

Exploring the Aspirations of Kolkatan (Calcuttan) Street Children Living On and Off the Streets Using Drawings

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ABSTRACT

The aims of the present study were to represent the aspirations of Kolkatan street children and to draw comparisons across gender and between children "on the streets" and "off the streets". The participants were 151 Street Children from Kolkata (Calcutta), India, 66 males (43.7%) and 85 females (56.3%), of which 51 (33.8%) were "on the streets" and 100 (66.2%) were "off the streets". They were asked to draw a picture of the sort of person they wanted to be when they grew up and to write who the person was, what they were doing, and why they were chosen. Content analysis identified themes evident in the drawings and comments. Frequency analysis and chi-square tests were used to identify patterns in these themes. Kappa coefficients for inter-rater reliability on a random sample of 10% of drawings reached the minimum 0.7 level for all themes. The most common occupations recorded were Teacher (n= 48, 31.8%), and Doctor, (n= 29, 19.2%) and there was a majority of higher socio-economic status (SES) occupations with high Educational requirements. Boys were more likely to draw male stereotypes and girls non-gender specific roles. Girls were more likely than boys to depict Helping as a Contribution and boys more likely than girls to depict Defence. These results are discussed with reference to patterns of themes identified and to the role of gender in some of the differences. Finally, some of the difficulties with the present study are posed as potential questions for further research.

Keywords: Street Children, Drawings, Career aspirations.

RESUMEN

El objetivo del estudio es mostrar las aspiraciones de niños de la calle en Calcuta y comparar los resultados entre ambos sexos y entre niños que siguen en la calle y niños que han salido de la calle. Los participantes fueron 151 niños de la calle de Calcuta, 66 niños (43,7%) y 85 niñas (56,3%), de los cuales 51 (33,8%) siguen en la calle y 100 (66,2%) ya han salido la calle. Se les pidió que dibujaran el tipo de persona que querían ser cuando fueran mayores y escribieran quién era la persona dibujada, qué estaba haciendo y por qué la habían elegido. El análisis de contenido identificó temas evidentes en los dibujos y en los comentarios. Se utilizaron análisis de frecuencia y pruebas de Chi-cuadrado para identificar patrones en los temas. Los coeficientes Kappa para fiabilidad interevaluador en una muestra aleatoria de 10% de los dibujos alcanzaron el nivel mínimo de 0,7 para todas los temas. Las profesiones más comunes fueron maestro/a (n= 48, 31,8%) y médico (n= 29, 19,2%), y la mayoría fueron profesiones de alto estatus socio-económico y educacional. Los niños eran más propensos a dibujar estereotipos masculi-

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nos y las niñas roles sin connotaciones de género. Las niñas tenían más propensión que los niños a representar el acto de ayudar como una contribución y los niños más propensión a representar esa contribución en forma de defensa. Los resultados son tratados con referencia a patrones de temas identificados y al papel del género en algunas diferencias. Por último, algunas dificultades con el presente estudio son planteadas como preguntas potenciales para investigaciones adicionales.

Palabras clave: niños de la calle, dibujos, aspiraciones profesionales

Psychologists have long been interested in the type of people children want to grow up to be and the careers they want to have (see Teigen, Engdal, Bjørkheim & Helland, 2000, for review). Most recent studies in the area have concerned children and adolescents in school settings (Bromnick & Swallow, 1999; Gash & Conway, 1997; Kelly, 1989; Simmons & Wade, 1985). The results from these studies revealed ideals, which were grouped into categories such as sports figure, actor/entertainer, pop star (Bromnick & Swallow), as well as figures from politics, religion, and the community (Gash & Conway). Gash and Conway also inquired as to the personalities and attributes of these ideal people. These were factor analysed into categories “heroic-good”, “brave-warrior”, “rich glamorous musician”, “sports star”, and “antihero or antiheroine”. This “Heroes and Heroines” approach, however, is just one method, which has been applied in trying to answer the question.

