

OPEN ACCESS



# Educational Research and Reviews

May, 2022  
ISSN: 1990-3839  
DOI: 10.5897/ERR  
[www.academicjournals.org](http://www.academicjournals.org)



**ACADEMIC  
JOURNALS**  
expand your knowledge

# About ERR

Educational Research and Reviews (ISSN 1990-3839) is published bi-monthly (one volume per year) by Academic Journals.

Educational Research and Reviews (ERR) is an open access journal that publishes high-quality solicited and unsolicited articles, in English, in all areas of education including education policies and management such as Educational experiences and mental health, the effect of land tenure system on resource management, Visualization skills and their incorporation into school curriculum, Gender, education and child labour etc. All articles published in ERR are peer-reviewed.

## Contact Us

Editorial Office: [err@academicjournals.org](mailto:err@academicjournals.org)

Help Desk: [helpdesk@academicjournals.org](mailto:helpdesk@academicjournals.org)

Website: <http://www.academicjournals.org/journal/ERR>

Submit manuscript online <http://ms.academicjournals.me/>.

## Editors

**Dr. Peter W. Wong**

*Southern Cross University  
Australia.*

**Assoc. Prof. Manjula Vithanapathirana**

*Faculty of Education  
University of Colombo  
Colombo,  
Sri Lanka.*

## Associate Editors

**Dr. Melissa Vick**

*School Of Education  
James Cook University  
Townsville,  
Australia.*

**Dr. Ahmet Basal**

*Yıldız Technical University  
Education Faculty  
Foreign Languages Education Department  
İstanbul,  
Turkey.*

**Dr. Maniam Kaliannan**

*Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies  
Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)  
Selangor,  
Malaysia.*

**Prof. Ogunsakin R. Ebenezer**

*Department of Statistics  
Ekiti State University  
Ado Ekiti,  
Nigeria.*

**Dr. Tavis D. Jules**

*Cultural and Educational Policy Studies  
School of Education  
Loyola University Chicago  
Chicago,  
USA.*

**Dr. A. Kadir Maskan**

*Dicle University  
Ziya Gokalp Education Faculty  
Department of Physics Education  
Diyarbakir,  
Turkey.*

**Dr. Adams Onuka**

*Centre for Peace and conflict Studies (CEPACS)  
University of Ibadan  
Nigeria.*

**Dr. Mohd Akhtar Siddiqui**

*Institute of Advanced Studies in Education  
Faculty of Education  
Jamia Millia Islamia Central University  
New Delhi,  
India.*

**Dr. Yambo John M. Onyango**

*University of Eastern Africa  
Kamagambo Adventist College Campus  
Baraton,  
Kenya.*

**Dr. Tolga Gök**

*Torbali Vocational School of Higher Education  
Dokuz Eylul University  
Izmir,  
Turkey.*

## Editorial Board

**Prof. García Mayo, María del Pilar**

*Departamento de Filología Inglesa y Alemana y de Traducción e Interpretación  
Universidad del País Vasco (UPV/EHU)  
Paseo de la Universidad 5  
Vitoria,  
Spain.*

**Prof. Frank Witlox**

*Ghent University  
Department of Geography  
Gent,  
Belgium.*

**Prof. Georgios D. Sideridis**

*University of Crete  
Department of Psychology  
Rethimno,  
Greece.*

**Prof. Andreas Veglis**

*Department of Journalism and Mass Media  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki  
Thessaloniki,  
Greece.*

**Prof. Mutendwahothe Walter Lumadi**

*Curriculum & Instructional Studies  
College of Education  
UNISA,  
South Africa.*

**Dr. Miriam McMullan**

*Faculty of Health and Social Work  
University of Plymouth  
Plymouth,  
UK.*

**Prof. Moshe Barak**

*Graduate Program for Science and Technology  
Education  
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev,  
Beer Sheva,  
Israel.*

**Dr. Hiam Zein**

*Psychology and Education  
Lebanese American University  
Chouran-Beirut,  
Lebanon.*

**Dr. Joel O. Eriba**

*Faculty of Education  
Benue State University  
Makurdi,  
Nigeria.*

**Prof. Bingjun Yang**

*School of Foreign Languages  
Southwest University  
Chongqing,  
China.*

**Dr. Ernest W. Brewer**

*The University of Tennessee  
Educational Administration and Supervision  
Tennessee,  
USA.*

**Prof. Gail Derrick**

*Regent University  
School of Education  
Virginia Beach,  
USA.*

**Dr. Evridiki Zachopoulou**

*Department of Early Childhood Care and Education  
Thessaloniki,  
Greece.*

**Dr. Francesco Pastore**

*Seconda Università di Napoli  
Italy,*

**Dr. Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah**

*Technical Education and Vocation  
TEVTA Secretariat  
Lahore,  
Pakistan.*

**Dr. Ravi Kant**

*College of Teacher Education  
Maulana Azad National Urdu University  
Darbhanga,  
India.*

## **Editorial Board**

**Dr. Dibakar Sarangi**

*Directorate of Teacher Education and State Council  
for Educational Research and Training  
(DTE & SCERT)  
Odisha,  
India.*

**Dr. Elisa Backer**

*Faculty of Business  
Federation University Australia  
Australia.*

**Dr. Ahmad Alkhaldeh**

*Department of Curriculum and instruction  
University of Jordan  
Jordan.*

**Dr. Mehmet Akif Sözer**

*Department of Primary Education  
Gazi Faculty of Education  
Gazi University  
Turkey.*

# Table of Content

<b>Impact of Chinese university teachers' aesthetic experiences on their professional development</b>	152
Weixin Lin, Yuan-Cheng Chang* and Peng-Fei Chen	
<b>Traits of street children</b>	160
Gabriel Julien	

*Full Length Research Paper*

# Impact of Chinese university teachers' aesthetic experiences on their professional development

Weixin Lin<sup>1,2</sup>, Yuan-Cheng Chang<sup>2\*</sup> and Peng-Fei Chen<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Visual Communication Design, College of Design, Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, China.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Education Management, Chinese International College, Dhurakij Pundit University, Thailand.

Received 3 April, 2022; Accepted 18 May, 2022

**The professional development of teachers is fundamental to educational reform and promotion, and such a development includes teachers' aesthetic experiences. This study aims to explore the impact of Chinese teachers' aesthetic experiences on their professional development and the differences between male and female teachers in terms of the impact of aesthetic experiences on professional development. In total, 500 teachers from 20 universities in Hainan and Guangzhou, China, were surveyed, and 488 valid questionnaires were collected. A multivariate regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of each variable. The results of the study indicate that "aesthetic attitude," "understanding of beauty," and "full experience" all have a significantly positive impact on the professional development of both male and female teachers, whereas "pleasure of beauty" has no significant impact on teachers' professional development. The findings also demonstrate that no difference exists between male and female teachers in terms of the impact of aesthetic experiences on professional development, and the more practical conceptions of aesthetic experience have a direct impact on teachers' development.**

**Key words:** Aesthetics, aesthetic experience, teachers' professional development.

## INTRODUCTION

Higher education offers the potential to support global, national, and local development, and higher education establishments play an essential role in society, cultivating elites, pioneering achievements in sciences and humanities, and providing greater opportunities to contribute to social development (Chankseliani et al., 2021). Accordingly, teachers are key players in the development of universities, laying the foundation for talent cultivation and an improved quality of education. In

addition, teachers are also of crucial importance to the success of reform initiatives, as they are ultimately the ones responsible for enacting these initiatives within the classroom (Guskey, 2002). Consequently, the promotion of teachers' professional development is an important matter for their personal growth and the sustainable development of universities. However, Chinese university teachers have outdated concepts of professional competence development, and there exist problems

\*Corresponding author. E-mail: [yuan-cheng.cha@dpu.ac.th](mailto:yuan-cheng.cha@dpu.ac.th).

related to the teaching environment, such as large classes, a low level of competence, and instrumental motivation (Peng et al., 2014). The established syllabus and heavy workload for teachers are also influential factors, including correcting assignments and preparing lessons (Barkhuizen and Wette, 2008).

Ensuring that teachers are competent in their professional practice, proficient in collaboration and leadership skills, and equipped with the quality of integrity and the knowledge and skills related to education and social evolution is critical to the success of educational reform (Garet et al., 2001). In addition, schools are expected to provide more diversified classroom environments for all students to work equitably and effectively, thereby contributing to a better as well as more impartial and liberal society (Kaur, 2012). Nevertheless, numerous teachers require intensive guidance and support to be in a position where they can teach in line with the principles of innovation (Borko, 2004).

