. The sample of the study was 75 children from both groups (Usakli, 2013).

Art therapy is an effective technique to lessen anger and its manifestations, according to research. The effects of art therapy are usually described as a reduction in stress, anxiety, hostility, aggressiveness, and tension. Children might learn to control challenging emotions like rage with art therapy practices. It can advance emotional intelligence and anger control. (Köiv&Kaudne, 2011).

The level of education aspiration and student disengagement was studied in the Korean school children, which were 9th to 12th grade students. The sample used in the study was approximately 6,000. Those were having both single and double-parent children. Results revealed that single-parent children were less interested or disengaged in getting admission to a four-year university education than both parents. (Park, 2008)

Studies measured that art-making reduces stress and negative mood. In this study, fifty adults were selected. They were randomly assigned to either create a work of art or to view and sort art prints. The results directed that art-making leads to significant decreases in negative mood and that these declines can be recognized in the making process rather than in observing artworks (Bell & Robbins, 2007).

The art therapy's value in decreasing the symptoms of depression among the prisoners studied in research. The study participants were male adult prisoners in low and medium-security prisons. Forty-eight male participants were selected between the age of 21 and 63 years. They have joined two group art therapy sessions per week. The findings of this study revealed a significant reduction in symptoms of depression in those prisoners who are joining the art therapy program. This study confirmed improvement in mood, socialization skills, and problem-solving (Gussak, 2007).

A study examined the usefulness of mother-child communication and the impact of group art therapy on mothers' self-image and self-esteem. Participants were four mother-child couples with depression symptoms in the mothers. As pre- and post-treatment evaluations, a mother and child drawing play session that was recorded, as well as two self-reports, were employed. Mothers who completed the research could apply their improved attitudes and self-beliefs to their activities and relationships with their kids (Kelly, 2000).

The researcher compared behavioral problems in Pakistan's children from single or average families. Single-parent families are those in which mothers head. The sampling technique of Snowball sampling was used in the research. The sample consists of 60 children aged 8-10 years. The teachers and mothers collected data. Results showed that single-parent family children were perceived to have high behavior problems, which can have a non-significant effect on gender (Sohail, Sabah, 2016).

The study was conducted to find out and explore how art therapy has been used to treat and heal Patients in Pakistan. The researcher used the Qualitative study method. The aim of the study was the process and limitations commonly faced by practitioners in Pakistan. Results

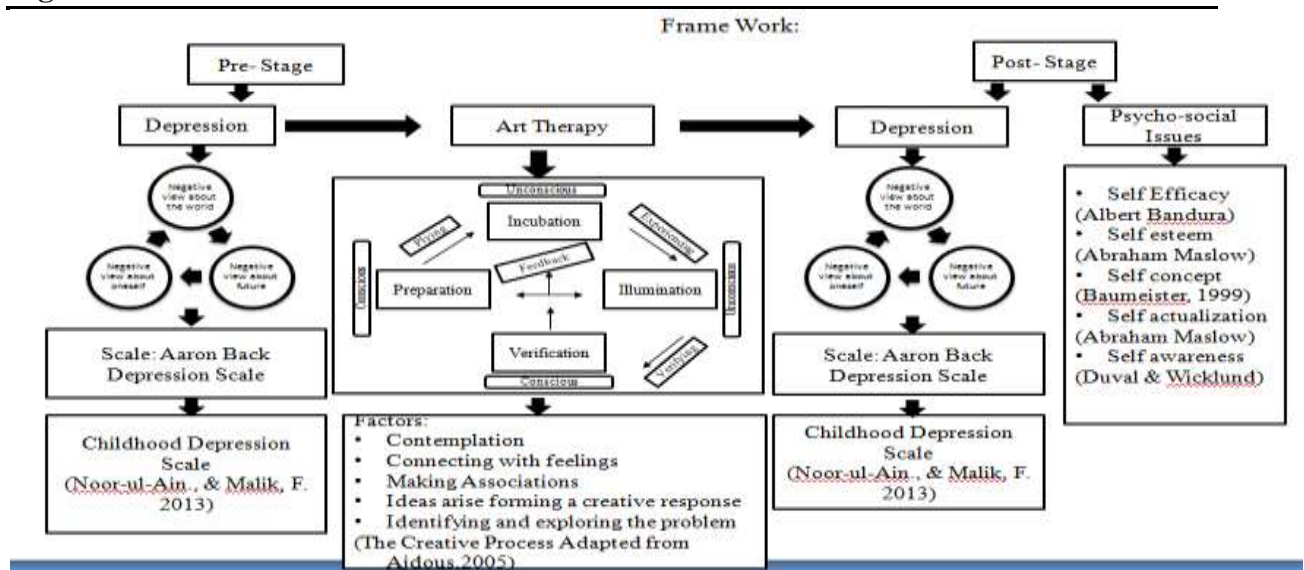
showed that Art therapy is a very young field in Pakistan. It needs to be public awareness about the benefits of therapy (Ansari, 2010).

