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THE EFFECT OF CREATIVE DRAMA COURSE IN THE PRESCHOOL PERIOD ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN'S SELF-CONFIDENCE: VIEWS OF FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

EL EFECTO DEL CURSO DE TEATRO CREATIVO EN EL PERÍODO PRE-ESCOLAR EN EL DESARROLLO DE LA AUTOCONFIANZA DE LOS NIÑOS: VISIÓN DE FAMILIAS Y DOCENTES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the effect of creative drama activity on the self-confidence levels of preschool students. The research was conducted in a pre-test/post-test and experimental control group design. The design of the research was based on quasi-experimental design, one of the experimental designs. The study group of the research consisted of a total of 16 students, 8 in the experimental group and 8 in the control group, aged 4 and 5 years old, who were studied in a private preschool education institution in Bishkek-Kyrgyzstan. The data were obtained from the families of 16 children and 4 teachers who teach and know the children. While the independent variable of the study is 8 sessions (8 weeks) of child-centered creative drama, the dependent variable is the scores obtained from the Self-Confidence Observation Check List of the preschool students included in the experimental and control groups. In order to compare the self-confidence levels of the students in the experimental and control groups before the drama activities, the Self-Confidence Observation Check List and the dependent variable were measured in the pre-test. While the students in the experimental group were given 8 sessions (8 weeks) of creative drama activities in addition to the ordinary school program, the ordinary school programs of the students in the control group continued. In addition, after the creative drama activity, the dependent variable was re-measured with the post-test (family-teacher). In the research, the Self-Confidence Observation Check List, which has been used in many studies in the literature, whose validity and reliability has been ensured, was used as a data collection tool.

Keywords:

Self-confidence, preschool period, drama, effect of drama.

RESUMEN

El propósito de esta investigación es examinar el efecto de la actividad dramática creativa en los niveles de confianza en sí mismos de los estudiantes de preescolar. La investigación se llevó a cabo en un diseño de pre-test/post-test y grupo control experimental. El diseño de la investigación se basó en el diseño cuasi-experimental, uno de los diseños experimentales. El grupo de estudio de la investigación estuvo conformado por un total de 16 estudiantes, 8 en el grupo experimental y 8 en el grupo control, de 4 y 5 años de edad, quienes fueron estudiados en una institución privada de educación preescolar en Bishkek-Kirguistán. Los datos se obtuvieron de las familias de 16 niños y 4 docentes que enseñan y conocen a los niños. Mientras que la variable independiente del estudio son 8 sesiones (8 semanas) de teatro creativo centrado en el niño, la variable dependiente son los puntajes obtenidos de la Lista de Verificación de Observación de Autoconfianza de los estudiantes de preescolar incluidos en los grupos experimental y de control. Con el fin de comparar los niveles de autoconfianza de los estudiantes de los grupos experimental y de control ante las actividades de teatro, se midió en el pre-test la Lista de Verificación de Observación de Autoconfianza y la variable dependiente. Mientras que los estudiantes del grupo experimental recibieron 8 sesiones (8 semanas) de actividades de teatro creativo además del programa escolar ordinario, los programas escolares ordinarios de los estudiantes del grupo de control continuaron. Además, después de la actividad de dramaturgia creativa, se volvió a medir la variable dependiente con el post-test (familia-docente). En la investigación se utilizó como herramienta de recolección de datos la Lista de Verificación de la Observación de Autoconfianza, que ha sido utilizada en muchos estudios en la literatura, cuya validez y confiabilidad ha sido asegurada. Los resultados revelaron que los puntajes de la Lista de Verificación de Observación de Autoconfianza obtenidos de las familias y los maestros de todos los estudiantes en los grupos experimentales y de control antes de la actividad de drama creativo estaban cerca entre sí y sus puntajes de autoconfianza estaban en un nivel moderado.

Palabras clave:

Autoconfianza, etapa preescolar, drama, efecto del drama.

