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Exploring the Transformative Influence of Dramatic Arts Education on Academic Achievement and Personal Development of Grade 10 Students

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Abstract. This study examined how dramatic arts education affects students in Grade 10 through improving their academic performance and personal growth thereby changing their lives. Using interpretative paradigms based on social interpretative theoretical frameworks, the study used a mixed qualitative and quantitative research methodology. A questionnaire was used to collect data from a purposive sample of 120 Grade 10 dramatic arts students and seven teachers. The case study was conducted in two schools using a descriptive study methodology. An examination of the data showed strong correlations between involvement in the dramatic arts and academic achievement, and discernible behavioural and critical skill gains throughout a student's academic life. Results showed that, because of the topic matter covered, students of the dramatic arts modified their misbehaviours. The results demonstrated that dramatic arts is important for developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical communication skills. This study recommends that teachers receive training in dramatic arts teaching and that more students be enrolled in dramatic arts programmes. Even though students enjoy dramatic arts as a subject, the results of this study show that some students were concerned about getting parental approval to enrol in dramatic arts. The study emphasises the transformational potential of dramatic arts education in providing students with the necessary skills for coping in a rapidly shifting world and gives insightful recommendations for educators, legislators, and curriculum designers. The study concluded that studying dramatic arts benefits students' academic performance and has a transformative effect on their personal lives. The study also found that parents greatly influenced the choice of dramatic arts as a subject taught in schools.

Keywords: academic achievement; critical skills; dramatic arts education; personal development; transformative influence

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1. Introduction

Dramatic arts education has long been seen as an effective instrument for students' transformational and holistic academic accomplishment (Halverson, 2021). This study investigated the transforming effects of dramatic arts education on academic success and personal development, focusing on Grade 10 students. This study examined the junction of dramatic arts and education to emphasise the multiple effects that participation in theatrical activities have on students' cognitive, emotional, and social development.

Fan et al. (2024) emphasise the many advantages of adding dramatic arts into the school curriculum, which range from improved critical thinking and communication skills to greater empathy and self-confidence. As students go through critical developmental milestones, investigating the possibilities of dramatic arts education becomes critical in developing academic success, resilience, academic adaptation, and personal control for healthy social behaviour (Goble et al., 2021). Many well-behaved students attain great academic achievements because they spend quality time preparing for exams, quizzes, and assignments (Wang, 2021).

On the other hand, educational and parental participation have a significant effect on the courses studied by students in South Africa. Most parents generally require their children to do subjects that are popular for finding employment rather than dramatic arts as they are unaware of job opportunities in the arts industry. In addition, many teachers offering dramatic arts in the Eastern Cape are not trained for the subject and therefore require extensive training (Gibson & Ewing, 2020). The transformative potential of the dramatic arts is dependent on education to provide insight into the use of pedagogic instruments for complete study development (Ma & Subbiondo, 2022).

Recent educational research investigated the transformative influence of dramatic arts instruction on both academic accomplishment and human development (Gibson & Ewing, 2020). This study focused on students in Grade 10, a critical stage in their academic and psychological development. Dramatic arts education, which encompasses theatre, improvisation, and role-playing, offers a multifaceted approach to learning that extends beyond traditional academic paradigms. Arts education plays an important role in the development of creativity and critical thinking, both of which are required for academic success and personal fulfilment (Halverson, 2021). The inclusion of dramatic arts in education should be viewed as having economic advantages as people may be paid for performances. In addition, the socio-emotional benefits of the dramatic arts, such as increased empathy and self-assurance, are critical for adolescent development (Ware, 2024). The purpose of this study was to investigate the transformational impact of dramatic arts education on academic and personal development among Grade 10 students, with the goal of holistic student growth.