A distinct but related approach to investigating children’s ideals looks at their career aspirations. For example, Lee (1984) explored children’s reports of their most desired job. The issues in this area relate to the influences on career choice (Lee; Marjoribanks, 1984, 1985; Rainey & Borders, 1997; Chen & Lan, 1998) as well as the distinction between “ideal” and “realistic” career aspirations (Kelly, 1989; Watson, Quatman & Edler, 2002). The types of careers typically reported here include Teacher, Nursery Nurse, and Hairdresser among girls and Engineer and Armed Forces among boys (Kelly). Kelly also includes analysis of the socio-economic status (SES) of the occupations reported. The SES categories are taken from the British classification of occupations (Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys, 1970).

A number of studies have taken this interest in ideals and career aspirations and explored the reports of children living in challenging situations, most notably children living on the street in countries around the world. Baker, Panter-Brick, and Todd (1996) conducted research with street children in Nepal. One 13-year-old rag-picker expressed uncertainty and fear for his future (Baker et al.). Others had found daily paid work, including butchery and playing in a wedding band, and were more optimistic about their futures (p.186). Raffaelli and Koller (2005) examine future expectations of Brazilian street children. DiCarlo Gibbons, Kaminsky, Wright, and Stiles (2000) report drawings of doctors, lawyers, carpenters, and dancers by street children in Honduras.

The most common methodology employed in these studies is questionnaires and these have generally asked about specific individuals. Simmons and Wade (1985) argued that young people can express their ideals best by personifying them, and that they frequently idolise and are influenced by significant others. However, Baker et al. (1996)

suggest that this approach has shortcomings that include the authoritative stance of the researcher, the inappropriateness of questions to children's experiences, and susceptibility of the method to children's manipulation of the information.

In looking for alternative methods, DiCarlo et al. (2000) used drawings to investigate the aspirations of street children in Honduras, suggesting that standardised tests fail to reveal the strengths and resourcefulness of street children. Drawing is commonly used in other areas of psychological research because of the popularity of the activity among children (Thomas & Jolley, 1998), because it is typically perceived as fun and non-threatening, unlike most testing situations (Rubin, 1984), and because it does not require literacy and verbal skills (DiCarlo et al., 2000). Furthermore, since drawings avoid the difficulties of translation, the method can be used in cross-cultural research. The potential to combine research into children's ideals with drawing as a research tool was first explored by Stiles, Gibbons, Lie, Sand, and Krull (1998) and DiCarlo *et al.* used a system of analysis devised by Stiles and Gibbons (2000). Stiles and Gibbons draw on the some elements of the projective methods of Koppitz's (1968) Human Figure Drawing (HFD) test combined with content analysis on comments that accompany the drawings. Themes deduced from the drawings form the basis of the analysis.

The present study, then, builds on the previous studies by using drawings to explore the career aspirations of children at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum, the Street Children and Orphans of Kolkata (Calcutta), India. The present study looks explicitly at career aspirations but is designed in such a way as to allow participants to express ideals about personal attributes, broad contributions to society, or, indeed, anything else they deem valuable in the sort of person they want to be when they grow up.

The UNICEF definition (Taçon, 1985) of street children makes a distinction whereby children "on the streets" are those who maintain contact with families and who work on the streets and children "of the streets" who are homeless and live on the streets. In the present study all the participants fell into the latter category, so children "off the streets" refers to those who are in the full time care of Non-Government Organisations and in full time education. In addition, the present study considers the aspirations of, and differences between, boys and girls living in these situations.

Three specific research questions are explored: (1) To what careers to child living "on the streets" and "off the streets" in Kolkata aspire?; (2) Are there any significant gender differences in the career aspirations of the group?; and (3) Are there any significant differences between these groups?

METHOD

Participants

The 151 participants in the current study included 85 girls (56.3%) and 66 boys (43.7%). They ranged in age from eight to fifteen years (mean = 11.34, sd = 1.4). Of the girls, 49 (57.6%) were from the school and 36 (32.4%) from the educational project.

Of the boys, 51 (77.3%) were from the school and 15 (22.7%) from the educational project.

Research Context

Data were collected in Kolkata, India from participants in three settings: two urban residential schools for orphaned children run by religious orders where English is the main language used, one all girls and the other all boys, and an educational programme for Street Children, which includes girls and boys. The project takes in orphaned street children currently living on the street, with a view to bringing them into mainstream education. It includes activities and informal lessons, including some with the day pupils, and provides meals.