INTRODUCTION

It is important for human beings to trust someone in life; people seek a sense of trust from the moment they are born. It is a subjective concept that emerges as a result of individuals' self-interpretation, whether they are satisfied with themselves or not. It may change according to conditions, location and developments, and it can be positive or negative in the form of high or low self-confidence. The high or low self-confidence of the individuals can affect the behavior and emotions of the individual in different ways (Kugle, et al., 1983). Self-confidence is one of the main elements of spiritual life and has an emotional necessity. If individuals do not feel valued to a certain extent and many of their basic needs are not met, they will live in distress (Mckay & Fanning, 2018). Self-confidence shapes personality and determines the way individuals use their unlimited capacities. The factor that creates success as an individual is not genes, it is self-confidence. The level of self-confidence after childhood determines the level of interpretation in the life of adults. Self-confidence develops in a child through his or her reactions to the relationships between parents and other people (Humphreys, 2002).

Self-confidence is not an innate ability, it is shaped by the experiences of the individual, and the level of self-confidence affects the individual positively or negatively at every moment of life. While a high level of self-confidence benefits the individual in different fields, individuals with low self-confidence can experience different problems. Therefore, it is important to analyze the studies on self-confidence.

Self-confidence is the individuals' awareness of controlling and dominating their own world with their bodies and behaviors. The presence or absence of this sense of dominance is one of the most important factors that play a decisive role in the bond between the individual and the outside world. However, the inner self-perceptions of the person are fundamental, these perceptions are transferred to the actions of the individual consciously or unconsciously, and it manifests itself positively or negatively in the whole scene of life (Göknaç, 2010). Self-confidence is not limited to being aware of the positive features of the individual. It also includes having a non-critical and accepting behavior towards oneself and others (Mckay & Fanning, 2018). Studies have shown that an individual's self-image generally has a significant impact on the level of success. In other words, there is a strong relationship between self-confidence and academic success. Parents are in the most decisive position in terms of getting to know their children themselves. The relationship of parents with their children is the main tool for how children will feel themselves. In this relationship, if the parents esteem

and show interest in their children, their self-confidence level will increase (Humphreys, 2002).

Self-confidence is the characteristic that determines one's behavior. It is a concept related to having unique positive ideas, the thought of being able to control behaviors and events, feeling adequate, and accepting oneself as they are, loving, feeling valuable, and self-knowledge (Ezmeçi & Dilekmen, 2016). Studies conducted on children suggest that the way children grow up to the age of three or four determines the child's level of self-confidence at an early age. On the other hand, studies on adults and young people claim to have shared confusion about what is cause and effect (Mckay & Fanning, 2018). Self-confidence is the ability to cope with the problems we face in real life. It is not an innate ability that must be acquired by doing. An individual's self-concept develops on feelings of competence and worthiness (Koç & Gün, 2007). Self-confidence is not an innate ability; it is a trait acquired by learning. If self-confidence arises at a random time in life or if it has never been gained at an early age, individuals can achieve success if they see this insecurity in themselves and want to overcome it. Therefore, it is very important to gain this feeling at young ages. In addition, self-confidence is one of the most important and effective concepts that a child will need at all stages of life from personal development to social and emotional development. Many skills underlying the concept of self-confidence are of great importance for children to grow up as strong, determined and responsible individuals. Leading children to the fields they are interested in, and ensuring that they receive training in these areas allows the child to establish controlling on that subject. Controlling is one of the most important factors that support the development of self-confidence. If a growing child gains dominance in any subject in the social and emotional field, the level of self-confidence increases accordingly when he/she believes that he/she can do it.

The preschool education period forms the basis of other periods of human life. This process can also be expressed as the period in which the child's personality and other development areas are the fastest. Preschool education is a fundamental step in the socialization process of the child and it should be given in accordance with the age, individual characteristics and needs of the child. In addition, it positively affects the child's reasoning ability, creativity and imagination development by providing rich environmental stimuli. Preschool education improves language skills by giving children the opportunity to communicate well with people around them and to express their feelings and thoughts easily (Aral, et al., 2002, 2003).