The study's problem statement emphasises the need to investigate the transformative influence of dramatic arts teaching on academic performance and personal growth in Grade 10 students. Although the importance of

comprehensive education incorporating arts-based pedagogies into the curriculum is becoming more obvious, there is still a scarcity of empirical research on the specific benefits of dramatic arts education (Ma & Subbiondo, 2022). In addition, the correlation between dramatic arts students' academic accomplishments and personal development is critical for guiding educational practices and policy (Gibson & Ewing, 2020). Researching how teachers and students view the outcomes of dramatic arts education may provide insights into the programme's benefits and drawbacks in educational settings (Goble et al., 2021). The project's goal was to address this information gap and improve the understanding of how dramatic arts education benefits students' overall development. Examining the transformative influence of dramatic arts instruction on students' academic achievement and personal growth in Grade 10 has the potential to change the way education is provided (Halverson, 2021). Acknowledging the relevance of dramatic arts becomes increasingly important as educational systems throughout the world strive to produce well-rounded individuals who are creative, empathic, and capable of critical thinking (Ma & Subbiondo, 2022). In addition to demonstrating the intellectual benefits of arts education, this study investigated its socio-emotional components, which are typically overlooked in traditional academic assessments (Gibson & Ewing, 2020). If education professionals recognise the general development benefits of dramatic arts, they may advocate for more inclusive and varied curriculum methods that accommodate children's varying learning styles and needs. Also, the study's empirical results will assist policymakers and educational institutions in understanding the benefits of introducing arts-based pedagogies into normal classroom instruction, therefore providing students with a more fulfilling and engaging learning environment. The following research questions guided this study:

- 1) How does participation in dramatic arts education programmes correlate with academic achievement and personal development outcomes among Grade 10 students?
- 2) In what ways does involvement in dramatic arts education influence the personal development of Grade 10 students?

2. Literature Review

The research review on the transformative impact of dramatic arts education emphasises the numerous benefits it provides to Grade 10 students in terms of academic accomplishment and personal development. A number of studies carried out highlight that involvement in the dramatic arts boosts academic success, stimulates creative thinking and develops problem-solving skills (Liu, 2023). Furthermore, research by Ware (2024) emphasises the role of dramatic arts in the development of emotional intelligence and empathy – qualities required for social interaction and personal growth. Nalbur (2021) notes that some of the studies emphasise the importance of arts education in developing communication skills and self-confidence, both of which are essential throughout adolescence. The purpose of this research was to get a better understanding of how dramatic arts education may improve educational experiences and promote holistic development among Grade 10 students.

Dramatic arts education may have a substantial influence on students' academic achievement and personal development. As was expressed that including dramatic arts into the curriculum might improve students' academic achievement (Lorenza, 2021) saw it better. Participating in theatrical activities increases empathy, communication skills, and critical thinking, according to a theoretical framework proposed by (Halverson, 2021). Dramatic arts also promotes social and emotional learning, allowing students to become more resilient and adaptive (Goble et al., 2021). It is feasible to believe that dramatic arts education has a transformative effect that extends beyond traditional academic boundaries, encouraging self-expression and holistic development (Ma & Subbiondo, 2022). This theoretical point of view highlights the potential benefits of theatrical teaching in producing well-rounded persons with crucial life skills by investigating the dynamic interaction between dramatic arts and student results. It also emphasises the transforming effects of dramatic arts education on students' academic progress and personal development in Grade 10.

Researchers have examined the transforming impact of dramatic arts education on academic success and personal development among Grade 10 students, which has been shown to be favourable. The empirical research illustrates how dramatic arts teaching has a significant influence on Grade 10 students' academic progress and personal development. There could be a beneficial relationship between theatrical engagement and the development of critical thinking and problem-solving abilities (Halverson, 2021). Liu (2023) argues that participation in dramatic arts promotes self-confidence, empathy, and emotional intelligence in teenagers. According to Fan et al. (2024), studies that highlight the long-term impacts of dramatic arts instruction on students' general well-being and academic achievement clearly indicate the positive impact of dramatic arts inclusion in learning. The empirical evidence emphasises the overall benefits of integrating dramatic arts education's transformational impact on academic success and personal development among students in Grade 10.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study on the transformative influence of dramatic arts education was grounded in the Constructivist Learning Theory and the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Theory. The Constructivist Learning Theory posits that learners construct knowledge through experiences and reflections, making dramatic arts an ideal medium for active, experiential learning (Sibakova, 2023). Through role-playing and performance, students who engage deeply with content, enhance their critical thinking and comprehension (Ibáñez Arenós, 2021). While, the Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Theory emphasises the development of emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and self-awareness. Dramatic arts foster SEL by providing a platform for students to explore and express emotions, build empathy, and develop social skills through collaborative activities and performances (Goughnour, 2022). Merging these theories created an adequate basis for investigating how dramatic arts education affects both academic accomplishment and personal development. The goal of this study was to explore the holistic advantages of drama by combining cognitive and emotional