Design

This study uses a mixed method design, combining qualitative and quantitative methodology to more fully explore the experiences of the groups. The qualitative component involves exploring the themes that emerged in the original analysis drawings and comments of the participants. The quantitative component involves statistical procedures comparing the findings for boys and girls and those “on the streets” and “off the streets”. For the purposes of the present study, those in the schools were considered “off the streets” and those in the educational project were “on the streets”. This distinction of location and gender were the independent variables to be considered, while the themes identified were the dependent variables.

Materials

A drawing sheet was developed for use in the present study and invited the participants to draw a picture of the sort of person they wanted to be when they grew up, and to show this person engaged in an activity. They were also invited to write who the person was, what they were doing, and why they were chosen.

Procedure

Written consent was been obtained from the Directors of the Orphanages and the Education Programme, who would be considered the legal guardians of the children in their care. In addition the children were invited to take part and the voluntary nature of participation was stressed. No child declined to take part. Participants were asked to “draw a picture of the sort of person you would like to be when you grow up”, to “draw them doing something” and to “write a little about who the person is, what they are like, and why you chose them”. Drawing sheets were distributed and the participants began their drawings using materials of their own or those supplied by the school or project. Drawing took up to one hour for the last participant to finish.

Analysis

A content analysis was conducted whereby the data were examined for recurring themes. These were combined with selected themes from the Stiles and Gibbons (2000) system of drawing analysis to develop the coding frame used in the present study. The main categories used in the coding frame are outlined in detail below:

SES, Education, Vocation: These categories dealt with the occupation depicted; its Socio-Economic Status (SES), required Educational level and whether or not it was a Vocational role. The SES categories were adapted from Kelly (1989) with the addition of Police and Military. Three levels of required Education were defined: None, Training, and Third Level. "None" indicated that neither training nor formal education was required. By contrast, Police, Military, and Business occupations require a certain level of formal education, those in the arts would train with experts in academies, and Shopkeepers and Ship Captains are involved in apprenticeship-type schemes. Finally, Third Level Education is required for the higher professionals mentioned above. The occupations considered to be Vocational in nature were Priest, Brother, Teacher, Mother, Nurse, and Doctor. Vocational occupations were those deemed by the researchers to require some self-sacrifice and a commitment to helping other people.

Nature of role depicted: Gender Stereotypes and Adult Responsibilities: These themes were concerned with the nature of the role depicted and included whether Adult Responsibilities, Work, Leisure, or Homemaking were shown and whether the role depicted was gender stereotyped. Eight of the occupations were categorised as male stereotyped, based on traditional roles. These were Builder, Bus and Train driver, Sailor and Ship Captain, Pilot, Cricketer and Footballer, Military, Police Officer, and Priest and Brother. The only job classified as female stereotyped was Nurse. All others were classified as not gender stereotyped and included those in entertainment and the arts, business, law, and Doctor and Teacher. Contrary to other studies Teacher was deemed not gender stereotyped since the boys in the all boys school were accustomed to male teachers, including the Brothers. There were also some male teachers in the girls' school.

Contribution to Society: These were classified as Helping, Defence, Commerce, and Others. The Vocational occupations described above were generally, but not necessarily, associated with Helping, Military and Police with Defence, Business with Commerce, and Bus and Train drivers as Others. Others also included any mention of social advance, scientific advance, or industry.

Patriotism, Religion, Achievement: Any depiction of a flag or mention of India was coded as Patriotism. Priests and Brothers as well as any depiction of religious symbols such as crosses were Religious. Mention in comments of "best", earning money, or fulfilling a wish was considered Achievement.

Once the categories had been developed the drawings were coded for statistical analysis. In the analysis *n* refers to the number of valid drawings for that theme and percentages are of valid drawings. On completion of coding an inter-rater reliability test was conducted on a random sample of 10% of drawings using the same coding frame and Kappa coefficients were calculated for each theme. Frequencies were totalled and

where appropriate descriptive and Chi-square analyses with a significance level of 0.01 were carried out to identify any gender or location differences. In order to determine significance, standardised residuals were calculated and scores greater than +/- 2 were deemed to contribute to the difference.