Smith et al. (2013) highlight the importance of teachers' professional development, including strengthening their continuous learning and evolution, allowing teachers to be resilient to changes and capable of tackling teaching challenges, improving teachers' professional knowledge and competence and social status, and diversifying the roles of teachers. Teachers' professional development is regarded as a key tool for enhancing teaching and, further, improving students' achievement; it is also a method used to introduce the curriculum and instructional development (Carr et al., 2000; Petrie and McGee, 2012). Effective professional development for teachers should continue with time, requiring reinforced learning experiences and contextualization (Garet et al., 2001). Opfer and Peder (2011) emphasize that a more comprehensive understanding needs to be considered in teachers' professional development, as it is likely to influence their career path and personal lives as well as their knowledge, competencies, and values.

Yuan et al. (2017) define professional knowledge and competence, professional development, teachers' beliefs, and teaching effectiveness as the main indicators of teachers' professional development, which can be achieved by fostering teachers' awareness and strengthening their motivation for such development. In the context of contemporary educational reform policies, teacher professional development is also faced with the limitations of various institutional conditions and diverse role expectations (Radovan, 2011). Nevertheless, it is important to improve teachers' literacy and further enhance their professional knowledge and competence through such development (Kose et al., 2011). It is essential for teachers to continue learning and receiving new knowledge, improve their teaching, and enhance their professional knowledge and competence in education (Glomo-Narzoles, 2013). Avalos (2011) states that the focus and the ultimate goal of teachers'

professional development should be students' learning and achievement and that education itself is about instructing students, with teachers playing an extremely crucial role.

Aesthetics is important to teacher professional development and practice (Attwood, 2020; Oreck, 2004). According to Eisner (2002), aesthetic experiences have the potential to be practiced in school education as long as the core values of education are transformed, and these transformations include the following: a greater emphasis on inquiry rather than discovery; more appreciation of wonderment rather than of static control; a greater focus on the emergence of distinctiveness and specificity as well as an allowance for differences rather than suppressive and uniform management; an increased usage of implicit language rather than simple literal interpretation; a greater focus on the process of transformation rather than on the existence of status quo; and a greater emphasis on imagination over fact, values over measurements, and the emotions that are experienced during the journey over the speed of arrival at the destination.

Thus, cognitive and noncognitive preferences are directly or indirectly related to environmental aesthetics, and experiencers transfer their experiences from the natural environment to everyday experiences, from which they can then form aesthetic experiences (Dewey, 2005). That said, aesthetic experience is an everyday activity that promotes positive emotions and is the best method to maintain subjective happiness, which is aligned with Melchionne's (2013) concept of everyday aesthetics, and the qualities of persistent, everyday routines are conducive to subjective well-being, as claimed by Carlson (2007). Scholars' research also accentuates the range of senses that underlie aesthetic experience and judgment as well as how the various senses shape aesthetic values of the natural world (Fisher, 1998; Prior, 2017).

Furthermore, Eisner (2002) suggests that educational establishments are the most appropriate places to teach art. However, if art education is leveraged as a tool for other purposes, it undoubtedly undermines the art experience, as the educational context is full of brief, bounded, difficult to evoke, and by no means continuous or predictable moments, and these factors make it difficult to have an aesthetic experience (Kerdeman, 2005). Therefore, these constraints and limitations, which exist in schools, must be broken to truly introduce aesthetics therein. The first step should be to include the concept of aesthetics in the cultivation of teachers, and school teachers should also enhance their own aesthetic literacy (Yang, 2014).

The conscious and subconscious experiences that individuals gain by viewing sources of beauty are called "aesthetic experiences" (Maquet, 1988). Moreover, beauty can play an archetypal role in imagery, and the subconscious mind will generate all the subliminal reactions in relation to mental connections, which serves



as an expression of creativity. Thus, the acquisition of aesthetic experiences can cultivate and inspire creativity (Richards, 2007). In other words, experiences such as the recollection of beautiful memories create an underlying energy that combines the conscious and subconscious mind to form a wellspring of innovation (Chang and Jaisook, 2020).

Fenner (2003) summarizes five criteria for judging the content of aesthetic experience. The first object is directness: in the context of the perceived or intended activity of the phenomenon, through the direction of the object's attributes, the individual's attention is drawn to what is going on or to what they are already engaged in; thus, the individual feels pleasure. Second, felt freedom is a feeling of release from the domination of previous stakes, a feeling of relaxation and harmony, and a sense of freedom of choice. The third criterion is detached affect, which is the goal of interest and entails keeping a certain emotional distance, namely, not feeling oppressed by dark and terrible things but, rather, engaging in appreciation with objectivity. Fourth, active discovery is when an individual is actively challenged by a variety of potentially conflicting stimuli, generating understandable feelings and delight. Finally, the fifth criterion is wholeness: a sense of integration and a recovery from the effects of fragmented and divisive emotions (such as distracting emotions of self-acceptance and self-inflation) to emotional wholeness, which ultimately produces a corresponding satisfaction.

Seel (2008) notes that aesthetic experience is an enhanced form of aesthetic awareness. Aesthetic awareness involves paying attention to what is happening at a given moment, a feeling of the moment, and generating an intensification and transfer of emotion; for example, an exciting soccer game or an imposing natural landscape can be an event of beauty. Aesthetic experience can occur anywhere and anytime, as long as the individual is emotionally engaged in the event. Thus, these characteristics can be found in practical, intellectual, and moral activities, and aesthetic experience can be a universal experience for the majority of people, with opportunities to gain it available everywhere in daily life. Averill et al. (1998) explain the aesthetic experience with its attributes, arguing that aesthetic experiences are not only pleasurable or enjoyable but can also encompass both unpleasant and pleasant feelings. The aesthetic experience is akin to a panacea for the wounds of the soul. For some, it is the innocence of the human mind; for others, it is positive morality or the value of society (Tomlin, 2008).

In his study, Attwood (2020) observes that aesthetic awareness is a literacy that can improve teachers' professionalism; therefore, teachers should be trained in aesthetic education to obtain relevant experience, and this education should be placed in an appropriate context and environment. Frawley (2013) also suggests that preservice teachers should include aesthetic education in

their preparation programs and emphasizes that courses on aesthetics should be a part of teachers' education. Oreck (2004) also finds, in his study of teachers' professional development, that aesthetics is important to teacher professional development and practice and should, thus, be included in teacher professional development programs. Aesthetics is not simply a curriculum; the context is also a part of it. Wiebe et al. (2007) also notes that supporting and extending the integration of fine arts engenders imaginative, flexible, and specific teaching practices, which can promote teachers' professional development.

To summarize, teachers' aesthetic experience development can be instrumental to their professional development. However, there are little empirical studies on this subject in China, and since aesthetic education is one of the important educational policies in the country, this study aims to investigate the impact of Chinese teachers' aesthetic experiences on their professional development and to analyze whether there are differences between male and female teachers in terms of the impact of aesthetic experiences on professional development. The study is expected to bridge the gap in the research related to teachers' aesthetic experiences and professional development in China and to provide a reference for future related research.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research framework

This study designs a research framework through the aforementioned literature review to explore the impact of Chinese teachers' aesthetic experiences on their professional development and the differences between male and female teachers in terms of the impact of aesthetic experiences on professional development. The aesthetic experiences are analyzed along four dimensions: "pleasure of beauty," "aesthetic attitude," "understanding of beauty," and "full experience." The framework is shown in Figure 1.

### Research subjects

This study was conducted with university teachers in Hainan and Guangzhou, China, as subjects. 200 questionnaires were distributed to teachers as pretest questionnaires to perform a reliability analysis of the scale. In terms of the official questionnaire, 10 universities each in Hainan and Guangzhou, China, were surveyed. Thus, 500 teacher questionnaires were distributed to 20 universities, with 50 questionnaires issued to each university and 200 and 488 valid samples recovered from the pretest and formal surveys, respectively. The data collected were subsequently subjected to statistical analyses.

