

A NEW VISUAL AESTHETIC SENSITIVITY TEST: III. CROSS-CULTURAL COMPARISON BETWEEN HONG KONG CHILDREN AND ADULTS, AND ENGLISH AND JAPANESE SAMPLES

J. CHAN  
*Educational Research  
Establishment, Hong Kong*

H. J. EYSENCK  
*University of London*

K. O. GÖTZ  
*Academy of Fine  
Arts, Düsseldorf*

*Summary.*—The Visual Aesthetic Sensitivity Test was applied to 287 male and 252 female Hong Kong children of Chinese extraction, aged from 7 yr. upwards, and to 58 adult males and 144 adult females. Their responses were compared with those of English and Japanese children and adults, and somewhat lower scores recorded for the Hong Kong children and adults. A group of German girls were also tested. Difficulty levels for the items were not dissimilar to those observed in England and Japan.

The measurement of aesthetic responses presents many problems, some of which are related to the existence of strongly marked individual differences (Eysenck, 1980). Previous papers dealing with some of these problems have been concerned with the construction of the new Visual Aesthetic Sensitivity Test and a cross-cultural comparison between English and Japanese subjects (Götz, *et al.*, 1979; Iwawaki, *et al.*, 1979). The present paper compares data from the test obtained from 287 male and 252 female Hong Kong children of Chinese extraction, with those obtained from English and Japanese children. Mean scores on the test are given in Table 1 for the different ages and for both sexes. There is little evidence of increase in scores with age, except the youngest group has low scores; this is in good accord with previous work. The scores should be compared with average scores for English children of 30.4 and Japanese children of 33.5. Clearly, the Hong Kong children have scores systematically lower than those of English and Japanese parentage; these differences are significant by *t* test.

Also tested were 8 groups of German girls, 11 to 18 yr. of age; each group was made up of 25 girls studying at high schools (Gymnasiums). Mean scores were 36.88, 37.48, 37.28, 38.88, 38.24, 40.32, 40.20, 40.00. These values are astonishingly high and clearly well in excess of those for the Hong Kong children; they are also significantly in excess of the values for English and Japanese children and adults. Possibly

TABLE 1  
MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR HONG KONG CHILDREN  
ON VISUAL AESTHETIC SENSITIVITY TEST

Age (yr.)	Sex	N	M	$\sigma$	Age (yr.)	Sex	N	M	$\sigma$
7	Male	34	25.23	4.42	11	Male	47	27.77	7.07
	Female	29	25.79	5.32		Female	38	29.87	5.16
8	Male	34	27.21	5.60	12	Male	52	29.23	5.81
	Female	34	27.88	5.16		Female	35	28.66	6.67
9	Male	34	26.23	6.87	13	Male	27	29.04	6.95
	Female	33	30.42	6.99		Female	19	29.00	7.11
10	Male	26	26.46	6.48	14+	Male	33	28.21	6.11
	Female	30	27.50	6.82		Female	34	28.91	8.31

TABLE 2  
DIFFICULTY OF 42 ITEMS OF VISUAL AESTHETIC SENSITIVITY TEST:  
COMPARISON OF HONG KONG CHILDREN WITH  
ENGLISH AND JAPANESE GROUPS

Comparison	<i>n</i>	<i>r</i>	Comparison	<i>n</i>	<i>r</i>
Hong Kong boys vs			Hong Kong girls vs		
English boys	204	.69	English girls	165	.85
English adults	38	.58	English adults	73	.66
Japanese boys	171	.66	Japanese girls	156	.83
Japanese students	145	.65	Japanese students	163	.80

the higher socio-economic status and better education of the German girls may account for these differences.

Table 2 compares the difficulty levels of the items for the Hong Kong boys and girls with those of English and Japanese children and adults. The correlation between Hong Kong boys and girls is .91, showing high reliability. For cross-cultural comparisons, correlations are systematically and significantly higher for girls than boys. A similar result was obtained in comparing English and Japanese children. The figures for the comparison of children in England and Japan were higher than those for the Hong Kong children; however, the difficulty levels for Hong Kong children show no greater resemblance to those of Japanese than to English children or adults.

The results suggest considerable similarity in the aesthetic reactions of Hong Kong, Japanese, and English children but with less than perfect agreement. There is no evidence of greater similarity of the two racially similar Chinese and Japanese groups, as opposed to the English group.

The low scores of the Hong Kong children, and the high scores of the German children may be associated with the low and high socio-economic status and education of these groups as compared with the English group; this point requires further study.

Also tested were 58 adult Chinese males and 144 adult Chinese females in Hong Kong. The groups had a mean age of 29 yr. (*SD* 7.95) for the men and 24 yr. (*SD* 5.21) for the women. The scores were 29.86 (*SD* 5.57) and 30.31 (*SD* 5.66), respectively; these compare with scores of 35 and 32 for English and Japanese adults, as reported in previous articles. Clearly for groups of adults also the Hong Kong sample of Chinese scores are somewhat lower than those for the other groups, although in this case there were no marked socio-economic differences in status. A further group of 39 English adult males and 64 English adult females, tested by Mr. John Dawson, gave a mean score of 32.07 (*SD* 5.65), a result reasonably close to previous adult norms. Much more work is required before we can say with any certainty that there are replicable differences between different cultural groups of the kind tested.

#### REFERENCES

- EYSENCK, H. J. Aesthetic preferences and individual differences. In D. O'Hare (Ed.), *Psychology and the arts*. Brighton: Harvester Press, 1980.
- GÖTZ, K. O., BORISY, A. R., LYNN, R., & EYSENCK, H. J. A new Visual Aesthetic Sensitivity Test: I. Construction and psychometric properties. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 1979, 49, 795-802.
- IWAWAKI, S., EYSENCK, H. J., & GÖTZ, K. O. A new Visual Aesthetic Sensitivity Test: II. Cross-cultural comparison between England and Japan. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 1979, 49, 859-862.

Accepted June 12, 1980.