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**WIJAYASRI VITHARANA**

University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka

## **THE EFFECTS OF DRAMA EDUCATION ON STUDENT SELF-CONCEPT IN SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION**

### **Abstract:**

The Effects of Drama Education on Student Self-Concept in Senior Secondary Education

W.B.A.Vitharana

Department of Languages, Cultural Studies and Performing Arts

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Nugegoda, Sri Lanka

Wijayasri@sjp.ac.lk

Abstract

There is a significant amount of attention given to student self-concept in education today. It is known that low confidence can lead to a variety of issues such as intellectual underachievement, academic overachievement, drug addiction and aggressive behavior. Also, comprehensive educational reform movements such as multiculturalism and cooperative learning can to a certain extent improve student self-concept. The theoretical foundations of this study are linked to the theoretical work in cognitive development, psychomotor development and movement, self-concept, and perceived wellness. The key theorists include Jean Piaget, Moshe Feldenkrais, Rudolf Laban, and Albert Bandura. Drama is a performance which comes from a balanced body of facts and can successfully lead to lifelong value. The achievement comes from presentation, participation and the creation of drama. Thus drama education is a major contribution to a person's well-being when it comes to the mind-body interaction; benefiting the individual emotionally, cognitively, and physically. This study explores the effectiveness of formalized drama education and training on student performance, particularly regarding the overall perceived wellness and self-concept of drama students in grade eleven. Drama, as an art form and formal guidance method, is an important resource that can give out a link to cognitive development, emotional growth and psychological health in adolescents, which is also associated with the academic performance of students. This study focuses on documenting the relationship between drama and its influences on the variables by comparing students who are both involved and not involved in drama programs. A significant difference is found between drama and non-drama for perceived wellness, self-concept, and cumulative marks. The evidence supports constructive contact on academic performance, but there is a need for involvement that addresses recovered views of wellness and self-concept among the drama population.

Key Words -self-concept, drama education, cognitive, psychomotor, emotional, psychological, adolescence

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## Introduction

When students have negative self-concept and a low self-esteem, their emotional welfare grieves. While some research has been focused towards self-concept throughout adolescence, there is rarely a clear delineation between self-concept and self-esteem. By clearly delineating between these two terms, a higher probability of validity will ensue. Additionally, much of the current research is directed towards the general population of adolescents.

Movement is an important human characteristic. It is happening everywhere at all times; it is a fundamental fact of life. At birth, patterns of movement are in the form of primitive reflexes that are designed to guarantee the infants' survival. These primitive motor schemes also represent the beginning of cognitive development. As children begin to explore, understand, and interact with the environment and the people in it, the schemes become increasingly complex (Piaget, 1972, 1990). According to Martin (1965), "In everyday life our first reaction to every object and circumstance is in terms of movement" (p.2). The relationship between motor behavior and cognitive development is a significant one. Cognitive and motor developments constantly interact; cognitive development depends on the individual's movement aptitudes, and motor development depends on intellectual capabilities. As children learn to organize, adapt, and increase motor arrangements in such a way that it increases their mastery of skills and manners needed to positively act in one's environment, there is a parallel increase in cognitive development. Children need to learn to operate effectively and efficiently within their physical and social world. This developmental sequence has been described by Piaget (1972, 1990) as a series of four discrete stages of cognitive development, with children's thinking at any particular stage being qualitatively different from that which preceded it or that which will follow it. The stages are age-related, and reflect a constant, reciprocal relationship between cognitive and motor development. Piaget (1990) insisted that the order in which children progress through these stages is invariant and culturally universal; stages cannot be skipped. While the stages are considered to be separate and unique structural structures, they depend on each other to define progress. New cognitive skill does not arise fully formed; rather it has a history, in that the structure that underlies the new skill is a transformation of an earlier structure. This tiered preparation is vital to the understanding of cognitive development. A central concept in Piaget's theory is the idea of schemes. Piaget did not view cognitive development as the gradual accretion of knowledge or skills. Rather, he viewed it as a series of revolutions or schemes, an enduring knowledge base by which children recognize and form their world. As development evolves, schemes change. A second central concept to Piagetian theory is the notion that children are intrinsically active. They are not inactive; they are active initiators and seekers of motivation. Schemes are driven by this intrinsic engagement. As children move, their schemes are strengthened, consolidated, and developed.