### Research tools

#### *Teachers' aesthetic experience scale*

The aesthetic experience scale developed by Chang (2017) was adopted as the teachers' aesthetic experience scale for this study.,

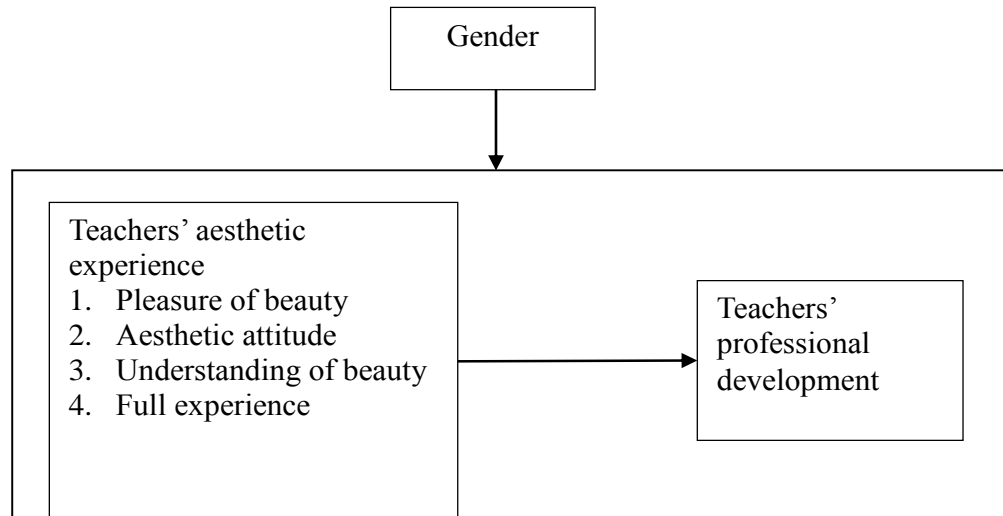


Figure 1. Research framework.

Table 1. Item-total correlation indices-stating.

Item	Corrected item-total correlation	Cronbach's $\alpha$ values after item deletion	t-values
C1	0.713	0.968	24.456***
C2	0.761	0.968	15.667***
C3	0.785	0.968	13.333***
C4	0.756	0.968	14.447***
C5	0.777	0.968	12.369***
C6	0.805	0.968	17.330***
C7	0.763	0.968	10.385***
C8	0.816	0.967	15.245***
C9	0.721	0.968	8.984***
C10	0.771	0.968	14.596***
C11	0.764	0.968	7.670***
C12	0.711	0.969	6.381***
C13	0.781	0.968	8.976***
C14	0.768	0.968	9.038***
C15	0.792	0.968	8.435***
C16	0.774	0.968	9.556***
C17	0.766	0.968	10.024***
C18	0.780	0.968	8.562***
C19	0.732	0.968	8.994***
C20	0.753	0.968	10.550***
C21	0.748	0.968	26.871***

containing six questions on “pleasure of beauty,” five questions on “aesthetic attitude,” five questions on “understanding of beauty” and six questions on “full experience.” First, a reliability analysis was conducted on the pretest questionnaires, with a Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.969$  for the overall aesthetic experiences, Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.952$  for “pleasure of beauty,” Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.907$  for “aesthetic attitude,” Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.936$  for “understanding of beauty,” and Cronbach’s  $\alpha = 0.918$  for “full experience.” Further, the corrected item-total correlation, the Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  values after item deletion,

and the t-values of the items all meet the criteria (Cuieford, 1965) (Table 1).

The formal scale was analyzed with validation factors to test its reliability, validity, and goodness-of-fit. The factor loadings for each dimension ranged from 0.712 to 0.829, and the construct reliability (CR) values for “pleasure of beauty,” “aesthetic attitude,” “understanding of beauty,” and “full experience” were 0.900, 0.863, 0.884, and 0.872, respectively, which all exceeded the assessment criteria value of 0.70. The average variance extracted (AVE) values

**Table 2.** Mean and Standard Deviation of Each Variable.

Variable	Total (488)		Female (275)		Male (213)	
	Means	SD	Means	SD	Means	SD
Teachers' professional development	4.005	0.579	3.971	0.603	4.050	0.546
Pleasure of beauty	4.270	0.629	4.274	0.649	4.266	0.604
Aesthetic attitude	4.180	0.612	4.183	0.649	4.175	0.562
Understanding of beauty	4.054	0.662	4.025	0.708	4.092	0.596
Full experience	4.158	0.609	4.143	0.638	4.177	0.571

of the four dimensions were 0.600, 0.558, 0.605, and 0.578, respectively, exceeding the assessment criterion of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), indicating a good reliability and construct validity. In terms of the goodness-of-fit index,  $\chi^2/df = 2.816$ , root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.061 ( $p < 0.00$ ), standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) = 0.038, goodness fit index (GFI) = 0.908, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.949, incremental fit index (IFI) = 0.949, parsimony normed fit index (PNFI) = 0.805, parsimony goodness of fit index (PGFI) = 0.719, all meeting the criteria (Ullman, 2001; Hu and Bentler, 1999), signifying a good theoretical model fitness.

#### **Teachers' professional development scale**

The teachers' professional development scale was developed based on the questions in the teachers' professional development section of the Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS) (OECD, 2018), consisting of 12 questions on teaching practices, 9 questions on teaching beliefs, and 11 questions on professional attitudes, for a total of 32 questions. In terms of the reliability analysis on the pretests, Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.946$  for teaching practices, Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.923$  for teaching beliefs, Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.958$  for professional attitudes, all of which meet high reliability criteria (Cueiford, 1965). The loading factors for each dimension ranged from 0.636 to 0.801, with CRs of 0.931, 0.900 and 0.938 for teaching practices, teaching beliefs, and professional attitudes, respectively, exceeding the assessment criterion of 0.70; further, the AVEs were 0.528, 0.502, and 0.580, for teaching practices, teaching beliefs, and professional attitudes, respectively, surpassing the assessment criterion of 0.50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), representing good reliability and construct validity. In terms of the goodness-of-fit index,  $\chi^2/df = 2.832$ , RMSEA = 0.061 ( $p < 0.00$ ), SRMR = 0.042, GFI = 0.884, CFI = 0.917, IFI = 0.917, PNFI = 0.816, and PGFI = 0.737, and all meet the criteria, denoting a good fitness.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive statistics**

In this study, 500 questionnaires were distributed to university teachers in the Hainan and Guangzhou provinces of China, and 488 valid samples were collected, 213 from male and 275 from female teachers. Of these teachers, 195 teachers had less than 10 years of experience, 135 had 11–20 years of experience, and 158 had more than 20 years of experience. In terms of educational background, 22 teachers had a degree below a bachelor's, 152 held a bachelor's degree, 280 had a

master's degree, and 34 had a doctoral degree.

With respect to the means of aesthetic experiences and professional development among all teachers, male teachers, and female teachers, the results can be seen in Table 2. The 5-point Likert scale was used to assess the level of all variable on a scale of 1 to 5 points. Teachers as a whole have the highest mean for "pleasure of beauty" (4.270) and the lowest mean for professional development (4.005), both of which are higher than a score of 4. In terms of gender, male teachers have higher means for professional development, "understanding of beauty," and "full experience," than female teachers, whereas the latter have higher means for "pleasure of beauty" and "aesthetic attitude" than the former.

### **Correlation analysis**

The results of the correlation analysis in Table 3 reveal that the correlation coefficients between the dimensions of aesthetic experience and teachers' professional development ranged from 0.615 to 0.749, and all of them were significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), with the highest correlation being between the "full experience" in teachers' aesthetic experiences and professional development (0.710,  $p < 0.001$ ). In addition, none of the correlation coefficients between the variables were greater than 0.8, indicating that there is no presence of collinearity. This also shows that there is a correlation between the variables, and a further regression analysis can be conducted to test the causal relationship between the variables.

### **Regression analysis**

A regression analysis was used to examine the impact of each dimension of teachers' aesthetic experiences on their professional development for all teachers, male teachers, and female teachers. For all the teachers, Model 1 in Table 4 shows that their "pleasure of beauty" had no impact on their professional development ( $\beta = 0.080$ ,  $t = 1.743$ ,  $p = 0.082$ ), whereas their "aesthetic attitude," "understanding of beauty," and "full experience" all had a significant and positive impact on their professional development, with  $R^2 = 0.594$  after adjustment and an overall explanatory power of 59.4%.

**Table 3.** Correlation analysis of each variable.

Variable	Teachers' professional development	Pleasure of beauty	Aesthetic attitude	Understanding of beauty	Full experience
Teachers' professional development	1.000				
Pleasure of beauty	0.615***	1.000			
Aesthetic attitude	0.688***	0.744***	1.000		
Understanding of beauty	0.709***	0.643***	0.749***	1.000	
Full experience	0.710***	0.696***	0.744***	0.749***	1.000

\*\*\*  $p > .001$ .