RESULTS

On completion of coding, a 10% sample of the data was coded by a second party based on the same coding frame. Percentage agreement and Cohen's Kappa coefficients were calculated for all items. The minimum accepted Kappa coefficient of 0.7 was reached by all themes (range= 0.7-1), while the average percentage agreement was 94.81%.

Table 1 below shows the different occupations that were drawn by the participants and the numbers that drew each occupation. Particularly striking are the numbers of Teachers, 48 (31.8%), and Doctors, 29 (19.2%).

Table 1. Total frequencies and percentages of occupations depicted (n= 149).

Occupation	Frequency	%	Occupation	Frequency	%
Bank Manager	1	0.7	Nurse	6	4.0
Building Maker	1	0.7	Office	3	2.0
Bus Driver, Train Driver	7	4.6	Painter	2	1.3
Business	3	2.0	Pilot	2	1.3
Computer Engineer	1	0.7	Police Officer	13	8.6
Cricketer, Footballer	4	2.6	Priest, Brother	6	4.0
Dancer, Singer	8	5.3	Sailor	2	1.3
Doctor	29	19.2	Ship Captain	1	0.7
Lawyer	2	1.3	Shopkeeper	2	1.3
Military	6	4.0	Student	1	0.7
Mother	1	0.7	Teacher	48	31.8

The first three categories in the coding frame referred to the occupation depicted in the drawing: Socio-Economic Status (SES), required Educational level, and whether it is a vocational role or not. The results for SES and Education are tabulated below (Table 2). The vocational roles considered were Priest, Brother, Teacher, Nurse, and Mother and these accounted for 60% (n= 90).

The drawings show a predominance of White collar and Professional occupations (39.9% and 28.7% respectively) with a requirement for Third Level Education (67.6%). The Figures below show examples of four levels of SES. Figure 1 (A), a drawing by a 13-year-old boy, shows a Sailor and this was coded as a Semi-skilled or unskilled occupation which required no specific education or training. The second drawing presented (1B), by a 13-year-old girl, shows a Teacher, representing a White collar occupation

Table 2. Socio-Economic Status and Educational level.

SES	Frequency	%	Education	Frequency	%
Semi-, unskilled manual	3	2.1	None	15	10.3
Skilled manual	10	7.0	Training	32	22.1
White collar	57	39.9	Third Level	98	67.6
Intermediate	14	9.8			
Professional	41	28.7			
Armed forces, police	18	12.6			
<i>n</i>	143		<i>n</i>	145	

requiring Third Level education and is considered a Vocation.

Figure 2(A) below shows a Painter by a 12-year-old girl for which SES was coded as Intermediate, as were such occupations as Dancer, Singer, Cricketer, and Footballer. This is based on the general finding that those who drew these occupations suggested that they would be professionally successful, for example a 12-year-old boy who drew a Footballer and wrote "I want to be the best player". Painter was considered to require Training and was not deemed a Vocation. Figure 2(B) is a Doctor drawn by a 12-year-old girl. This was coded as Professional, requiring Third level education, and as a Vocational occupation.

There were no significant differences between those "on the streets" and "off the streets" for SES ($\chi^2 = 8.08$; $df = 5$; $p > 0.01$), Education ($\chi^2 = 5.2$; $df = 2$; $p > 0.01$), or Vocation ($\chi^2 = 5.07$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$). In SES, there were significant differences between boys and girls ($\chi^2 = 51.19$; $df = 5$; $p < 0.01$). These are presented in Table 3. Significantly more boys than girls drew occupations classified as Skilled manual, indeed no girls drew such occupations. Boys also drew significantly more Military and Police Officers than girls. Girls drew significantly more White collar occupations, including Teachers, than boys.