It is important for preschool children to express themselves in the socialized environment, and self-confidence skills need to be developed in a healthy way in order to use this expression skill. Self-confidence plays an important role in the period when social life gains more importance, especially in preschool children. The child will take the basic steps of individualization by developing a healthy personality during this period. There are different methods to improve self-confidence in preschool and one of them is drama. Drama is a learning tool that increases people's awareness of themselves, other people and the world, and develops their imagination. Drama refers to the form of action situations and improvisations that the participants create based on their own creative inventions, original thoughts, memories and knowledge without a pre-written text. In other words, drama is the response of participants to a stimulating material using their bodies or voices. Drama plays a key role in children's creativity and re-creation of real life situations, starting from preschool.

Drama is a field that uses the power of play in education because of its playful feature and its suitability for creative acts and creativity processes. Drama, which is used as a method in education, is based on student-centered education in all its stages. The purpose of drama is to make children active in the learning process, to have fun and to ensure the permanence of what is taught (Gönen, 1999). There are different types of drama: psychodrama, educational drama and creative drama. Psychodrama is a group method in which personality, interpersonal relationships, conflict and emotional problems are explored with special dramatic methods. Most people throughout their lives say one thing, think another, feel a third thing, and ultimately do something that has nothing to do with all three. As a result, the human spirit is battered, stressed, and begins to crumble. The purpose of psychodrama is to help people to be consistent in their words, thoughts and behaviors. Another purpose is to make it easier for people to be open and consistent with themselves and others. One of the most important purposes of psychodrama is to enable individuals to develop their psychological development through catharsis and gain insight and thus to be treated. Psychodrama as a therapy technique should be applied by experts, especially by psychologists who have been trained on this field. Educational drama is a technique used in the education of the child in almost every subject. For this reason, it includes the other two drama genres in specific proportions. Educational drama aims to raise awareness of children about psychological structure and psychological experiences and to gain creativity as a special ability. The most significant difference between educational drama and creative drama is that the purpose of educational drama is not to create a game

and children participate in the subject for educational purposes. Creative drama has a great importance in terms of learning and integrating with mental, social and psychomotor abilities. Many skills in every learning process are acquired through creative drama experience. In this respect, drama esteems people's feelings and thoughts. Creative drama is also important in terms of being a basic education model for the development of mental skills and personality traits. Creative drama offers the individual a synthesis in which movements, senses, language, thought, communication and emotions are brought together. This is one of the most important benefits of drama. Another feature is that it gives the individuals the ability to empathize and makes them more sensitive to those around them.

At the end of the creative processes in drama, individuals discover their hidden talents and get to know themselves that they choose the field where they can work most productively, happily, with pleasure, be beneficial to themselves and the society, and make the right and healthy decisions. In this way, they become democratic and contemporary individuals, who have developed self-confidence, gained the principle of working with others. The concept of creativity is a process that combines with an inner feeling in art and expresses this feeling, and the result is to create a work of art. While educators approach creativity, they aim to raise individuals who think freely, research and constantly question. Expected behaviors in education are to raise people asking questions, inquiring, solving problems and reasoning (Kırıoğlu, 1991). In creativity, as in creative drama, the process is important, not the result. In the process, there are participants who question, research, wonder and internalize the desire to explore.

Dramatic games are the games such as playing doctor and house in which children imitate all the characters and actions they discover around them and play in a free space. They cannot be played individually; they must be played in groups. They are processes in which role-playing and improvisation techniques are used, which are not clear when they start and end, take their development from everyday life, have roles but not scenarios. Dramatic games form types of games based on visualization in interaction and communication. There are no pre-made stories in these games. Children take on different roles, they play these roles freely without the direction of the leader, adult or teacher. Dramatic games have the features related to creative drama such as experience, subject, spontaneity, improvisation and role playing, but they differ from creative drama since not all animations are imitated. *Imitation* is an important concept in dramatic games.

Children imitate what they hear, see and feel in their environment in order to understand the events happening around them and benefit them in the future. Imitation of a child is a conscious behavior. By imitating, children fulfill their need to identify themselves with adults or a fantasy. Based on these considerations, it would be beneficial for creative drama leaders to see imitation as a healthy part of learning through dramatic game and in the creative drama process (Possilini, 1994).

In dramatic games, children play in a free environment where they explore and imitate all the characters and movements around them. These kinds of games require a group, they are not individual, they are momentary, their duration is unpredictable, they are basically based on storytelling. They begin at once and their ending is uncertain. They have a process that takes their development from daily life, where improvisation and role-playing techniques are used where there are no scenarios and texts where the roles exist. Dramatic games form the types of games based on imagination in the communication and interaction between children. A typical example of dramatic games is playing house games of children.