**Table 4.** Regression analysis.

Variable	M1			M2 (women)			M3 (men)			Difference check
	Beta	t	p	Beta	t	p	Beta	t	p	t-statistic
Pleasure of beauty	0.080	1.743	0.082	0.058	1.020	0.309	0.145	1.850	0.066	0.889
Aesthetic attitude	0.190	3.614	0.000	0.161	2.321	0.021	0.225	2.773	0.006	0.679
Understanding of beauty	0.298	6.153	0.000	0.337	5.661	0.000	0.194	2.310	0.022	1.225
Full experience	0.290	5.830	0.000	0.343	5.228	0.000	0.229	3.002	0.003	1.104
F	179.060***			139.291***			49.562***			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.594			0.669			0.478			

\*  $p < 0.05$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

Model 2 represents the impact of the female teachers' aesthetic experiences on professional development. The female teachers' "pleasure of beauty" had no impact on their professional development ( $\beta = 0.080$ ,  $t = 1.743$ ,  $p = 0.082$ ), while their "aesthetic attitude" ( $\beta = 0.161$ ,  $t = 2.321$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ), "understanding of beauty" ( $\beta = 0.337$ ,  $t = 5.661$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), and "full experience" ( $\beta = 0.343$ ,  $t = 5.228$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ) all had a significantly positive impact on their professional development, with  $R^2 = .669$  after adjustment and an overall explanatory power of 66.9%.

Model 3 represents the impact of male teachers' aesthetic experiences on their professional development. The male teachers' "pleasure of beauty" had no impact on their professional development ( $\beta = 0.145$ ,  $t = 1.850$ ,  $p = 0.066$ ), while their "aesthetic attitude" ( $\beta = 0.225$ ,  $t = 2.773$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ), "understanding of beauty" ( $\beta = 0.194$ ,  $t = 2.310$ ,  $p = 0.022$ ), and "full experience" ( $\beta = 0.229$ ,  $t = 3.002$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ) all had a significant and positive impact on their professional development, with  $R^2 = .478$  after adjustment and an overall explanatory power of 47.8%.

Finally, a comparison of the impacts of the dimensions of aesthetic experiences on professional development between the female and male teachers was conducted. The t-statistic results in Table 4 show that there is no significant difference between the female and male teachers in terms of the impact of each dimension on their professional development. This also indicates that for the female and male teachers, "aesthetic attitude," "understanding of beauty," and "full experience" had

positive effects on teachers' professional development and that there was no significant difference between female and male teachers.

## DISCUSSION

The results show "pleasure of beauty" had no significant impact on professional development for all the teachers, the male teachers, and the female teachers in this study. This also demonstrates that the teachers' appreciation of beauty and feeling relaxed and delighted about beauty did not significantly contribute to their professional development. This is possibly because this dimension is merely the teachers' personal perception of beauty, which does not have a notably direct impact on a teacher's teaching and professional ability.

By contrast, "aesthetic attitude," "understanding of beauty," and "full experience" all had significantly positive impacts on the teachers' professional development. Thus, the male and female teachers who can accept diverse cultures and ideas, find beauty in difficulties and frustrations, analyze the style and reasons for the expression of beauty, discuss and share beauty with others, and recall relevant beautiful things when creating can achieve professional development in teaching practices, beliefs, and attitudes. In addition, concepts and approaches that concern aesthetic experiences but are more practical in nature, including "aesthetic attitude,"

“understanding of beauty,” and “full experience,” can clearly contribute directly to the development of teachers’ professional competence.

Furthermore, there was no difference between the male and female teachers in terms of the impact of “pleasure of beauty,” “aesthetic attitude,” “understanding of beauty,” and “full experience” on teachers’ professional development.

Although the standardized regression coefficients revealed that the impact of “pleasure of beauty” and “aesthetic attitude” on professional development was greater among male teachers than female teachers and that the impact of “understanding of beauty” and “full experience” on professional development was greater among female teachers than male teachers, no significant differences were found in the t-statistic comparison. This also shows that there was no difference in the impact of aesthetic experiences on teachers’ professional development between male and female teachers in Hainan and Guangzhou, China, and that aesthetic experiences were equally important for both male and female teachers’ professional development.

## Recommendations

The cultivation of aesthetic awareness can contribute to teachers’ professional development. The results of the present study and the aforementioned discussion indicate that teachers’ “aesthetic attitude,” “understanding of beauty,” and “full experience” are all important in enhancing their professional development, demonstrating that substantive aesthetic experiences and concepts are of direct help to teachers’ professional development. Therefore, schools can incorporate these three categories into the development of aesthetic awareness when designing teacher aesthetic training programs. To elaborate, “aesthetic attitude” is the ability to accept and appreciate the diversity of cultures and ideas and to find the good in the bad or the difficult; “understanding of beauty” is the ability to discern the subtle or easily overlooked aspects of beauty as well as the ability to understand the concept of beauty and the reasons for which it is meant to be expressed; and, finally, “full experience” is the ability to recall beautiful aspects related to a work during its creation and the ability to discuss and share one’s own beautiful experiences and things with others.

There are few empirical studies on the relationship between aesthetic awareness and teachers’ professional development in China; by administering a questionnaire to Chinese teachers and analyzing the results thereof, the findings herein show that teachers’ aesthetic experiences have an impact on their professional development. Thus, future research should consider using aesthetic experiences to explore the relationship between aesthetic awareness and teachers’ development.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

## REFERENCES

- Attwood AI (2020). Contextualizing aesthetics as social engagement for teacher education. *Journal of Social Change* 12(1):19-31.
- Avalos B (2011). Teacher professional development in teaching and teacher education over ten years. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 27(1):10-20.
- Averill JR, Stanat P, More TA (1998). Aesthetics and the environment. *Review of General Psychology* 2(2):153-174.
- Barkhuizen G, Wette R (2008). Narrative Frames for Investigating the Experiences of Language Teachers. *System* 36(3):372-387.
- Borko H (2004). Professional development and teacher learning: Mapping the terrain. *Educational Researcher* 33(8):3-15.
- Carr M, McGee C, Jones A, McKinley E, Bell B, Barr H, Simpson T (2000). The effects of curricula and assessment on pedagogical approaches and on educational outcomes. Ministry of Education.
- Carlson A (2007). The requirements for an adequate aesthetics of nature. *Environmental Philosophy* 4(1 & 2):1-14.
- Chang YC (2017). Construction on students’ aesthetics experience scale. *International Journal of Organizational Innovation* 10(1):110-130.
- Chang YC, Jaisook N (2020). Differences in the influence of aesthetic experience on the innovative behaviors of Thai students and Chinese international students. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education* 13(3):900-913.
- Chankseliani M, Qoraboyev I, Gimranova D (2021). Higher education contributing to local, national, and global development: new empirical and conceptual insights. *High Education* 81:109-127.
- Cuiford JP (1965). *Fundamental statistics in psychology and education* 4th(Ed.). McGraw-Hill.
- Dewey J (2005). *Art as experience*. Penguin.
- Eisner EW (2002). What can education learn from arts about the practice of education.. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision* 18(1):4-16.
- Fenner DEW (2003). Aesthetic experience and aesthetic analysis. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 37(1):40-53.
- Fisher JA (1998). What the hills are alive with: In defense of the sounds of nature. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 56(2):167-179.
- Fornell C, Larcker DF (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research* 25:186-192.
- Frawley TJ (2013). Aesthetic education: Its place in teacher training. *Art Education* 66(3):22-28.
- Garet MS, Porter AC, Desimone L, Birman BF, Yoon KS (2001). What makes professional development effective? Results from a national sample of teachers. *American Educational Research Journal* 38(4):915-945.
- Glomo-Narzoles DT (2013). Classroom communication climate and communicative linguistic competence of EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies* 3(3):404-410.
- Guskey TR (2002). Professional development and teacher change. *Teachers and Teaching* 8(3):381-391.
- Hu LT, Bentler PM (1999). Cutoff criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional criteria versus new alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling* 6(1):1-55.
- Kaur B (2012). Equity and social justice in teaching and teacher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education* 28(4):485-492.
- Tomlin A (2008). Introduction. In R. Shusterman, & A. Tomlin, (Eds.), *Aesthetic experience*. New York: Routledge.
- Kerdeman D (2005). Aesthetic experience and education: Themes and questions. *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 39(2):88-99.
- Kose S, Savran GA, Gezer K, Erol G, Bilen K (2011). Investigation of undergraduate students’ environmental attitudes. *International Electronic Journal of Environmental Education* 1:85-96.
- Maquet J (1988). *The aesthetic experience: An anthropologist at the visual arts*. Yale University Press.