components, stressing their significance in developing well-rounded, capable persons who are prepared for future life problems.

4. Method

4.1 Research Design

This investigation used a mixed methodology, however, with more of a qualitative method. The study employed a qualitative research approach based on an interpretive paradigm. The qualitative research design for this study employed a case study approach, focusing on Grade 10 students involved in dramatic arts programmes. This method allowed for an in-depth investigation of the transformative effects on academic achievement and personal development (Schoch, 2020). These methods provided rich, detailed insights into participants' experiences and perceptions of dramatic arts in schools (Gibson & Ewing, 2020). Specifically, this study sought to investigate the transforming impact of dramatic arts education on students' academic progress and personal growth in Grade 10.

4.2 Population and Sampling

A purposive sample of two dramatic arts high schools, 120 students doing dramatic arts, and seven dramatic arts teachers were used to ensure a comprehensive investigation of views (Smith, 2020). This technique made it simpler to choose participants based on their knowledge and experiences in the dramatic arts, which they had selected as a subject in Grade 10.

4.3 Research Instruments

Data were mostly collected using a semi-structured questionnaire with open and closed questions constructed by the researcher (Leavy, 2022). This questionnaire made it easier to gather information from 120 students who chose dramatic arts as a subject beginning in Grade 10 and seven teachers. The questionnaire, which included both open-ended and closed-ended questions, sought to elicit a variety of viewpoints on the transforming influence of dramatic arts education on both academic success and personal development among students in Grade 10. The inclusion of open-ended questions enabled students to openly voice their opinions, resulting in valuable qualitative data on their experiences and impressions (Schoch, 2020). Meanwhile, closed-ended questions allowed researchers to effectively collect quantitative data, providing insights into specific characteristics of students' participation with dramatic arts teaching (Smith, 2020). This extensive approach to data collecting resulted in a sophisticated knowledge of the multiple consequences of dramatic arts instruction on students' overall development.

4.4 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher prioritised participant accessibility by distributing hard-copy questionnaires, which were physically delivered. The questionnaires were supplemented by clear instructions that emphasised anonymity and minimised answer bias (Leavy, 2022). The data gathering method was improved by using an intentional sampling strategy, which assured the inclusion of the teachers with various experiences and opinions in teaching dramatic arts. Before collecting full-scale data, a pilot test was undertaken to improve the questionnaire's validity and reliability (Schoch, 2020). The pilot test feedback guided changes to improve the

questionnaire's relevance and clarity (Sekhon et al., 2022). These iterative adjustments improved the instrument's ability to elicit relevant insights from participants about the transformational influence of dramatic arts instruction on academic success and personal development in Grade 10 students.

4.5 Data Treatment and Analysis

In the investigation of the transforming impact of dramatic arts education on academic success and personal development among Grade 10 students, a qualitative research technique was used to delve into participants' experiences and perspectives. The collected data were thoroughly processed and analysed, with an emphasis on qualitative factors such as investigating the transformational impact of adaptation on students and teachers in the field of dramatic arts education (Zakopoulos et al., 2023). To guarantee richness and depth of comprehension, the dataset was meticulously cleaned and organised, paving the way for meaningful analysis. Rather than relying merely on numerical summaries, qualitative methodologies were used to elicit the underlying meanings from drawn themes and contexts implicit in participants' answers (Smith, 2020). Emerging patterns and themes were uncovered through thematic analysis and coding of open-ended responses, offering significant insights into the lived experiences and views of Grade 10 students and instructors pursuing dramatic arts education. Teachers, on the other hand, provided an overview of their perspectives on students' participation in dramatic arts. According to Schoch (2020), there is a critical need in education for comprehensive teacher preparation in the dramatic arts. Such training allows instructors to successfully encourage students' creativity, communication, and critical thinking abilities, hence improving their overall development and learning experience (Smith, 2020).