Objectives

The objectives of the present research work can be broadly classified as Social, Scientific, and personal objectives.

1. Social Objective: Research will be essential in society and literature. Art therapy helps children to find out the reasons for depression. It will be beneficial to the teachers, Educational Institutions, Parents, and peer groups of the single-parent child to survive better in society.
2. Scientific Objective: The researcher wants to study this topic to find out the effect of art therapy on the depression level of children. *Play therapy* is a technique that can be used to guide these children toward beneficial outcomes that lead to healthy developmental progress.
3. Personal Objective: Research will also help in the literature because it was not primarily used on children with depression. Art therapy cannot be used on single-parent children before. Therefore, it can be helpful for single-parent families to find out the psycho-social issues of children.

Figure 1



Research Methodology

Pre-Stage Study I

Research Design: Quantitative research design. (Before & After)

Research Method: The childhood depression scale use on the 50 single parent children. Twenty-five boys and 25 girls. After that, four boys and four girls were selected for the therapy sessions. Again, administer the C.D.S. at the end of sessions to check the therapy's effectiveness.

Sampling Strategies: Snowball & Purposive.

Research Process

The Child Protection Bureau was selected for the data collection. Firstly, small interviews of many children from different classes were taken, and the demographic sheets. After the first stage, 25 girls and 25 boys were selected to administer C.D.S., which belongs to a single-parent

family and lives in the institution. Based on scale results, a high rank of depressive children, four boys, and four girls, were selected for the therapy sessions.

Ethical Consideration: All the study data was collected while considering the ethical issues.

Mode of Analysis: Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the results.

Pre-Stage Study II

Research Design: Qualitative research design.

Research Method

Art therapy sessions were given to both girls and boys. Four girls and four boys were selected after the analysis of Study 1. Art therapy techniques use colors with different types of white paper and guide the children in the drawings. A therapy guide was constructed for the session's help. Every session had one goal according to the decided goal of the therapy session conducted. A reflective journal was written about every child for I.P.A. analysis. The observer deeply observes a child's gestures, behavior, and emotions during therapy. After the art therapy sessions, a child depression scale was administered to the children to analyze the effectiveness of therapy.

Sampling Strategies: 4 girls and four boys were selected for the art therapy age range 8 to 15, which is on the high rank of study 1 analysis.

Research Process: After administering the childhood depression scale on 50 single-parent children, 25 girls and 25 boys, four girls and four boys were selected for the therapy session. A total of six therapy sessions were conducted separately with boys and girls. Firstly, an introductory group session was conducted with boys and girls separately for rapport building, and the biodata was taken for further sessions. After the first session, five more sessions were conducted, designed according to therapy guidelines to discover the children's psycho-social issues. In every session, the child draws the drawing according to instructions. The art therapy session is entirely based on the children's drawing. Drawings play the most crucial role in finding out the problems and issues of the children. The entire information the child has given the duration of the session and their gestures, behaviors, and irritability are all written in a reflective journal for further analysis.

Ethical Consideration: Inform consent and audio recording permission from the institution's authority.

Mode of Analysis: An interpretative phenomenological approach (I.P.A.) was used to analyze the reflective journals of the therapy sessions. Data was analyzed in different stages. Firstly, transcription was done of all audio recordings, and I.P.A. was used for the analysis and results of the research. After the process, a childhood depression scale was administered to the children to check the effectiveness of therapy sessions.