- Melchionne K (2013). The definition of everyday aesthetics. *Contemporary Aesthetics* 11(1):26.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (2018). Teaching and learning international survey (TALIS): Teacher Questionnaire.
- Oreck B (2004). The artistic and professional development of teachers: A study of teachers' attitudes toward the use of the arts in teaching. *Journal of Teacher Education* 55(1):55-69.
- Opfer VD, Peder D (2011). Conceptualizing teacher professional learning. *Review of Educational Research* 81(3):376-407.
- Peng WJ, McNess EM, Thomas SM, Wu XR, Zhang C, Li JZ, Tian HS (2014). Emerging perceptions of teacher quality and teacher development in China. *International Journal of Educational Development* 34:77-89.
- Petrie K, McGee C (2012). Teacher Professional Development: Who is the learner? *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 37(2):59-72.
- Prior J (2017). Sonic environmental aesthetics and landscape research. *Landscape Research* 42(1):6-17.
- Radovan M (2011). The relation between distance students' motivation-Their use of learning strategies and academic success. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology* 10(1):216-222.
- Richards R (Ed.). (2007). *Everyday creativity and new views of human nature: Psychological, social, and spiritual perspectives*. American Psychological Association.
- Seel M (2008). On the scope of aesthetic experience. In R. Shusterman, & A. Tomlin, (Eds.), *Aesthetic experience* (98-105). Routledge.
- Smith KM, Wenderoth MP, Tyler M (2013). The Teaching Demonstration: What Faculty Expect and How to Prepare for This Aspect of the Job Interview. *CBE-Life Sciences Education* 12(1):12-18.
- Ullman JB (2001). Structural equation modeling. In B. G. Tabachnick, & L. S. Fidell (Eds.), *Using multivariate statistics*. Pearson Education.
- Wiebe S, Sameshima P, Irwin R, Leggo C, Gouzouasis P, Grauer K (2007). Re-imagining arts integration: Rhizomatic relations of the everyday. *The Journal of Educational Thought* 41(3):263-280.
- Yang CP (2014). H. Rolston's Environmental Aesthetics and Its Implications for Environmental Education. *Bulletin of Educational Research* 60(4):1-31.
- Yuan KS, Wu TJ, Chen HB, Li YB (2017). A study on the teachers' professional knowledge and competence in environmental education. *EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education* 13(7):3163-3175.

*Review*

## Traits of street children

**Gabriel Julien**

Programme Delivery Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of the West Indies,  
St. Augustine, Open Campus Trinidad and Tobago.

Received 4 April, 2022; Accepted 18 May, 2022

**Street children: who are they? Why are they homeless? How do they actually live on the streets? What quality of life do they enjoy? What are the characteristics of these children? These questions appear to be simple, but the answers are so very complex. Very often the public lacks proper information about these children and they instinctively judge and cast aspersion on them. This non-empirical paper presents a clear understanding about some of the characteristics of street children. With the use of existing literature, it tries to provide a definition and quantify the number of street children. It explains the difference between children “on” and “of” the streets and highlights some of the notions of street culture. It is the firm view that if the public is more cognizant of the reasons these children live on the streets, they may tend to be sympathetic and understanding to their needs. This paper does not evoke sensationalism but tries as far as possible to create an awareness of the lifestyle of street children.**

**Key words:** Street children, street culture, street life.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last century, there have been a growing number of children who live on the streets. Although very little is still known about them, they are often regarded in a negative light. This non-empirical paper explains some of their characteristics with the support of existing literature. It offers possible definitions and shows the complexity in trying to quantify them. It examines the difference between children “on” and “of” the streets and talks about street culture. It is the firm view that if people are more informed about the lifestyle of these children, they may be more sensitive to their needs.

### DEFINITION OF STREET CHILDREN

Mondal (2013) holds the firm view that “Children are the

source of hope and inspiration for the society.” He further insists: “That is why they have the right to be brought up in a positive environment”. This perspective by Mondal (2013) is crucial, but it is completely contrasting when one tries to arrive at a conceivable definition of street children. There exist many definitions on the grounds that different countries construe them in several ways. Thus, it is very complex to accurately formulate an accurate one for them. Reza and Henly (2018) believe that the street environment is often filled with illness, violence and poverty and these children rely on each other for survival. Consortium for Street Children (CSC) notes that many people use the terms “street children” and “homeless children” interchangeably but there are some differences. For example, not all street children are homeless.

Some of them seek accommodation at night shelters

E-mail: [gabrieliulien7@gmail.com](mailto:gabrieliulien7@gmail.com).

Author(s) agree that this article remain permanently open access under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

and hostels. Conversely, children who are described as street children are not necessarily homeless. They work, play, and spend time on the street, but return to their family or parents. The street is their home and they do just about everything for survival. In this manner, they become vulnerable (Kwaku, 2019).

A review of the literature clearly indicates that street children are often described in a negative manner. Atwar and Engkus (2020) state that: "Street children are always associated with acts of violence, crime, and social disturbances".

They become socially susceptible and vulnerable to their environment, both as causes and victims. Dabir (2014) notes that unsupervised minors who constantly dwell on the streets and make it a source of livelihood could be considered as street children. Irawati et al. (2021) think that street children work on the streets and unsuitable places such as under bridges and vacant land. They also hold no support from family and are unsupervised. Embleton et al. (2016) suggest that street children are persons, aged 12 to 24, for whom the street is their chief source of livelihood, and they also spend a significant time on the streets. Mulekya et al. (2021) define them as individuals who literally dwell on the streets. Sanjay et al. (2019) note that street children are constantly at high risk. They are vulnerable to all types of exploitation, abuse and sickness. They are also deprived, neglected and denied of their rights; especially those of their childhood. Sanjay et al. (2019) also claim that without proper guidance, these children may look forward to a very uncertain and productive future. The preceding paragraphs demonstrate the complexity to arrive at a factual definition of street children. The following segment demonstrates the difficulty to quantify them.

## NUMBER OF STREET CHILDREN

It is instructive to mention that the lifestyle of these children is dynamic for the simple reason that they constantly change locations or move from one area to another. However, they commonly live in public spaces like markets, parks, buses, or train stations to name a few. Most of these spots have no access to the basics: food, water, and clothing (Brenda et al., 2020). Consequently, it is difficult to ascertain the exact population. There are many factors that contribute to the increase of street children (Atwar and Engkus, 2020). Darragh (2019) offers this likely explanation for the inability to adequately quantify street children. They explain that these children tend to move from one location to another. They practise this behaviour for the simple reason they do not want to be caught. Sofiya and Galata (2019) further add that because the life of street children is often secluded, it is almost impossible to ascertain an accurate number for those who dwell on the streets. Jacob and Teresa (2018) offer a similar

perspective and add that this is probably because very little is known about them. Sanjay et al. (2019) support this position and further claim that the phenomenon of street children is very common in many cities of Nepal. Mondal (2013) also believes that this difficulty exists because these children are marginalized and form a "hidden" population. He states that this issue is further exacerbated since the population often fluctuates. However, Mondal (2013) indicates that about 100,000 and 125,000 children reside on the streets and railway stations of some cities of India.

While it is not easy to quantify them, Opping et al. (2014) hold the firm view that this is a global phenomenon and perhaps millions of children inhabit the streets. Mokoena (2021) also believes that this is a growing social problem.

Sofiya and Galata (2019), state that globally the number of street children continues to rise at an alarming proportion. They further claim most of the street children in developing countries total about 650 million. On an international scale, there are about 100 million street children, and this number continues to increase rapidly with a high concentration in the developing world (Kamruzzaman and Hakim, 2015). UNICEF (2012) state: "Globally there are over 100 million street children: 40 million in Latin America, 30 million in Asia, 10 million in Africa and the remaining 20 million in Europe, the United States, Canada and Australia." UNICEF (2012) claims that while it is impossible to quantify street children, they are increasing daily at alarming proportions.

The aforementioned demonstrates that it is neither easy to establish a proper definition of street children nor quantify them. It also highlights that street children form the most vulnerable groups in any society. They regularly encounter tremendous hardships and difficulties on the streets. They are marginalized, deprived, and ostracized. They are often treated with scant courtesy and are shunned and ignored by a majority of members of the wider society. The next segment describes life on the streets.

## STREET LIFE

The term "street" does not exactly convey the same meaning for street children as it does for the public (Aptekar and Stoecklin, 2014). It is instructive to mention that the word "street" is made up of an integral part of life for street children.

It is their world, their environment; way of life, their abode (Aptekar and Stoecklin 2014). They survive on the streets. They establish friendship on the streets. They socialize on the streets. A review of the literature, Makofane (2014), Nega et al. (2021), (Reza and Bromfield, 2019a), Sorber et al. (2014), Stephen and Udisi (2016) recognises the plight of street children. They state that street children are always associated with acts of



violence, crime, and social disturbances. They become socially susceptible and vulnerable to their environment; both as causes and victims.