In the literature, studies revealed that creative drama contributes positively to children's eating habits and to improving their artistic and free thinking abilities. In this study, we concluded that drama studies are not adequately implemented in preschool institutions in Kyrgyzstan, and practical studies on creative drama practices in Kyrgyzstan literature are insufficient. We believe that our findings will contribute to future studies and fill the gap in the literature. The problem of this study is to examine whether the creative drama courses have an effect on the self-confidence development of preschool children according to the perceptions of parents and teachers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study (Matthews & Ross, 2010), we thought that in order to prove the effects of certain events, methods, approaches on human behavior with reliable data, we needed research designs that included the experimental group to which the independent variable was applied, and the control group, which had similar characteristics with the experimental group and was not exposed to any intervention. In this direction, we designed the study in a pre-test/post-test experimental design to determine the effectiveness of creative on the self-confidence levels of preschool children. Stating that there are three basic research designs in behavioral researches as descriptive, relational and experimental (Strangor, 2016) claimed that supporting theories of human behavior with reliable data and being able to determine which independent variable

is effective on which dependent variable is vital in explaining the causes of behavior, but experimental designs give more reliable results because descriptive and relational designs are insufficient to explain the causes of behavior.

In this study, preschool children were included in the research group. They were selected in order to work with a similar age group and legal guardians, who were approved by their parents. Stating that the randomly selecting experimental and control groups did not make quasi-experimental studies incomplete, inadequate or worthless from real experimental research in any way (Fife-Schaw, 2006) claimed that sometimes quasi-experimental studies were even used to test the findings of laboratory-based experimental studies. For this purpose, the study was conducted with a total of 16 children, 8 (4 female and 4 male students) of which were in the experimental group and 8 (5 female and 3 male students) in the control group, among the children aged 4 and 5 who were educated in a private preschool in Bishkek, where permission was obtained to conduct the research. The data were collected from the families of 16 children and 4 teachers who attended the children's classes and knew the students.

In the study, we informed the participants before inclusion in the study and obtained confirmation that they were voluntarily participating in the process (Thyer, 2012). We obtained research permission from the legal guardians (parents, guardians, etc.) of the students who were under-age or mentally handicapped.

In the study, we used the Self-Confidence Observation Check List developed by Günalp (2007), as a data collection tool. It has 52 items and includes behaviors that express children's self-confidence. There are two options for answering, "yes" and "no". The highest score that can be obtained in the check list is 104, and the lowest score is 52. Values close to 52 points indicate low self-confidence level, and values close to 104 points indicate high self-confidence level.

The Self-Confidence Observation Check List and personal information form were translated into Russian by the researcher. The language and cultural adaptation of the check list was assessed by two field experts; a preliminary study was carried out on the clarity of the questions on a sample group.

Before the creative drama activity, we explained the purpose of the research and obtained the research permissions, and we asked the parents of the students to fill in the Self-Confidence Observation Check List. We gave information about the purpose of the study to the teachers who taught different courses of the students and knew the students, and asked them to fill in the same

Self-Confidence Observation Check List by obtaining research permission from the institution and teachers. Then, we analyzed the difference by conducting pre-test/post-test analysis. In this study, 3-interval (low, medium, high) evaluation was used to facilitate the interpretation of the items of the Self-Confidence Observation Check List. Accordingly, scores between 52 and 68 indicate low level of self-confidence, scores between 69 and 88 indicate medium level, and scores between 89 and 104 indicate high level of self-confidence.

Some ethical universal principles such as conscious consent, confidentiality, and respect for private life have been accepted to prevent malpractices in research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In the study, the families of the children included were informed about the purpose of the study, the method, the data collection tools to be used in the process, that they can withdraw their children from the study at any time and that the results will be used for scientific purposes only, and they were provided to read and sign the voluntary participation form. The identities of the participants were kept confidential and code names were used on the grounds of respect for private life (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The self-confidence levels of the students according to the families before the creative drama activity (pre-test), which is the first sub-objective of the research, were given in Table 1.