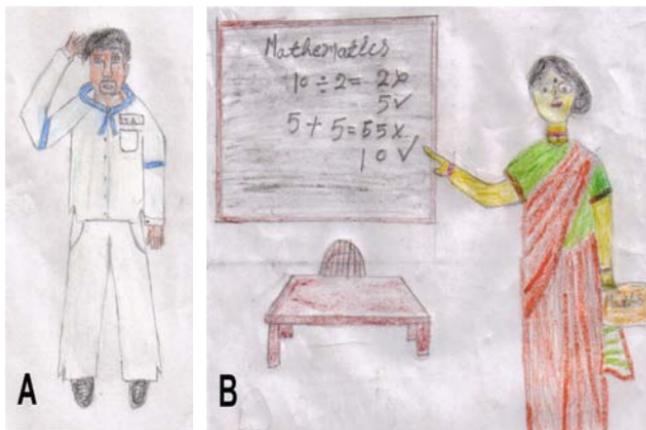


Figure 1. (A) Sailor by 13-year-old boy and (B) Teacher by 12-year-old girl.

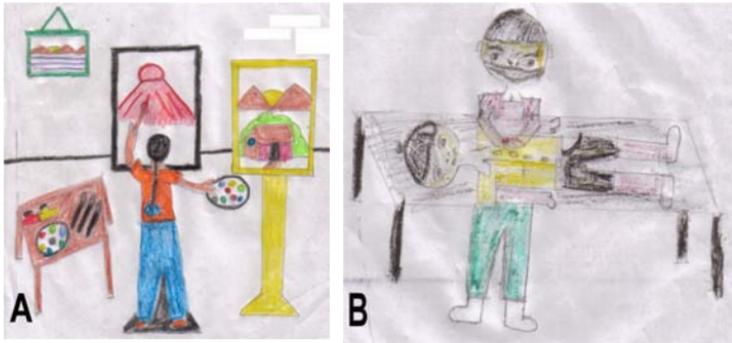


Figure 2. (A) Painter by 12-year-old girl and (B) Doctor by 12-year-old girl.

There were also significant gender differences in required Education level ($\chi^2 = 44.33$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.01$) (see Table 3). Boys were significantly more likely than girls to choose occupations that required minimal education or training and girls were more likely than boys to require Third Level Education.

There were further significant differences in the number of boys and girls who depicted an occupation classified as vocational ($\chi^2 = 45.25$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$), as shown in Table 3. Girls were significantly more likely than boys to draw a vocational occupation. Of the 85 girls in the sample, 41 (48.2%) drew teachers, the single most common occupation. This is compared to 7 (10.6%) of the boys.

Next the drawings were considered with respect to the gender-specificity or otherwise of the role depicted. For these purposes, Teacher was determined to be not gender specific. Overall, 67.6% of the roles depicted were not gender specific, 27.7% were male stereotyped, and 4.7% female stereotyped.

Also examined in this section was the nature of the role depicted, whether it involved Adult Responsibilities, Work, Leisure, or Homemaking. The total number of valid drawings was 149 of which 91.3% showed Adult Responsibilities and 88.1% were Work. While overlap was permitted, only 9.9% depicted activities that were Leisure and 0.7% Homemaking.

Table 3. Socio-Economic Status, Educational level, and Vocation by gender.

Gender	SES						Educational level			Vocation	
	Unskilled manual	Skilled manual	White collar	Inter-mediate	Professional	Armed forces	None	Training	Third Level	Yes	No
Boys											
F	3	10	8	10	15	14	14	24	23	19	46
%	5.0	16.7	13.3	16.7	25.0	23.3	23.0	39.3	37.7	29.2	70.8
S.R.*	1.6	2.8	-3.3	1.7	-0.5	2.3	3.1	2.9	-2.8	-3.2	3.9
Girls											
F	0	0	49	4	26	4	1	8	75	71	14
%	0.0	0.0	59.0	4.8	31.3	4.8	1.2	9.5	89.3	83.5	16.5
S.R.	-1.3	-2.4	2.8	-1.4	0.5	-2.0	-2.6	-2.4	2.4	2.8	-3.4

* Standardised residual; F: Frequency

Statistical analysis of these themes highlighted some significant differences. A significant difference was found in the depiction of gender stereotyped roles by location ($\chi^2 = 9.2$; $df = 2$; $p = 0.01$) and inspection of the standardised residuals suggests that those on the streets were more likely than expected to show female gender stereotyped roles (see Table 4). As a matter of interest, if not of statistical significance, closer examination of the data shows that all of those who did draw female roles were girls in the educational project who drew Nurses (11.8%).