In almost every part of the world, there is a growing presence of street children (United Nations, 2017). Darragh (2019) states that globally these children experience a poor quality of life which is often marred by violence. Research in Bangladesh by Reza and Bromfield (2019b) revealed that street children are exposed to all types of abuse and exploitation. Their findings also regard street children as those who perform: “3-D” jobs dirty, dangerous, and demanding. These children do not possess a permanent residence nor a comfortable place to lay their heads. Hence, it is not unusual for them to dwell and sleep in abandoned shops, stores, cinemas, and marketplaces. Some even live in bus terminals, railway stations and under bridges. Very often, these places are not hygienic and riddled with rats and other animals that could spread disease. They drink water from the drains and use public bathrooms and toilets where available. Some girls, because they are more vulnerable, often spend their nights with security guards. This type of behaviour only compounds the scenario and makes them susceptible to further abuse (Okoequale et al., 2020). In this way, the phenomenon of street remains a big issue, Irawati et al. (2021), this vicious cycle continues, and street children suffer considerably.

Sorber et al. (2014) suggest that because these children lack adult supervision, they are subjected to psychosocial, emotional, and social problems. This often lowers their self-esteem, and they are reduced to feeling inferior. Moreover, they are prone to contracting communicable diseases. Kwaku (2019) conducted research in Accra and claimed that street children work mainly as porters and sex workers. These illicit activities further expose them to great risks. Therefore, it goes without saying they are even more prone to violence, sexual abuse, and physical and psychological harm.

Life on the streets is utterly burdensome, exacting, and oppressive. It is not uncommon for street children to work in car parks carrying out menial tasks. Some of them sell goods and beg at traffic intersections. Life is so harsh and rugged that some of them exchange sex for money.

As mentioned in the definition, street children are the most vulnerable group in society. Accordingly, they continually face difficulties and hardships on the streets. Mokoena (2021) notes that street children ought to find ways to survive on the streets. A study done in South Africa by Makofane (2014) describes them as resourceful. Kwaku (2019) offers the view that social relationships and interpersonal resources boost them to become more resilient and cope with adversity. In the midst of this grim reality, they cultivate survival and coping skills. For example, they are aware of the various places people gather for worship and invariably appear there so as to benefit from almsgiving. They are also mindful of certain religious and cultural events, and they show up to gain access to money, food, and clothing.

They also benefit from the various NGOs and charitable organizations.

A review of the Literature (Chowdhury et al., 2017; Hills et al., 2016; Ogunkan and Adeboyejo, 2014) strongly suggests that street children regularly act in a peculiar type of behaviour on the streets. In almost all parts of the world, street children live in primary streets in the city. During the day, they wander aimlessly to looking for “employment” and money. At night, they sleep wherever possible. Some avail themselves to deserted, abandoned, and derelict buildings while others sleep on the pavement and streets. They generally use cardboard boxes, newspapers, and untidy bedding to shield themselves from the elements. Although the literature presents street children in diverse ways, Derivois et al. (2019), Raju and Sharmin (2016) and Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman (2016) suggest that they basically fall into two main categories: children “on” the streets and children “of” the streets.

### **CHILDREN “ON” THE STREETS**

The literature (Aptekar and Stoecklin, 2014; Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 2016) states that children “on” the streets work extraordinarily hard and under difficult conditions to maintain themselves and their families. Some of them preserve contact with their families while others go back home “after work.” Others return periodically to a drop-in centre. Children “on” engage in the following tasks: cleaning and shining shoes, selling newspapers or snacks, washing cars or performing menial jobs in mechanic shops, stores, or groceries. Although children “on” the streets work, they supplement their meager income by engaging in “illicit” pursuit such as drugs and prostitution. It is no surprise that because they are involved in such activities they are often arrested and subsequently interrogated by the police. Children “on” the streets work at a very tender age and very often their education and social life are frequently suspended.

### **CHILDREN “OF” THE STREETS**

Children “of” the streets believe and think that the streets are their homes. They spend most of the time patrolling the streets and safeguarding their territory. They work on the streets. They beg for the basic: food, money, clothing, and anything that would make their life more comfortable. They take to stealing or get involved in prostitution and drugs.

Unlike children “on” the streets, they seldom visit their families and do not even find pleasure in talking about them. When they describe or speak of their life at home, it is usually delivered in a flippant, melancholy, and dismissive manner. It is interesting to mention that children “of” the streets are usually more aggressive and more violent than children “on” the streets.

As a collective group - children “on” and “of” the streets customarily begin the day very early; perhaps at 05.00 a.m. Those who work during the night begin at around 10.00 a.m. This schedule is flexible and unplanned. Children “on” or “of” the streets constantly struggle to survive. Survival on the streets is of paramount significance. Consequently, street children do whatever it takes to survive. According to the Literature (Derivois et al., 2019; Hills et al., 2016), some of them survive by selling whatever they can find. Some even sell themselves.

In view of the fact that most of them live in deteriorating physical environments like marketplaces, bus stations, rum shops, busy streets, and traffic intersections, they are susceptible to several risks. Apart from enduring hunger, they are also exposed to social, psychological and mental hazards. To further compound this scenario, most of them have little or no educational opportunities and are conceivably illiterate. Thus, according to the Literature (Aptekar and Stoecklin, 2014; Scheper-Hughes and Hoffman, 2016). The streets form an integral component of their lives. It is on the streets that they satisfy their basic needs: food, water, clothing, and shelter. In addition, they earn a living on the streets. This is the harsh reality: wretched and deprived, they are forced to call this space their home. This vicious cycle continues. These children who experience abuse and rejection at home embrace a similar practice on the streets.

Some members of the public may envision the lives of street children in different ways. Some think that these children hold opportunities, but they deliberately choose to live on the streets. A sympathetic and caring public may unwittingly contribute to the presence of street children. This occurs especially when street children are young. Those, about four years old, who beg on the streets or in the marketplace, look innocuous, pathetic and heartbreaking. These street children may solicit and receive donations without much difficulty. Their parents are delighted and have little or no reservation in allowing their young children to continue to beg as they are likely to bring in a sizable income. However, when these children develop physically and show signs of maturity, a totally different scenario develops. They are often chased away in an aggressive manner from occupying public space. As these children grow older, they are very often dehumanized and rejected, and this makes begging and vending even more complex.

Some street children are also vulnerable to pressures and demands from drug dealers, pimps, criminals, and pornographers. These people manipulate and exploit them. The children are promised money, food, clothing and a place to stay. Since the glamour of obtaining “easy” money is very appealing and enticing, they succumb to illegal attachments. In return for favours received, they are obligated to follow the dictates of their “new owners” and consequently they become involved in all sorts of illicit practices like burglary, prostitution, selling drugs,

and performing lewd acts.

Bar-On (1997) does not object to children who beg on the streets. While he does not evoke sensationalism, he concedes that individuals cannot: “...ignore the fact that street children are at risk and lead a harsh life.” However, he cautions individuals against categorizing street children as vulnerable and maligning them without fully understanding their situations. Bar-On (1997) argues that: “...as harsh as their situation is, it is wrong to think of it as invariably miserable or distressing.” Furthermore, Bar-On (1997) argues that people ought not to simply condemn children who work or sell on the streets without first investigating the entire scenario. He claims as poverty escalates; young boys become idle due to the fact that they are unable to find employment. The girls, on the other hand, are forced into menial domestic chores. Although life on the street is unbearable, it offers work and provides material security so that street children are not totally overwhelmed and absorbed by abject poverty. Therefore, according to his view, street children who beg and work on the streets are provided with a: “...measure of material security, which few of their non-working siblings and friends have.” More importantly, begging and working on the streets, according to Bar-On (1997) gives some street children a little “ray of hope.” It takes away the daily drudgery of poverty which in most cases would be absolute idleness for the boys and hard domestic labour for the girls. Moreover, begging on the streets may help to somewhat reduce the distress of the likely troubled interpersonal relationships that may have occurred at their poverty-stricken homes.

To refute the perspective presented by Bar-On (1997), Campos et al. (1994) contend that the rugged life that children face on the streets, regardless of the meagre rewards, could have an adverse effect on their long-term development.

They believe that the illicit and non-productive activities that street children engage in during their daily lives are harmful and include the potential to influence them negatively. Old habits usually become entrenched in people’s systems and are difficult to change. In the case of street children, there is no difference. Some of them have become so accustomed to the rugged life on the streets that possible alternatives to that life seem difficult to accept. Le Roux (1996) notes that when such behaviour among street children continues without proper mediation, the gap between them and mainstream society gets wider. It can be argued that the longer children are on the streets the more they are: “distanced from possible rehabilitation resources and thus become absorbed into the street life culture.”

## **SNIFFING GLUE TO SURVIVE**

As mentioned previously, some street children beg in

order to survive. Others work to maintain themselves and their family. Still, some engage in illegal activities. On the other hand, there are those who turn to other “substances” as a means of dealing with the hunger and frustration that they encounter on the streets.