Table 1. Before the creative drama activity (pre-test) self-confidence levels of the students according to their families.

Experimental Group		Control Group	
E1	70	C1	64
E2	71	C2	64
E3	64	C3	71
E4	73	C4	66
E5	66	C5	67
E6	67	C6	75
E7	64	C7	68
E8	69	C8	75
Total	544	Total	550
Mean	68	Mean	68,75

According to the evaluations of the families, the self-confidence levels of the students in the experimental and

control groups were close to each other. This finding shows the equivalence of the experimental and control groups. The mean score of the experimental group (68) and the control group (68.75) are low according to the scoring of the observation list (54-68 low, 69-88 medium). However, the findings are very close to the medium level. The mean score of the experimental group and the control group were close to each other. This result shows the equivalence of the experimental group and the control group (Table 1).

The self-confidence levels of the students according to the teachers before the creative drama activity (pre-test), which is the second sub-objective of the research, were given in Table 2.

Table 2. Before the creative drama activity (pre-test) self-confidence levels of the students according to their teachers.

Experimental Group		Control Group	
E1	64	C1	65
E2	69	C2	64
E3	63	C3	67
E4	67	C4	69
E5	69	C5	68
E6	68	C6	68
E7	67	C7	69
E8	68	C8	70
Total	532	Total	540
Mean	66,875	Mean	67,5

According to the evaluations of the teachers, the self-confidence levels of the students in the experimental and control groups were close to each other. This finding shows the equivalence of the experimental and control groups. The mean score of the experimental group (66,875) and the mean score of the control group (67.5) is low according to the scoring of the observation check list. However, the findings are very close to the medium level. The mean score of the experimental group and the control group were close to each other. This finding also shows the equivalence of the experimental group and the control group (Table 2).

The self-confidence levels of the students according to the families after the creative drama activity (post-test), which is the first sub-objective of the research, were given in Table 1.

Table 3. After the creative drama activity (post-test) self-confidence levels of the students according to their families.

Experimental Group		Control Group	
E1	95	C1	74
E2	91	C2	70
E3	92	C3	75
E4	97	C4	68
E5	98	C5	69
E6	98	C6	68
E7	96	C7	68
E8	96	C8	69
Total	763	Total	561
Mean	95,375	Mean	70,125

According to the evaluations of the families, the mean score of the experimental group was determined as 95,375. This result indicates a high level of self-confidence according to the Self-Confidence Observation Check List score (89-104). The mean score of the control group was determined as 70,125. This result indicates that the scores between 69 and 88 in the Self-Confidence Observation Check List indicate a medium level of self-confidence. The score of the control group is close to the low level in the medium level sub-scores. It is estimated that the significant difference between the experimental group mean score and the control group mean score is due to the effectiveness of the creative drama activity (Table 3).

Table 4. After the creative drama activity (post-test) self-confidence levels of the students according to their teachers.

Experimental Group		Control Group	
E1	94	C1	72
E2	89	C2	72
E3	89	C3	69
E4	91	C4	75
E5	93	C5	72
E6	92	C6	69
E7	92	C7	69

E8	93	C8	73
Total	733	Total	571
Mean	91,625	Mean	71,375

According to the evaluations of the teachers, the mean score of the experimental group was determined as 91,625. This result indicates a high level of self-confidence according to the Self-Confidence Observation Check List score (89-104). The mean score of the control group was determined as 71,375. This result indicates that the scores between 69 and 88 in the Self-Confidence Observation Check List indicate a medium level of self-confidence. The mean score of the control group is close to the low level in the medium level sub-scores. It is estimated that the significant difference between the experimental group mean score and the control group mean score is due to the effectiveness of the creative drama activity (Table 4).

Before (pre-test) and after (post-test) creative drama activity, the difference between self-confidence levels of students according to their families was examined and the pre-test mean score was 68 and the post-test mean score was 95,375. While the mean score of the pretest (68) was low according to the Self-Confidence Observation Check List score (54-68, low level), the mean score of the post-test (95,375) was high according to the Self-Confidence Observation Check List score (89-104, high level). It can be said that the difference between mean scores is a result of the creative drama activity. When the post-test mean score of the experimental group (95,375) is compared with the mean score of the control group (70,125), it can be concluded that the significant difference between them is due to the creative drama activity. When the control group is examined, the pre-test mean score is 68.75, the post-test mean score is 70.125, and the difference between them is not at a significant level. This finding enables us to conclude that the difference in scores in the experimental group is due to the activity.