4.6 Ethical Considerations

When examining the transformational impact of dramatic arts education, the study concentrated on ethical issues. Participating students' informed consent and parental approval were secured to maintain ethical standards (Leavy, 2022). Furthermore, ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' comments preserved their privacy and reduced any damage (Li & Zhang, 2022). Researchers must also avoid conflicts of interest and follow institutional review board (IRB) requirements to ensure the study's ethical integrity and participants' well-being (May & Perry, 2022). All ethical concerns were addressed. The student below 18 years of age had their parents sign the consent form.

5. Findings

The study's findings suggest that dramatic arts training among Grade 10 students has a substantial favourable correlation with both academic achievement and personal development. A qualitative study comprising questionnaire responses from 120 students and seven teachers found that participation in dramatic arts programmes increased students' critical thinking, originality, and self-assurance (Smith, 2020).

5.1 Correlation of Dramatic Arts Education Programmes with Academic Achievement and Personal Development Outcomes among Grade 10 Students by Answering Research Question 1

- (1) How does participation in dramatic arts education programmes correlate with academic achievement and personal development outcomes among Grade 10 students?

To answer this research question, Figure 1 shows improved student correlation on academic achievement due to participation in dramatic arts.

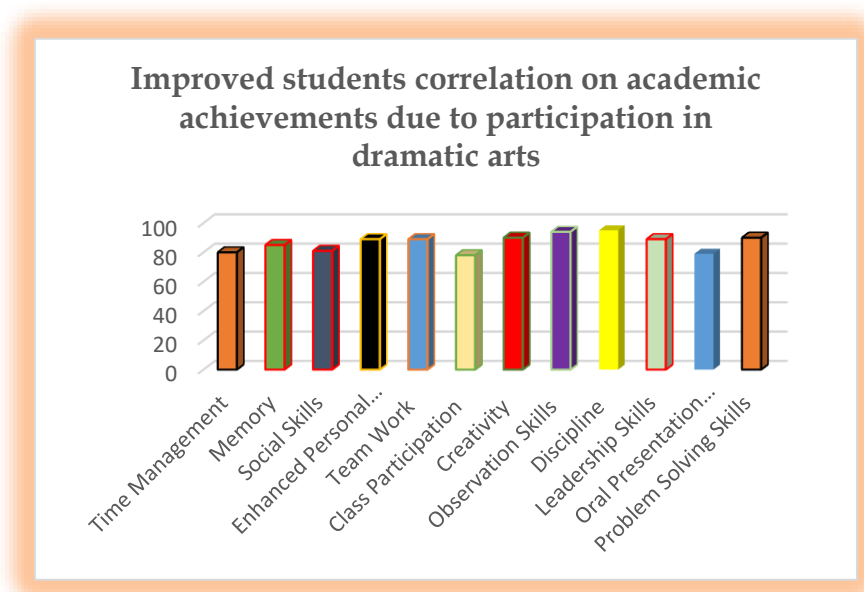


Figure 1: Correlation with academic achievement

Figure 1 shows that students had significantly improved their academic performance and social behaviour due to participating in dramatic arts. The improvements were: time management 80%; memory 85%; social skills 81%; enhanced personal study skills 89%; participation in class 85%; teamwork 89%; creativity 90%; observation skills 94%; discipline 95%; leadership skills 89%; oral presentation skills 79%; and problem-solving skills 90%.