Table 4. Gender stereotyped roles by location.

Location		Male	Female	Not gender specific
On the streets <i>n</i> = 51	Frequency	11	6	34
	%	21.6	11.8	66.7
	S.R.	-0.8	2.3	-0.1
Off the streets <i>n</i> = 97	Frequency	30	1	66
	%	30.0	1.0	66.0
	S.R.	0.6	-1.7	0.1

None of the other themes in the group reached significance: Adult Responsibilities ($\chi^2 = 4.46$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), Work ($\chi^2 = 6.23$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), Leisure ($\chi^2 = 5.63$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), Homemaking ($\chi^2 = 0.524$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$). However there were significant gender differences in Stereotyped roles ($\chi^2 = 54.54$; $df = 2$; $p < 0.01$). Boys were significantly more likely than girls to draw male stereotyped occupations and girls were more likely than boys to draw non-gender specific occupations (see Table 5).

There were no such differences in depiction of Adult Responsibilities ($\chi^2 = 0.69$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), nor for Work ($\chi^2 = 2.8$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), nor for Leisure ($\chi^2 = 1.98$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), nor for Homemaking ($\chi^2 = 0.758$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$).

Table 5. Gender Stereotyped roles, Contributions to Society, Patriotism, Religion, and Achievement by gender.

Gender	Gender Stereotype (Boys 63; Girls 85)			Contribution to Society (Boys 64; Girls 81)				Patriotism	Religion	Achievement
	Male	Female	Not gender specific	Helping	Defence	Commerce	Other	Yes (Boys 65; Girls 85)	Yes	Yes
Boys										
F	37	0	26	29	18	8	11	13	7	5
%	58.7	0.0	41.3	44.6	27.7	12.3	16.9	20.0	10.8	7.7
S.R.*	4.7	-1.7	-2.5	-2.3	2.7	1.8	2.5	1.5	2.3	-1.4
Girls										
F	4	7	74	74	4	2	1	7	0	16
%	4.7	8.2	87.1	87.1	4.7	2.4	1.2	8.2	0.0	18.8
S.R.	-4.0	1.5	2.2	2.0	-2.4	-1.5	-2.2	-1.3	-2.0	1.2

Whether a Contribution to Society was depicted in the drawings was broadened to “Helping”, “Defence”, “Commerce”, and “Others”. Helping was a theme present in 68.7% of drawings; Defence by 14.7%; Commerce by 6.7%; and Others, which included any mention of social advancement or scientific advancement, was drawn by 8% of participants. Again, while the categories were not mutually exclusive, there was little overlap. By far the most common was Helping (68.7%) and most of these Contributions referred to helping the poor: “I will help the poor and needy families” from a 13-year-old boy who drew a Priest and even “I will catch the thief and help the poor” from a 9-year-old boy who drew a Police Officer. Many of those who drew Teachers and Doctors also wanted to help the poor: “I want to teach the poor children”, an 11-year-old Teacher and an 11-year-old would-be Doctor who “will give the medicine free to the poor”. Comments describing Other Contributions included an 11-year-old budding Bus driver suggesting that he “will help the pupils to take them to places where they want to go”. Defence was portrayed by an eight-year-old Police Officer as “This man is saving the country”. One thirteen-year-old showed Defence in a mountain based battle (see Figure 3).

None of these themes showed a significant difference between the “on the streets” and “off the streets” groups: Helping ($\chi^2 = 3.42$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), Defence ($\chi^2 = 0.064$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), Commerce ($\chi^2 = 0.936$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), Others ($\chi^2 = 0.471$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$). However there were significant gender differences in Helping ($\chi^2 = 30.84$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$), Defence ($\chi^2 = 15.56$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$), and Other ($\chi^2 = 12.41$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$) as shown in Table 5 below. Boys were significantly more likely than girls to depict Defence and Other Contributions and girls were more likely than boys to depict Helping. Differences in depiction of Commerce did not reach significance ($\chi^2 = 5.87$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$).