Educators are interested in accessing cognitive and motor development because both are directly related to learning. Learning is inseparably tangled with activity; when students are given opportunities to manipulate material and engage in purposeful experiences, they improve motor and cognitive development. As children mature and move through the school system, the curriculum offered by the schools provides opportunities for motor development; traditionally these opportunities were restricted to physical education paths. However, some curricula introduce students to special opportunities such as drama. Drama is a unique form of movement; it is more than a mere physical movement, drama is aesthetic. Through drama, movement is transformed into a purposeful phrase of action that encompasses physicality, emotion, and cognition. Drama uses “the movement of the body in its reactions to the environment” (Martin, 1965, p.1). As a unique form of movement, dance is a direct and natural way to move; one that inspires creativity, motivation, self-discipline, and self-awareness. Drama education is a structured approach to instruction and can serve as a valuable method of learning because students are exposed to a curriculum that challenges them to integrate that unique experiential education into their everyday life and culture. Drama education has been a part of the comprehensive school movement in the Sri Lanka since the beginning of the twentieth century. Originally, dance was taught mainly as an activity within the physical education curriculum. Currently, it is recognized as an art form comparable to music, drama, and the visual arts.

**Purpose of the Study** The purpose of this study was to examine the effects that drama education has on student performance, overall perceived wellness, and self-concept of students currently receive School, and compare it against students who do not. More specifically, students in grades 9-10 in government schools.

## **Review of Related Literature**

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects that drama education has for students who are currently receiving government Schools. Academic self-concept A relatively stable set of attitudes and feelings reflecting self-perception, self-evaluation and attitudes concerning performance in basic school-related tasks like reading, writing, spelling, and math (Chapman & Boersma, 1991).

High self-esteem. Increase in value oneself and recognizing self-worth, self-control and competence, with a consistent confident attitude and high self-evaluation (Walz, 1991). Self-concept - An individual's general composite or collective view of him or herself across multidimensional sets of domain specific perceptions, based on self-knowledge and evaluation of value or worth of one's own capabilities formed through experiences with and interpretations of the environment (Eccles, O'Neill, & Wigfield, 2005). Self-esteem Feelings an individual has about him herself that affect the way he/she views him herself, including self-observations, perceived feelings of him herself, and self-knowledge

(Schwalbe & Staples, 1991). The overall affective evaluation of one's worth, value or importance (Blascovich & Tomaka, 1991). Drama activities provide lots of opportunities for revealing, supporting and developing creativity. Drama is to perform a word, concept, behavior, sentence, idea, experience or event by utilizing theater techniques and developing a game or game. Drama is an instructional method, which helps individuals develop themselves in multi dimensions by empathizing with others, be active in educational and instructional processes, be able to express themselves, be creative, perceive life from many perspectives, be keen on research and on learning as opposed to the fact of education's getting dull and non-productive.

Drama offers participants the opportunity to practice constructive behavior and provides a medium through which students learn to cooperate and collaborate (Sternberg, 1998) and it develops self-confidence and self-esteem as well as providing learning and socialization. It emphasizes social potential energy that is thanks to being a member of a group, and it develops problem solving skills and communication skills. Drama also provides active participation rather than being passive, being independent rather than dependency and making independent decisions, becoming democratic, and noticing one's own skills. One of the most important characteristics of drama processes is to give the individuals the opportunity for self-actualization, group work and sharing responsibilities. Drama also provides individuals with an opportunity to get encouraged, to have new experiences, to be at peace with themselves and with the others, and to be tolerant towards others since every member of the group has the opportunity to participate in the process. Group members examine a particular topic, analyze, play, revise, synthesize, apply the knowledge obtained to real life, take lessons from their experiences, and reflect these lessons into real life. Through drama individuals can recognize themselves better, develop a creative personality, and realize their skills. Drama activities are now done in all stages of education, ranging from preschool education to university and graduate education. In addition, creative drama is considered important not only in education but also in many other fields. While school teachers, students, and other personnel in education are attending courses for self-development and to use creative drama in their classes, those out of the field join creative drama activities (Köksal, 2003). According to Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is the individual's perception of his/her ability to deal with different types of situations. Self-concept is the perception that individuals have of their own worth. This includes a composite of their feelings, a generalized view of their social acceptance, and their personal feelings about themselves (Belmore & Cillessen, 2006). High self-esteem was defined by Walz (1991) as appreciating oneself and acknowledging self-worth, self-control, and competence, with a corresponding positive attitude and high self-evaluation. Opposite to this, Brendgen (2002) defined low self-esteem as having low self-evaluations, self-criticism, and feelings of hopelessness. Both self-concept and self-esteem are fluid through a child's development and can be influenced by positive parental involvement. Self-concept develops as a result of one's experiences with the environment and one's evaluations of