In many parts of the “developing” world, street children use solvent-based glue to take away the pangs of hunger, to relieve themselves of the cold temperature and cope with fear and frustration. It also gives them the courage to steal and engage in survival sex. It is a pragmatic response to a life characterized by hopelessness as Mondal (2013) explains that drug and solvent abuse is widespread as an escape from the reality of daily life and many children are forced to turn to crime to survive.

The use of glue keeps children attracted to the streets (Oppong et al., 2014). They become addicted to the glue, but the use of this substance causes a change in their personalities and most of them turn very aggressive and hostile to one another and to members of the public. Although the use of solvent-based glue may render some measure of comfort to street children, it seems to have adverse social effects and deleterious physiological consequences. Sanjay et al. (2019) say that the persistent use of solvent-based glue can damage the liver, lungs and brain and can ultimately lead to sudden death.

Sanjay et al. (2019) explain that the term “inhalant” refers to a variety of household and commercial products that are legally available. They include volatile solvents such as gasoline, glue, paint and polishes, anesthetics such as chloroform, ethers and nitrous oxide, nitrates and aerosols. These products can be inhaled deliberately into the system by sniffing or huffing. The chemicals found in inhalants are as varied as their use. Cigarette lighters and refills contain the gas butane. Paint thinner may have toluene, turpentine ethylacetate or mineral spirits. Fingernail polish remover and rubber cement contain acetone. Pressurized cans of hair spray, computer cleaners and whipped cream contain fluorinated hydrocarbons. Medical anesthetic gases contain chloroform, halothane, or nitrous oxide, and are also known as “laughing gas.”

Thus far, with the use of literature, definitions were offered an attempt to quantify them was made. Street life was also explained. This next portion looks at some of the literature as it pertains to street culture.

## **STREET CULTURE**

In general, culture denotes customs, habits, and beliefs. It provides tradition and information that narrates how certain events were carried out in the past. Akande (2009) believes that certain customs and beliefs can help to explain particular events that have occurred in the past. Customs can help to make the social adjustment of

some people more predictable where individuals know what to expect and how to behave in a given situation. Akande (2009) contends that several factors help to form various cultures and the environment is one such area. For example, people who live in rural areas where there are often vast expanses of fertile soil typically become farmers and cultivate the land. Co-operation by all residents is often required for the successful cultivation of crops. Thus, it is not unusual for farmers to be seen working together, tilling the soil, irrigating the land or reaping the harvest. Those who do not conform would not be good co-workers. As a result, Akande (2009) argues that socialisation in such cultures emphasises dependability, responsibility and conformity and concludes that the realities of an environment create the condition for the development of particular cultural, socializing and behavioural patterns.

Street children dwell in an environment of hostility. They are neglected by members of the public and they often lack proper parental guidance Ilan (2016). Ehsan et al. (2017) and Eriksen and Mulugeta (2016) claim that people raise children differently. Children who are brought up in a warm, supportive, and caring environment usually turn out optimistic and well adjusted. However, those who are raised in a cold, indifferent, uncaring manner and are subjected to frequent punishment and abuse are pessimistic. They perceive themselves as inferior and do not like themselves. They are usually unresponsive and adjust poorly to changing circumstances. By trying to appreciate street culture, observers can realize that ideas and understandings can be found in collective life through anthropological fieldwork. Such work is interpretive, evocative and raises many questions.

The telling of stories and creation of myth can help individuals perpetuate a certain opinion about a particular culture and its lifestyle. This point of view may not always be purely negative. This is so because words, stories, myths, music, paintings, and objects are considered symbols. Symbols encode meanings and help people recognize culture. Rituals facilitate changes and certain rituals carried out by street children orient them to street life and are easily identifiable. They wear earrings, have tattoos over their bodies, smoke, swear, have a filthy appearance, practise “free sex” and use lurid gestures and slangs. Street children whose very manner of dressing does not conform to that of mainstream culture are perceived as outsiders. Street children who use language that is unconventional are sometimes regarded as outsiders from the mainstream culture. Generally speaking, street children are often regarded as uncouth. They are considered to be troublemakers and delinquents. Therefore, the public may not be able to identify with those who live on the streets. They may experience great difficulty in trying to comprehend street culture that may appear peculiar to them.

According to Ehsan et al. (2017) and Eriksen and

Mulugeta (2016) one of the basic tenets of culture is to establish proper social relationships. It is no surprise that those who live in the streets also have their own way of relating, thinking, and conducting themselves. To try to understand the lives of streets children, people need to study street culture and what it entails: the behaviour of street children and the way these children interpret their world. This is not easy to accomplish. It is demanding in that the notion of street culture is complex; especially when most of the depictions of these children are downright negative.

People create their own meanings in the situation, and this is precisely what street children do. They come together and literally form their own culture. Therefore, street culture is not a phenomenon. It is dynamic. It is a process. It is a way of life. Street life offers a means through which these children, who are considered alienated by society, can collectively voice their indignation. They express their dissatisfaction about the way they are treated by the State and society. They also speak about the lack of treatment and support they get from their family. On the streets, they share their experiences which often prove to be similar. Beazley (2000) adds that: "Often, street children are fleeing poverty or abusive home situations, and on the streets, they find others with similar experiences."

Through this sharing amongst themselves, street children experience comfort and security. Therefore, they have no qualms on sharing their deepest hurts and emotions. Beazley (2000) believes that by sticking together, street children feel empowered and so they can allow themselves to refuse and simultaneously subvert State ideology to some degree.

They earn money, find enjoyment, and feel safe among themselves. They develop intense emotional bonds and individual status, a position of authority and valuable connections. In mainstream society, they have nothing. They have no friends. They have no family. Very few people understand their culture and problems arise even if street children want to be integrated into mainstream culture. Beazley (2000) states that once they have experienced street life for a considerable length of time it is very difficult for street children to return to "re-assimilate into dominant society."

The behaviour pattern of the subculture of street children often represents a challenge to the values and rules of the dominant culture. This is because street children still interact with the external world of mainstream society although this interaction can sometimes be superficial. A desire for street children to return to mainstream culture means more than just abandoning the streets and returning home. Beazley (2000) contends that on the streets, street children form an alternative family. Such a family unit has its own value system. It provides emotional support and empathetic understanding that some street children no longer find at home.

Street children are faced with two sets of opposing standards which can create a conflict of values because two realities pull them into two different directions: their subculture and the dominant culture. What alternatives do street children have? Many street children, over a period of time, have evolved their own subculture, distinct from that of their parents and wider society. Although they are part of society, they are perceived as outsiders. They are not only resented and scoffed at by the public but are often abused by Law Enforcement Agencies. In an attempt to find solidarity in the face of oppression by the police and negative remarks by the public, some homeless children are forced to create their own street culture.

Some street culture is structured in such a way that the "older" children, who have been on the streets for a long period of time and who have established permanent selling points, form gangs. The older children are usually regarded as leaders of their particular gang. Trussell (1999) indicates that street children may sometimes have the support of their leaders and trust exists among members because: "They turn to each other as their sole support system." He believes that this level of trust and bonding forms an integral part of the culture of street children since without such support some street children are left alone in the streets and their chances of survival become very difficult. Therefore, Trussell (1999) suggests that trust among members of the group is very essential for the continuation of street culture and also for the survival of its members.

There is another side to the culture of street children. A number of these leaders of gangs have prospered over the years. Consequently, they are "street wise" and influential among their peers. Sometimes they seek to control the lives of younger children who live on the streets. They sometimes exploit their younger fellow street children. Trussell (1999) believes that in such circumstance, most street children have very little choice. Although they may resent the dictatorship of their leaders, it is tough for them to escape because they are young and vulnerable. They often have to confront hostile attacks from increasing violence among other gang leaders. They cannot win the battle on their own. Therefore, they have no other choice but to follow the commands of these gang leaders.

These leaders often utilized younger street children to sell stolen articles and to steal while they supervise the entire proceedings. According to Trussell (1999) street culture is organized in such a manner that it demands a collaborative effort from all members of the gang. Often the younger ones, because they are physically small, are used as thieves.

This is quite possible since they can enter quickly through small openings and "unobserved" areas like a hole in ventilation blocks or by way of the ceiling or the flooring. However, their work, dangerous as it is, does not go without reward. Their leader usually guarantees

them protection. Trussell (1999) explains that very often they are guaranteed protection because younger street children are afraid of being caught participating in illegal activities. Although some children may be initially reluctant to obey the commands of their leaders, because they are afforded protection, they are encouraged, and so most street children succumb to such pressures. In addition, because these illegal activities usually bring in a sizeable income, gang leaders are obligated to protect the younger ones and ultimately their entire gang. The younger children on the other hand, are expected to offer unreserved reverence and respect for their “elders.” When misfortune strikes, the business may temporarily halt. Misfortune in this sense refers to confiscation of goods by the police, loss of cash through harassment by other gangs of street children, or cash swindled during the transaction of goods.