Figure 3. Defence as Contribution to Society by 13-year-old boy.

The final group of themes were Patriotism, Religion, and Achievement or success. Patriotism was depicted by 13.3%, Religion by 4.7%, and Achievement by 14%. Figure 3 is shown to be a clear expression of Patriotism when the comments are also considered: "When I will grow up and become a big man then I will fight for my country India and I will save all the people's life". Other Patriotic elements were mainly flags. Similarly religious symbols were crucifixes, and almost exclusively in the drawings of priests and brothers. The comments, however, were the main indicators of Patriotism, Religion, and Achievement and success. Patriotism was shown by a number of girls who drew Teachers and also mentioned wanting to "educate the children of India". Religion was depicted only in the boys' school and all but two were aspiring Priests or Brothers. The strongest expression of motivation among these was "I want to become a Father because they preach to the people about God's rightness". Achievement and success was attributed to comments such as "I want to be the best player" from a thirteen-year-old boy who drew a cricketer. Expression that a particular occupation would fulfil a wish or long-held ambition was also considered an Achievement.

Finally, there were no significant differences in Patriotism ($\chi^2 = 1.24$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), Religion ($\chi^2 = 3.78$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$), or Achievement ($\chi^2 = 3.68$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$) when children on and off the streets were compared. However significant gender differences were observed in Religion ($\chi^2 = 9.6$; $df = 1$; $p < 0.01$) but not in Patriotism ($\chi^2 = 4.41$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$) or in Achievement ($\chi^2 = 3.79$; $df = 1$; $p > 0.01$). Boys were more likely than girls to depict Religious themes (see Table 5).

DISCUSSION

The present study sought to investigate the career ideals and aspirations of children living on and off the street in Kolkata (Calcutta), in particular the sort of person they wanted to be when they grew up. Most of the participants depicted jobs or occupations and many of the occupations were of higher Socio-Economic Status with Third Level Educational requirements. Among the occupations presented, there was also a tendency to draw roles that were not Gender Stereotyped, particularly among the girls. A majority of participants chose occupations considered Vocations and most also showed an inclination to making a positive Contribution to Society, whether through Helping others, Commerce, Defence, or simply driving a bus. A smaller number expressed Patriotic sentiments and fewer still depicted Religious themes.

There were significant differences between those "on the streets" and those "off the streets" in terms of Gender Stereotyped roles, with the former group more likely to depict female roles. There were gender differences on S.E.S and Education level required for the career depicted, with girls generally drawing careers which required higher levels in both categories. Girls were also more likely than boys to depict those roles classified as Vocational. With regard to Contributions to Society, boys were more likely than girls to portray Defence and Other Contributions while girls expressed Helping more often than boys. Boys were also more likely to depict Religious themes in their drawings.

As far as the contribution to the field of research into children's ideals and career aspirations goes, the present study is part of a growing trend towards child-centred research and found some novel results. Few of the sports figures, actors/entertainers, pop stars, and figures from politics, religion, and the community of previous research (Gash & Conway, 1997; Bromnick & Swallow, 1999) emerged in favour of a different sort of hero; those who teach the children and look after the poor. There are a number of similarities between these results and those of DiCarlo et al. (2000). In that study, 85.9% of drawings depicted Work, compared to 88.1% in the present study. Success or achievement was represented in 14.6% in DiCarlo et al. and 14% in this study. These results may suggest a concordance of experience among street children in different countries. It is clear, then, that these choices are influenced by the children's immediate surrounding and culture. The role played by the major figures in their lives, school and teachers, is also clear. Whether or not these children live up to the ambitions portrayed will most certainly be influenced by the culture in which they will grow up.

In the research around children's career aspirations, there are few reports which address stability of aspirations over time and likelihood of their achievement. One of the few which does have a longitudinal element is that by Kelly (1989). She found a high proportion of "fantasy occupations" at 11 with a "clear acceptance of reality" at 14 (p.182). There was no life-time follow-up in Kelly's work but these results suggest that the ambitions of the participants in the present study have yet to be tempered. While it is impossible to predict the futures of these participants, evidence from Jessop (1998) is that a number of ex-Rainbow pupils have found secure jobs as security guards, domestic workers, or hospital staff, and many of the girls have married stable, non-street husbands.