these experiences. Additionally, opinions of significant others, casual attributions, and concrete feedback play a crucial role in the process of self-concept development (Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976). The formative middle-school years of a child's life are an important time for the child to develop a positive self-concept. Self-concept is important because it contributes too many different facets of a person's life, from childhood to adulthood. Just as self-esteem has a range of definitions, self-concept can be measured in varying realms (Shapka & Keating, 2005). Of particular importance are academic self-concepts in the school context. Two key components in academic self-concept are verbal and mathematical self-concept (Marsh, Byrne, & Shavelson, 1988). Literature suggests that movement and exercise are cost-effective, viable interventions for depression, anxiety and many health related issues such as heart disease, cancer and stress (Dixon, Mauzey & Hall, 2003). Movement Applications in the Promotion of Wellness History reminds us that all dance is processed through culture and that the arts have usually been in the service of something else, such as art, religion, morality, identity, stress relief or recreation. While the outcome of dancing may be better technique and skill, it may also be an entry point to other kinds of learning, mental stability and wellness. The study of Body-Mind Centering is a creative process in which students learn to meet and recognize themselves and others through the exploration of embodiment. Each person is both the student and the subject matter. Principles and techniques are taught in the context of self-discovery and openness. Students and practitioners learn to engage themselves and others non-judgmentally, starting from where they are and the place where others are. This allows practitioners to find the ease that underlies transformation (Bainbridge Cohen, 1993). Body-Mind Centering has numerous of areas of application. It is currently being used by people in movement, dance, yoga, bodywork, physical and occupational therapy, psychotherapy, child development, education, voice, music, art, meditation, athletics and other body-mind disciplines (Bainbridge Cohen, 1993).

Much of the philosophical and theoretical support for the overall wellness construct has been derived from related theories (Adams, Bezner & Steinhardt, 1997). According to systems theory, each part of a system is both an essential constituent of a larger system and an independent system with its own constituents. The elements of the system are reciprocally interrelated in such a way that disruption of homeostasis at any level requires adaptation of the entire system (Adams, Bezner & Steinhardt, 1997). The perceived wellness dimensions are completely integrated and function simultaneously. In essence wellness, because of its constructs, is multidimensional.

## **Methodology**

The following research questions are addressed in this literature review:

1. What is the concept of self-concept and why is important?

## 2. How do Effects of Drama Education on Student Self-Concept in Senior Secondary Education

This study was planned to explore the efficiency of dignified drama education and training on student performance (marks, behavior and attendance), overall perceived wellness and self-concept of Senior Secondary drama students in grades ten and eleven. This study focused on recording the relationship between drama and its inspirations on the variables by comparing students who are and are not involved in drama programs. Participants were drawn from the population of students enrolled in Senior Secondary schools in Colombo.

The first group included students enrolled in the drama program, the second group consisted of students who did not participate in the drama education program.

The dependent variables for this study included student performance as measured by increasing term test marks, attendance behavior and conduct behavior; self-concept as measured by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES); and apparent wellness as measured by the Perceived Wellness Scale for Youth (PWS-Y). Included in the wellness variable are the following constructs: physical, spiritual, psychological, social, emotional and intellectual. Individuals who are high on perceived wellness appear to: 1) be more physically healthy, 2) have a greater sense of meaning and purpose in life, 3) expect that positive things will occur in their life no matter what the circumstances, 4) be more connected with family or friends, 5) be more secure and happy with who they are, and 6) be intellectually vibrant (Adams, Bezner, Garner & Woodruff, 1998). If wellness is a "quest for maximum human functioning that involves the body, mind, and spirit" (Archer, Probert & Gage, 1987, p. 311) then there may be an obvious link between drama and wellness. Drama, like wellness, is complete in countryside; thus, there may be important parallels between drama education and wellness, which subsequently influences students' academic achievement and self-concept. Students will use self-report methods to track perceived wellness, self-concept, growing Marks, attendance behavior, and conduct behavior. The relevant independent variables used in the study were the drama and non-drama groups and the four levels of ability/training.

Teachers escorted their students to the class room monitored student progress throughout the questionnaire. The entire survey took participants approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. To ensure confidentiality, all surveys were tallied anonymously. The survey did, however, include questions regarding school, grade, gender and race of each individual participant for use in the analysis. Research Design the quantitative research methods employed in this study included descriptive research, which uses the correlational and cross-sectional survey design. The study was conducted using a multi-site survey design that recruited a convenience sample of both and Drama Student from the school's total population. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the hypotheses.

## Data Analysis and Results

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of dignified drama education and training on student concert (Marks, behavior, and attending), overall perceived wellness and self-concept in government school students in grades ten and eleven.