5.2 Ways in Which the Involvement in Dramatic Arts Education Influenced the Personal Development of Grade 10 Students

In response to how the involvement in dramatic arts education influenced the personal development of Grade 10 students, participants had a number of views. Figure 2 shows the differing personal developments influenced by the involvement of Grade 10 students in the dramatic arts.

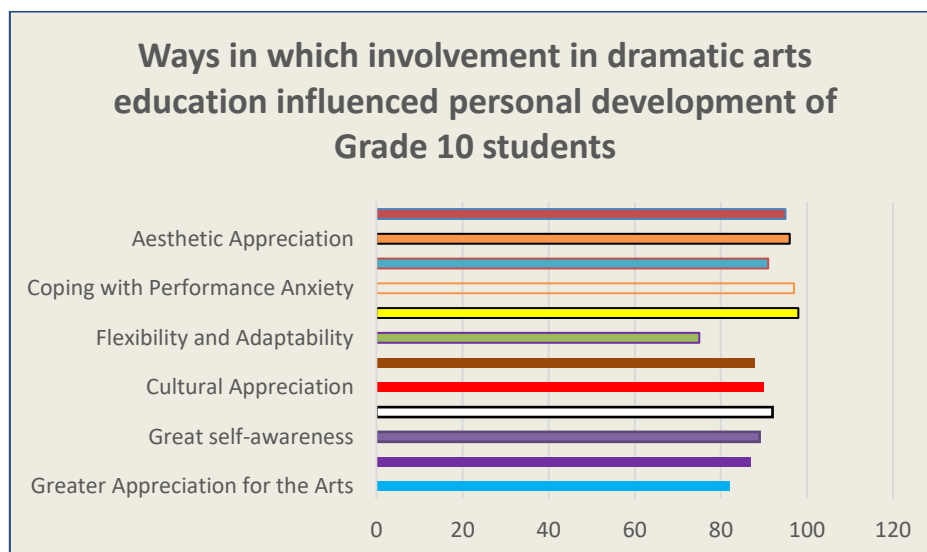


Figure 2: Influence of dramatic arts

Figure 2: a greater appreciation for the arts 82%; resilience 87%; great self-awareness 89%; enhanced friendship building 92%; cultural appreciation 90%; physical and emotional health 88%; flexibility and adaptability 75%; better stress management and risk-taking 98%; coping with performance anxiety 98%; conflict resolution 91%; aesthetic appreciation 96%; exposure to literature 95%. The research themes presented in Table 1 were derived from the study's research questions.

Table 1: Research themes for this study

Research question	Themes	Sub-themes
1. How does participation in dramatic arts education programmes correlate with academic achievement and personal development outcomes among Grade 10 students?	Academic achievement	1.1 Impact on grades and test scores 1.2 Improvement in subject-specific skill
	Personal development	1.3 Enhancement of cognitive skills 1.4 Positive emotional and social growth
2. In what ways does involvement in dramatic arts education influence the personal development of Grade 10 students?	Social skills and relationships	2.1 Teamwork and collaboration 2.2 Improved communication skills
	Emotional intelligence and self-perception	2.3 Positive self-esteem and confidence 2.4 Positive emotional regulation and empathy

In Table 1, the Research theme, Academic Achievement, was divided into manageable sub-themes:

Sub-theme 1.1: Impact on grades and test scores

Participant A: "Since joining the dramatic arts, my English grades have improved significantly. I believe performing has helped me better grasp books."

Participant B: "Being in the dramatic arts class has made me more disciplined, and I've started doing my homework on time, which has helped boost my grades levels overall."

Participant C: "My test scores in Life Skills have gone up because acting out historical events in plays makes them more memorable."

Participant D: "I was struggling with public speaking, but dramatic arts have made me more confident, which has positively impacted my presentations in other subjects."

Participant E: "I've noticed that my critical thinking skills have sharpened, especially in analysing characters and scripts, and this has helped me in subjects like Life Skills."

Participant F: "Mathematics used to be my weakest subject, but the problem-solving and concentration skills I've gained from dramatic arts have actually helped me perform better in mathematics tests."