However, these findings must be considered in the light of several strengths and weaknesses of the method employed in the present study. The method used was an attempt to avoid some of the methodological problems experienced in previous research into children's ideals and career aspirations. For example, asking participants to draw "the sort of person" they wanted to be when they grow up rather than their "ideal" person, avoided a number of problems. Firstly, Gash and Conway (1997) found "generational effects" (p.366) whereby the soccer World Cup or the Olympic games precipitated larger numbers of footballers, athletes, and swimmers than would have been expected. Secondly, the use of drawings also helped to overcome other barriers attributable to the setting, particularly linguistic ones. In contrast to questionnaires, the drawings used in the present study drawing required minimal instruction and explanation, avoided problems of translation, and allowed children with limited literacy skills to participate. Finally, the high inter-rater reliability pointed to the strength and accuracy of the coding frame and to the internal validity of the approach.

There are other consequences of the flexibility of the coding frame, however, which may have effected the findings and these must also be noted. For example, a number of the results referred to above are contingent on the way in which Teacher was coded. Of the girls in the sample, almost half drew Teachers, the single most common occupation. This is compared to one in ten of the boys. Teacher was coded as White collar, as requiring Third Level education, and as Vocational. It is possible, then, this

classification may have impacted on gender differences such that girls were more likely than boys to draw White collar, Third Level education, Vocational jobs. If Teacher had been coded otherwise, those other categories may have shown significant differences.

One of the most interesting results is the number of girls who want to be teachers. O’Kane (2003) writes that “perceptions of children inevitably affect the roles, responsibilities and behaviours that children are expected to take on in any one particular context, as well as the nature of adult-child relations, and how children are treated” (p.7). Equally, expectations placed on children affect the roles, responsibilities, and behaviours they take on. Every Thursday 150 regular students from the girls’ school travel to village schools in rural areas of West Bengal and engage in “child-to-child teaching and learning”.

Further implications of the present study are recommendations for how to lay foundations for the best vocational orientation of adolescents. Knowledge of the career aspirations of the participants will be of interest to their teachers. It must be restated that these aspirations have not proved to be stable over time (Kelly, 1989) but the drawings may have revealed particular interests, affinities, or aptitudes which can be nurtured and explored. For example, the value of the Rural Child-to-Child teaching programme to the children in the villages has long been known by staff (Jessop, 1998). This programme involves students spending one free day a month teaching in under-resources schools in villages around Kolkata. The present study, furthermore, shows its value to the young “teachers” in terms of revealing aptitudes for and interest in teaching, as described above. The results of this study can be used, then, in the provision of subjects useful for the occupations which emerged as most popular. In the event that the ideal job did not require education or training, practical vocational programmes would be more appropriate for certain students. More generally, the approach that the present study takes to engaging children in this process of service provision can be of wide benefit. Asking children, and finding new, more appropriate ways of asking them, what they want and what they need can be a valuable part of attending to those needs.

As mentioned above, children’s aspirations are not usually stable over time, and, due to some of the socio-economic limitations that may come to bear on the participants in the present study, their aspirations may never be realised. From this point of view, a follow-up study of these participants would lend weight to the stability theory as well as giving insights into some of the political and social processes of Indian society. Since this will be impossible since anonymity of participants was maintained, a similar study with a longitudinal element might be appropriate. Indeed, any longitudinal research on children’s aspirations would be valuable, particularly in the evaluation of the effectiveness of any vocational programmes such as those suggested above.

The present study contributes to the bodies of research into children’s ideals and career aspirations and into the unique contexts of Indian children in general and of Street Children in particular. As far as the organisations involved are concerned, there is some indication of how to cater for the needs and ambitions of the children in their care and of the aspirations they have. However, the likelihood that these aspirations will change combined with the difficult circumstances in which the participants find themselves must suggest caution. Ultimately, however, the children’s drawings show

that no matter the challenges they face or how difficult their lives may be, they still dream.

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