Table 1. Distribution of Drama student and Non- Drama student Groups by Gender, Ethnicity and Grade Level (Total N = 100)

Drama student Group	Non- Drama student Group	Male	Female
56	44	25	75

Perceived Wellness Scale for Youth (PWS-Y). The PWS-Y is a 36 item self-report instrument that is designed to measure how individuals perceive themselves to be functioning on the six life dimensions specified as important within the Perceived Wellness Model (Adams, Bezner & Steinhardt, 1997). The perceived wellness score is represented by the total of each subscale (i.e. physical, spiritual, psychological, social, emotional, and intellectual), each consisting of 6 items. Rating responses are designated from 1 through 6. The score of "1" represents the lowest perceived wellness, or unhealthy, rating; whereas a score of "6" represents the highest perceived wellness, or most healthy, rating. The total mean score for overall perceived wellness was 3.16 with a standard deviation of 0.30. Internal consistency for PWS-Y was calculated using Cronbach's alpha formula. The observed reliability estimate for PWS-Y was .72 indicating that approximately 72% of the subscale variance was attributed to true score variance. This is consistent with what was reported from the pilot study described in Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES). The SES (Rosenberg, 1965, 1989) is a 10 item measure of self-esteem with a 4 point likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" represented by a 0 to "strongly agree" represented by a 3 indicating the extent to which an individual is generally satisfied with his or her life, considers her or himself worthy, 83 holds a positive attitude toward him or herself, or alternatively feels dissatisfied. The score of "0" represents the lowest score, or unhealthy, view of one's self; whereas a score of "3" represents the highest score, or most healthy, view of one's self. The total mean score on the SES was 3.53 with a standard deviation of 0.40. Internal consistency for the SES was calculated using Cronbach's alpha formula. The observed reliability coefficient for the SES was .78 indicating that approximately 78% of the subscale variance was attributed to true score variance. This is consistent with what has been reported in the literature (Rosenberg, 1989; Silber & Tippett, 1965).

Marks were calculated on the basis of all the courses the student attempted for which grades and credit were assigned. Letter grades were assigned numerical values as follows: "A" = 4, "B" = 3, "C" = 2, "D" = 1, "W" = 0. Participants recorded their marks; the total mean score on marks was 2.15 with a standard deviation of 0.61.

Attendance behavior. Items included questions regarding the number of times the student was late for school, skipped a day of school or was absent from a day of school that academic year. Item responses included "never," "1-2 times," "3-6 times," "7-9 times," "10-15 times," and "over 15

times." The responses were scored as follows: 1 represented the least serious attendance behavior problem, whereas a 7 represented the most serious attendance behavior problem. The total mean score on the attendance indices was 3.0 with a standard deviation of 0.6. Using Cronbach's alpha, internal consistency for the 84 attendance behavior variable was calculated. The reliability coefficient for the attendance behavior variable was .62 indicating that approximately 62% of the subscale variance was attributed to true score variance.

Significant positive correlations were found between perceived wellness and self-concept education and training on student performance (marks, behavior, and attendance), overall supposed wellness and self-concept in high school students in grades ten and eleven. Provided in this chapter is a brief overview of the study and a description of the participants and the procedures used. The overview is followed by an in-depth discussion of the results, implications and limitations. Finally, references for future research are reported. Indication of the Study drama is a unique form of movement; it is more than a mere physical movement, it is aesthetic. Drama employs "the movement of the body in its reactions to the environment" (Martin, 1965, p.1). As a exclusive form of movement, dance is a direct and natural way to move; one that inspires creativity, motivation, self-discipline and self-awareness. Through drama, movement is changed into a purposeful phrase of action that encompasses physicality, emotion and cognition. Drama, as an art form and formal training method, may be a valuable resource that can serve as a connection to cognitive development, emotional growth and psychological health in children and adolescents, which is associated with academic performance in students. This study focused on documenting the relationship between drama and its influences on perceived wellness, self-concept and student performance by comparing students who are and are not involved in government school Drama programs.

Results from the ANOVA indicated that there was a statistically significant difference reported in self-concept between the Drama and non- Drama groups. An unexpected higher level in self-concept was observed in the non-drama group. This indicates the sample was tilted; since everyone scored well, there was not much room for an increase.



## Conclusion and Suggestions

Drama empowers students, in all levels of education, develop their intellectual skills such as creativity, problem solving, communication, socialization and empathy and it gives individuals the opportunity for self-actualization, group work and sharing their responsibilities. In this study, it was generally found out that drama had quite effect on prospective students' creativity. Creative drama in education increases durability of the knowledge that the individuals experience in a learning environment where they can express themselves freely. Therefore, creative drama needs to be compulsory a part of all general education programs. Also, the findings of this research suggest that creative drama should be an indispensable part of education and its use should be promoted in student programs and there needs to be efforts to make creative drama continually usable at schools. Beyond the formal educational and professional development activities available for secondary student in government schools, it is also very essential for general education institutions to collaborate with private organizations and non-educational institutions capable of designing activities on drama to open opportunities for student to benefit from such activities for a better understanding of drama. In spite of the findings discussed in this paper, more research is required to better understand the effect of drama on students' various skills or attitudes. Further research could investigate the effect of drama all students' problem solving, emphatic skills and interpersonal communication skills.

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