Participant G: "Group projects have become easier since I started dramatic arts, as I've learned how to collaborate better with others, which reflects in my group assignment grades."

Participant H: "My teachers have remarked on my improved participation in class discussions, which has translated into better grades, particularly in subjects like literature and essay writing in languages."

Participant I: "The creativity I express in dramatic arts has spilled over into my writing assignments, proof reading of my written work, essay writing and topic analysis and evaluation leading to higher grades in English."

Participant J: "Learning to memorise lines has improved my memory overall, making it easier to retain information for tests across all my subjects specifically poetry in languages."

Sub-theme 1.2: Improvement in subject specific skill

Participant A: "Since joining dramatic, my ability to interpret and analyse literary texts in English class has significantly improved."

Participant B: *“Dramatic has helped me understand historical events better because we often rehearse them, which makes them easier to remember and analyse in history class and life sciences.”*

Participant C: *“My public speaking skills have greatly improved, which has made a big difference in my presentations for Life Science essay projects and analysis of concepts.”*

Participant D: *“Participating in dramatic has enhanced my creativity, and I’ve been able to apply this to my art class projects, presenting neat written work hence, resulting in better grades.”*

Participant E: *“I’ve become better at understanding and using expressive language, which has helped me write more compelling essays in English First Additional Language.”*

Participant F: *“The focus and discipline I’ve learned in dramatic arts have improved my ability to concentrate in math, and my problem-solving skills have become sharper.”*

Participant G: *“Dramatic arts has taught me how to work well in teams, which has been particularly useful for group projects in English First Additional Language debates, Life Sciences, Life Skills and isiXhosa Home Language.”*

Participant H: *“My ability to empathise with characters has translated into a deeper understanding of different perspectives in literature.”*

Participant I: *“Improvisation exercises in dramatic arts have made me more adaptable and quick-thinking, which has helped me in subjects like debate and public speaking.”*

Participant J: *“Learning to convey emotions and motivations through acting has improved my ability to analyse characters and themes in English literature.”*

Sub-theme 1.3: Enhancement of cognitive skills

Participant A: *“Drama has sharpened my memory since I need to remember all my lines and cues.”*

Participant B: *“Analysing scripts and characters has improved my critical thinking and problem-solving abilities.”*

Participant C: *“Interpreting different roles has helped me understand and empathise with various perspectives.”*

Participant D: *“The creativity required in dramatic arts has enhanced my ability to think outside the box and generate new ideas.”*

Participant E: *"Participating in improvisation exercises has improved my quick thinking and adaptability."*

Participant F: *"Dramatic arts has taught me how to make connections between different pieces of information, enhancing my analytical skills."*

Participant G: *"Learning to manage stage directions and movements has improved my spatial awareness and coordination."*

Participant H: *"The need to stay focused and in character during performances has significantly enhanced my concentration skills."*

Participant I: *"Exploring complex themes and narratives in dramatic arts has deepened my comprehension and interpretative skills."*

Participant J: *"Collaborating on dramatic arts projects has improved my planning and organisational skills, as we often have to coordinate various elements of a performance."*

Sub-theme 1.4: Positive emotional and social growth

Participant A: *"Dramatic arts has boosted my self-confidence because performing in front of an audience has made me more comfortable with myself."*

Participant B: *"I've become more empathetic by understanding and portraying different characters' emotions and experiences."*

Participant C: *"Being part of a dramatic arts group has helped me make new friends and improved my social interactions."*

Participant D: *"I've learned to express my emotions more effectively, which has strengthened my relationships with others."*

Participant E: *"Dramatic arts has taught me how to handle constructive criticism positively, which has made me more resilient."*

Participant F: *"I've become more aware of my emotions and how to manage them through the different roles I play."*

Participant G: *"The collaborative nature of dramatic arts has improved my teamwork skills and taught me the value of supporting others."*

Participant H: *"Dramatic arts has provided a safe space to explore and express my feelings, which has improved my mental well-being."*