The difference between the self-confidence levels of the students according to their teachers before (pre-test) and after (post-test) the Creative Drama activity was examined and the pre-test mean score was 66,875 and the post-test mean score was 91,625. While the mean score of the pre-test (66,875) was low according to the Self-Confidence Observation Check List score (54-68, low level), the mean score of the post-test (91,625) was high according to the Self-Confidence Observation Check List score (89-104, high level). It can be said that the difference in mean scores is a result of the creative drama activity. When the post-test mean score of the experimental group (91,625)

is compared with the mean score of the control group (71,375), it can be concluded that the significant difference between them stems from the creative drama activity. When the control group is examined, the pre-test mean score was 67.5, the post-test mean score was 71,375, and the difference between them was not significant. This situation enables us to conclude that the difference in scores in the experimental group is due to the activity.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of the study is to examine the effect of creative drama education on the self-confidence levels of preschool children. According to the Self-Confidence Observation Check List evaluations of the families before the activity, the self-confidence levels of the students in the experimental and control groups were at medium level and close to each other.

According to the Self-Confidence Observation Check List evaluations of the teachers before the application, the self-confidence levels of the students in the experimental and control groups were at medium level and close to each other.

After the creative drama activity (post-test), the self-confidence levels of the students were higher in the experimental group compared to the families, while there was little change in the control group, and it was still at a medium level.

After the creative drama activity (post-test), the self-confidence levels of the students were high in the experimental group according to the teachers, but there was little difference in the control group, and it was still at a medium level. According to the results of the Self-Confidence Observation Check List applied to the families and teachers and the observations researchers, it was concluded that the creative drama activities positively affected the self-confidence levels of the students in the experimental group.

There are different research results in the literature that creative drama education supports the multi-faceted development of preschool children. It has been observed that creative drama has a positive effect in many fields (Ilgaz, 2014; Mármol Maridueña, 2019).

Yaman, et al. (2015), aimed to see the effects of the creative drama program on the personal/social, language and fine-gross motor development of 4-5-year-old children in preschools. They emphasized that the dimension in which children develop at the most advanced level is language development. The research is a descriptive study with surveying model. By making field searches related to the research, she examined the game, the importance of

the game, the drama, the importance of the drama and the drama-play relationship in preschool education. As a result of her study, she emphasized that the necessary importance should be given for preschool children to make the most of these two fields. The above-mentioned research results reached in the literature support these research findings. There is no study on this subject in the literature in Kyrgyzstan. For this reason, the research was supported by studies conducted in Turkey.

In the literature, there are studies conducted not only on preschool students but also on students at other educational levels, and these reveal that creative drama has a positive effect in different fields. Ulubey & Toraman (2015), aimed to synthesize the effect of creative drama on academic achievement and research findings by bringing together experimental studies in the field. They concluded that the creative drama method increased academic achievement. According to the results of the research conducted by Sedef (2012), with primary school seventh grade students, it was determined that the scientific process skills, scientific creativity and self-regulation of the students in the experimental group, in which activities involving the creative drama method were used, increased positively compared to the students in the control group. Pekdemir (2014), concluded that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores in the multiple intelligence domains was significant on the multiple intelligence domains of first-grade children. Çakmakçı & Özabacı (2013), concluded in the study they conducted with primary school fourth grade students that the drama education program, which is structured on the decision-making skills of solving the problems they encounter in daily life, improves the decision-making skills of the students. A great amount of studies has been found in the literature showing that creative drama has a positive effect on different fields (social emotional adaptation, self-perception, problem-solving strategy, eating habits) (Sütçü, 2006; Güner, 2008; Önder, 2012).

There are studies in the literature that conclude that creative drama contributes to many aspects of children. With the results obtained from this research, we can state that creative drama has a positive effect on children's self-confidence development as well as other aspects.

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