Perhaps some members of mainstream society can begin to learn to appreciate some aspects of street culture by spending time with street children and reading about their lifestyle. Some people from mainstream society appear to be too ethnocentric and may feel that others must learn about their culture rather than themselves. Appreciating street culture helps people to see how street children perceive life. Appreciating street culture means recognising the best in street children no matter how difficult it is.

## Conclusion

This paper explored the complexity in arriving at a precise definition of street children and as well as to quantify them. It examined the two basic categories under which some street children are usually classified: “on” and “of” the streets. It also showed how some street children survive on the streets by begging, selling, using illicit drugs, prostitution and sniffing inhalants or glue thus providing us with a clearer understanding of their lives. It further presented some of the social conditions that affect the lives of street children and underscored the significance of street culture. Childhood is undoubtedly a crucial period for acquiring healthy lifestyle habits. Unfortunately, street children cannot appreciate this luxury. It is my sincere hope that this paper will stimulate minds so that we can all realize that children are the source of hope and could be the major ailments for the development of society, nation, and the world.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflicts of interests.

## REFERENCES

Akande A (2009). Comparing Social Behaviour Across Culture and Nations: The ‘What’ and ‘Why’ Questions. *Social Indicators Research*

- 92 p. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-008-9321-9>
- Aptekar L, Stoecklin D (2014). *Street children and homeless children: A cross-cultural perspective*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Atwar B, Engkus K (2020). Violent language in the environment of street children singer-beggars in Heliyon 6(8). Available at: DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04664>
- Bar-On A (1997). Criminalising Survival: Images and Reality of Street Children. In *Journal of Social Policy* 26(1). Available at: DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047279496004928>
- Beazley H (2000). Home Sweet Home? Street Children's Sites of Belonging. In S. L. Holloway and G. Valentine (editors) *Children's Geographies: Playing, Living, and Learning*. London: Routledge.
- Brenda AK, Brian KK, Samuel NC (2020). Effect of COVID-19 response in Uganda on street children in Pan Africa Medical Journal 35(2):56. Available at: DOI: 10.11604/pamj.2020.35.2.23545
- Campos R, Raffaelli M, Ude W, Greco M, Ruff A, Rolf J, Antunes CM, Hasley N, Greco D, Street Youth Study Group (1994) *Social Networks and Daily Activities of Street Youth in Belo Horizonte, Brazil*. *Child Development* 65(02). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1131386>
- Chowdhury S, Chowdhury AS, Huq KE, Jahan Y, Chowdhury R, Ahmed T, Rahman MM (2017). Lifestyle and Risk Behavior of Street Children in Bangladesh: A Health Perspective. *Health* 9(4):577.
- Consortium for Street Children. Street children are one of the most vulnerable children on the planet. Available at: <https://www.streetchildren.org/about-street-children>
- Dabir N (2014). Street connected children, in *Encyclopaedia of Social Work*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199975839.013.1044>
- Darragh L (2019). Street children: everything about this global humanitarian crisis.
- Derivois D, Cénat JM, Karray A, Charpillat-Richard E (2019). Determinants of Resilience in Haitian Street Children Four Years After the January 2010 Earthquake. *Journal of Loss and Trauma* 25(1):34-46.
- Ehsan N, Nauman H, Tahir H (2017). Parental Acceptance-Rejection, Self Esteem and Self Control Among Street Children in FWU Journal of Social Sciences 11(2).
- Embleton L, Lee H, Gunn J, Ayuku D, Braitstein P (2016). Causes of Child and Youth Homelessness in Developed and Developing Countries: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatr*. 170(5):435-444.
- Eriksen SH, Mulugeta E (2016). Social networks for survival among working children in Addis Ababa. *Childhood* 23(2). Available at <https://doi:10.1177/0907568215592684>
- Hills F, Meyer-Weitz A, Oppong Asante K (2016). The lived experiences of street children in Durban, South Africa: Violence, substance use, and resilience. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being* 11(1). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3402/qhw.v11.30302>
- Ilan J (2016). *Understanding Street Culture: Poverty, Crime, Youth and Cool*. Available at: <https://cljbooks.rutgers.edu/books/understanding-street-culture-poverty-crime-youth-and-cool/>
- Irawati K, Ningrat FN, Dewi EU (2021). The correlation between dysfunctional family process and self-neglect of street children at Special Region of Yogyakarta. *Bali Medical Journal* 10(3):2828 Available at: DOI: 10.15562/bmj.v10i3.2828
- Jacob D, Teresa AO (2018). Teachers' perceptions of learners who are street children: A South African case study 38(2). Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-13d793b022>
- Kamruzzaman M, Hakim MA (2015). Socio-economic status of child beggars in Dhaka City. *Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 1(5):516-520.
- Kwaku OA (2019). Factors that Promote Resilience in Homeless Children and Adolescents in Ghana: A Qualitative Study. *Behavioral Sciences* 9(6):64.
- Le Roux J (1996). Street Children in South Africa: Findings from Interviews on the Background of Street Children in Pretoria, South Africa. *Adolescence* 31(122):423-431.
- Makofane M (2014). A conceptual analysis of the label street children: Challenges for the helping professions. *Social Work* 50(1):134-146. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.15270/50-1-20>

- Mokoena PM (2021). Self-Esteem and Resilience Differences Among Street Children Compared to Non-Street Children in Limpopo Province of South Africa: A Baseline Study. *Frontiers in Public Health* 9.
- Mondal NK (2013). Commercial glue sniffing and child health: Indian street children are at a risk. *Journal of Health Education Research and Development* 1(3):2.
- Mulekya FB, Paul B, Cheryl AM, Bart H Wvan den Borne (2021). Demographic and behavioural drivers of intra-urban mobility of migrant street children and youth in Kampala, Uganda. *PLOS One* 16(2):e0247156.
- Nega M, Bekrie M, Haile W, Kegnig S (2021). Determinants of stunting and wasting in street children in Northwest Ethiopia: A community-based study. Elsevier.
- Ogunkan DV, Adeboyejo AT (2014). Public perception of street children in Ibadan, Nigeria. *Ife Psychologia* 22(1):39-49
- Okoguale MI, Egberue GO, Olayele PA (2020). Street children in Benin City, Nigeria: Nutritional status, physical characteristics and their determinants. *Journal of Medicine and Biomedical Research* 19(1)
- Oppong AK, Meyer-Weitz A, Petersen I (2014). Substance use and risky sexual behaviours among street connected children and youth in Accra, Ghana. *Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention and Policy* 9(45).
- Raju A, Sharmin M (2016). Street children in Bangladesh: A life of uncertainty. *The Independent*. Available at: <https://www.theindependentbd.com/printversion/details/32932>
- Reza MH, Bromfield NF (2019). Human Rights Violations Against Street Children Working in the Informal Economy in Bangladesh: Findings from a Qualitative Study. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work* 4(3):201-212.
- Reza MH, Bromfield NF (2019). Poverty, Vulnerability and Everyday Resilience: How Bangladeshi Street Children Manage Economic Challenges through Financial Transactions on the Streets, *The British Journal of Social Work* 49(5):1105-1123.
- Reza MH, Henly JR (2018). Health crises, social support, and caregiving practices among street children in Bangladesh. *Children and Youth Services Review* 88:229-240. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.03.006>
- Sanjay KS, Nira N, Anupama PT, Sabita S, Asha S (2019). Prevalence of glue-sniffing among street children 7(1):206-211.
- Scheper-Hughes N, Hoffman D (2016). *Kids Out of Place*. NACLA Report on the Americas.
- Sofiya E, Galata S (2019). Causes and Consequences of Streetism among Street Children in Harar City, Ethiopia. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies* 7(2).
- Sorber R, Winston S, Koech J, Ayuku D, Hu L, Hogan J, Braitstein P (2014). Social and economic characteristics of street youth by gender and level of street involvement in Eldoret, Kenya. *PLOS One* 9(5): e97587. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0097587>
- Stephen EN, Udisi L (2016). Street children in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria: Beyond economic reason. *Cross-Cultural Communication* 12(10):19-28.
- Trussell RP (1999). *The Children's Streets: An Ethnographic Study of Street Children in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico*. *International Social Work* 42(2).
- United Nations (2017). General comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations. Available at: [http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f21&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fGC%2f21&Lang=en)
- UNICEF (2012). *State of the World's Children 2012: Children in An Urban World*. UNICEF; New York, NY, USA.

**Related Journals:**