Participant I: *"Participating in drama has made me more outgoing and less afraid of taking risks in social situations since I now have a cue on the meaning of what life may be."*

Participant J: *"Through dramatic, I've developed better communication skills, which has helped me build stronger connections with my peers and my teachers."*

Sub-theme 2.1: Teamwork and collaboration

Participant A: *"Being part of a dramatic arts production has taught me the importance of working together to achieve a common goal."*

Participant B: *"I've learned how to listen to others' ideas and incorporate them into our performances, which has improved my collaboration skills."*

Participant C: *"Drama has shown me that everyone has a role to play, and success comes from supporting each other."*

Participant D: *"Working on group scenes has helped me understand the value of compromise and finding solutions that work for everyone."*

Participant E: *"I've become more comfortable giving and receiving constructive feedback, which has improved our team dynamics."*

Participant F: *"Through drama, I've learned how to trust my peers and rely on them, knowing they will support me on stage."*

Participant G: *"Participating in drama has made me more aware of my body language and how it affects group communication and cohesion."*

Participant H: *"I've discovered that effective teamwork in drama requires clear communication and mutual respect; skills I've applied in other group projects."*

Participant I: *"The collaborative nature of drama has taught me the importance of being reliable and accountable to my team."*

Participant J: *"I've developed stronger interpersonal skills and learned how to build positive relationships with my peers through our drama activities since we have to rehearse even after school hours."*

Sub-theme 2.2: Improved communication skills

Participant A: *"Being in dramatic arts has made me more articulate and confident when speaking in front of others."*

Participant B: *"I've learned how to project my voice and speak clearly, which has helped me in all my dramatic arts classes."*

Participant C: *"Dramatic arts has taught me how to use my body language effectively, how to sit, walk, above all how to communicate emotions and ideas."*

Participant D: *"Through acting, I've become better at reading and responding to non-verbal cues from others."*

Participant E: "Improvisation exercises have improved my ability to think on my feet and communicate spontaneously when need be."

Participant F: "I've gained experience in delivering lines with the right tone, posture, expression and emotion, which has made my presentations more engaging."

Participant G: "Dramatic arts has helped me understand the importance of active listening, communication in conversations and group discussions."

Participant H: "I've learned how to adjust my communication style to different characters and situations, which has made me more adaptable in real-life interactions."

Participant I: "Practicing dialogue in dramatic arts has improved my pronunciation and diction, which has benefited my language skills."

Participant J: "I've become more comfortable expressing my thoughts and ideas clearly and confidently, both on stage and in everyday life."

Sub-theme 2.3: Positive self-esteem and confidence

Participant A: "Performing on stage has given me a sense of accomplishment that has really boosted my self-esteem."

Participant B: "Dramatic arts has helped me overcome my fear of public speaking, and now I feel much more confident in front of an audience."

Participant C: "Taking on different roles has made me more comfortable with who I am and improved my overall confidence."

Participant D: "I've learned to trust my instincts and make bold choices in my performances, which has translated to more confidence in my daily life."

Participant E: "Receiving positive feedback from my peers and teachers in dramatic arts class has greatly enhanced my self-worth."

Participant F: "The supportive environment in dramatic arts has encouraged me to take risks and try new things, building my self-confidence."

Participant G: "Mastering complex scenes and characters has shown me that I can handle challenging tasks, for example, being given a script to be performed in a short space of time, boosting my self-esteem."

Participant H: "Dramatic arts has helped me see my unique qualities as strengths, making me feel more confident in my abilities."