Results

By the use of I.P.A., the superordinate themes were generated, which are as follows: · Loss of one Parent · Childhood trauma · Attachment to family · Anger · Physical Abuse · Sadness about staying away from home · Goal to achieve in life.

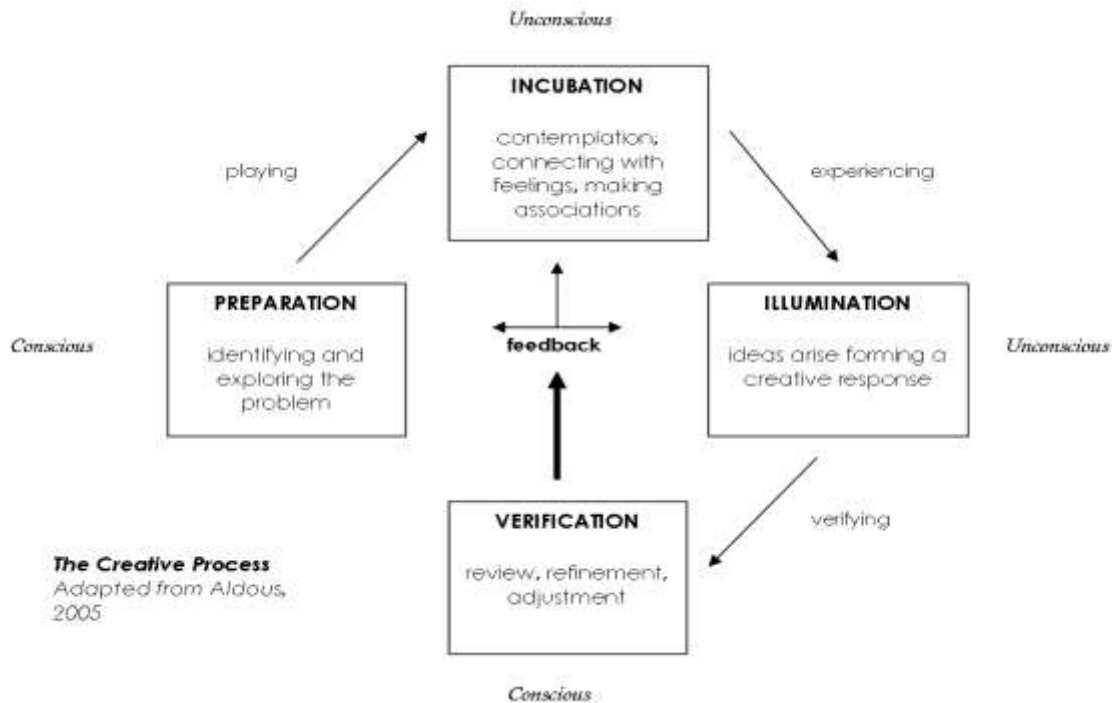
Sub-themes: Negligence · Push or slap · Kicking · Throwing things · Beating with pipes · Sadness · Fear · Frustration · Disappointment · Worry · Feeling of Worthless · Rejection · Hurt Loss.

Art Therapy

The classic model of the creative process by Wallas (1926), cited in Aldous (2005), is effectively applied by art therapists. It can be used to explain the client's process when the client enters art therapy. This process has four stages: Preparation, Incubation, illumination, and

verification. During the process, the client hesitates between Conscious and unconscious mental activity. The conscious stage has a verification and preparation phase. The unconscious has an incubation and illumination phase.

Figure 2



"The preparation phases establish the need, problem, or desire, collect whatever data the solution or answer needs to consider, and provide criteria for determining if the solution is acceptable. Step aside from the issue during incubation and let our thoughts reflect and solve it. Incubation, like preparation, can take hours, days, or even years. Ideas emerge from the mind during illumination, serving as the foundation for an original response. These concepts might be parts of a whole or the entire thing itself, i.e., perceiving the whole idea or thing at once. In contrast to the previous stages, illumination frequently lasts only a few minutes or hours and involves a massive rush of discoveries. The final part of the process, verification, involves showing whether or not what came through lighting fulfills the requirements and standards set out in the preparation stage. While the second and third stages involve the right brain, the initial and last stages involve the left brain." (Aldous, 2005).

Study I: Quantitative (Pre-Stage)

Problem Definition

With time, couples' divorce and separation ratio is high in Pakistan compared to past years. The parent's separation or death of the parent can affect the children psychologically and behaviorally. According to the present research literature, single-parent children have high levels of depression symptoms compared to normal family children.

Rationale

The quantitative research method is used for this study to identify the depression symptoms in single-parent children, especially in those children who live in institutions without family and only spend little time with the family in a month.

Objective

Present research checks the symptoms of Depression and observes the level of Depression in single-parent children.

Hypothesis

Single-parent children will have high levels of Depression.

Study II: Qualitative (Post-Stage)**Problem Definition**

Children face problems because of single-parent families. Depression level of children is high in those children who are single parents and living in institutions, according to study 1 of the present research. Qualitative design is used for the in-depth study of depressive children to find out the psycho-social issues of children. Art therapy techniques are used to discover the psycho-social issues and help the children cope with the problems.

Major Question

How does Art therapy works/helps single-parent child with Depression?

Sub-Questions

1. What are the psychological impacts of Art therapy on single-parent children with Depression?
2. What are the social impacts of Art therapy on single-parent children with Depression?
3. How does gender affect the significance of Art therapy on single-parent children with Depression?

Research Methodology**Pre-Stage Study I****Research Process**

After administering the childhood depression scale on 50 single-parent children, 25 girls, and 25 boys, four girls and four boys were selected for the therapy session.

A total of six therapy sessions were conducted separately with boys and girls. Firstly, an introductory group session was conducted with boys and girls separately for rapport building, and the biodata was taken for further sessions.

After the first session, five more sessions were conducted, designed according to therapy guidelines to discover the children's psycho-social issues. In every session, the child draws the drawing according to instructions.

The art therapy session is entirely based on the children's drawing. Drawings play the most crucial role in finding out the problems and issues of the children. The entire information the child has given the duration of the session and their gestures, behaviors, and irritability are all written in a reflective journal for further analysis.

Ethical Consideration

Inform consent and audio recording permission are given from the institution's authority. All data was under ethical consideration, highly confidential, and used only for research purposes.

Mode of Analysis

An interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) was used to analyze the reflective journals of the therapy sessions. It was most suitable for the data analysis of subjective experience. Data was analyzed in different stages. Firstly, transcription was done of all audio recordings, and IPA was used for the analysis and results of the research. After the process, a childhood

depression scale was administered to the children to check the effectiveness of therapy sessions.

Conclusion

The main focus of this study was to analyze the effect of art therapy on single parent children which lived in the child protection bureau. There were large number of children those lived in such sort of specified institutions because of so many reasons for their admission in these institutions and the leading factors are their basic needs e.g. food, shelter and education.

Present research was divided into two parts, firstly the sample of 50 Single Parent Children which are 50 girls and 50 boys from the age of 8 to 14 years were selected. Those were selected by the small interview with the children and fill-up the demographic sheet. After the selection of single parent children apply the Child Depression Scale which is developed by Noor ul Ain & Dr. Farah Malik in 2013 used with proper permission.

Children Depression scale was used to identify the level of depression among those children. After the interpretation of scale scores, 8 children were selected (4 Boys & 4 Girls) who were on the high level of depression. They were taken for the Art Therapy sessions. Art therapy sessions were conducted to identify the problem of depression and help them to manage their problem. It can also be used to find out the psycho-social issues of children. Art therapy for children can provide kids with an easier way to express themselves since children are more naturally artistic and creative. A young child is likely to be more comfortable initially expressing him/herself with some crayons and markers, for example, he/she is going to be at expressing emotions and feelings through words.

IPA was used for the analysis of therapy session for understanding in depth Psycho-social issues of children. Then, the depression scale was again administered on those children to check the efficiency of art therapy techniques. After the post analysis of childhood depression scale, it was concluded that the scores of depression in children was 57 low as compared to pre therapy analysis. It reveals that art therapy plays an important role for depressive single parent children. Present research concludes that art therapy effects positively on the depressive symptoms and psycho-social issues of the single parent children.

Suggestions

- Art therapy can be used for the treatment of many disorders related to children.
- Art therapy is very useful for the adults in managing the depression.
- Art therapy is helpful for the normal people to find out their problems/issues.

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