Participant I: *"I've become more assertive in expressing my ideas and opinions, thanks to the confidence I've gained in dramatic arts."*

Participant J: *"The sense of belonging and acceptance in the dramatic arts community has significantly improved my self-esteem and made me more confident beyond measure."*

Sub-theme 2.4: Positive emotional regulation and empathy

Participant A: *"Being part of a drama production has made me realise that I can achieve great things, which has really boosted my self-esteem."*

Participant B: *"Acting on stage has helped me conquer my shyness and become more outgoing and confident."*

Participant C: *"Taking on challenging roles has shown me that I'm capable of more than I thought, which has increased my self-confidence."*

Participant D: *"The encouragement I receive from my drama teacher and classmates makes me feel valued and confident in my abilities."*

Participant E: *"I've learned to project my voice and presence, which has made me more confident in everyday conversations."*

Participant F: *"Successfully performing in front of an audience has given me a huge confidence boost and made me believe in myself."*

Participant G: *"Dramatic arts has helped me embrace my uniqueness and feel proud of who I am, enhancing my self-esteem."*

Participant H: *"Participating in drama has shown me that making mistakes is okay and part of learning, which has made me more confident in taking risks."*

Participant I: *"The collaborative nature of drama has helped me build strong, supportive relationships that make me feel confident and secure."*

Participant J: *"Each performance and rehearsal built my self-confidence, showing me that practice and effort lead to success."*

Figure 3 indicates the results on students' views on the transformative influence of dramatic arts on academic achievement and personal development.

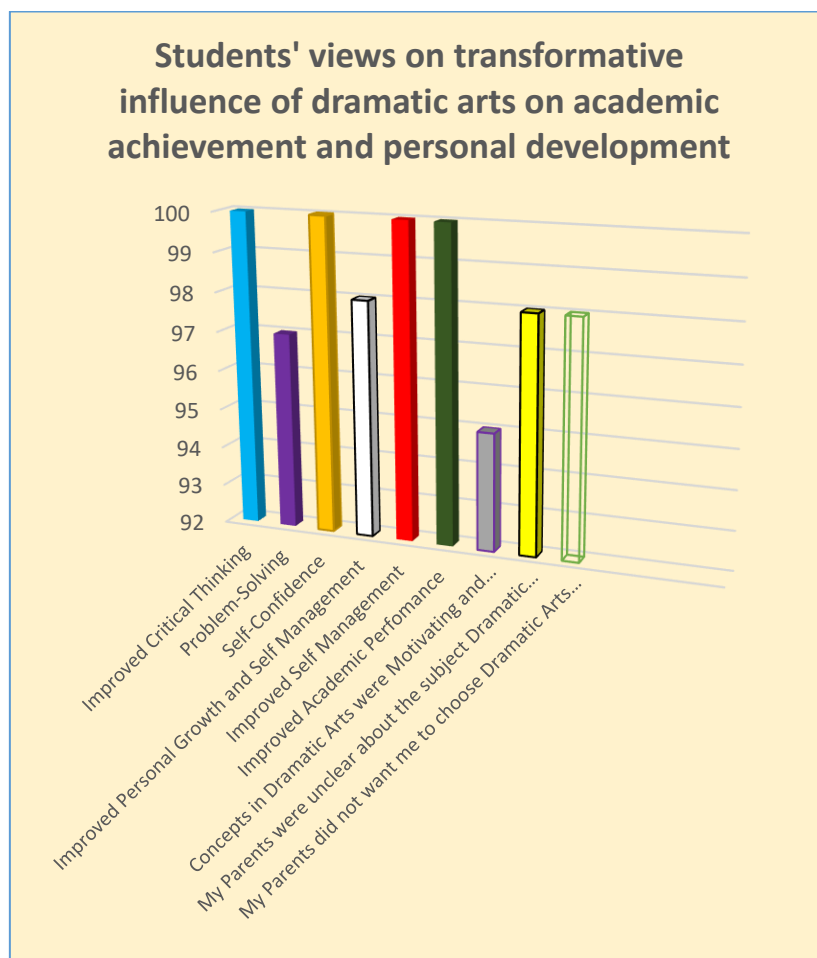


Figure 3: Students' views

Figure 3 shows that 100% of the participants said that studying dramatic arts had improved their critical thinking, problem-solving, and self-confidence; 97% said that the study had given them skills for personal growth and self-management; 100% said that the study had improved their academic performance; 98% said that the concepts of the study of dramatic arts were very motivating and meaningful; and 100% said that their parents were unclear about the dramatic arts. Ninety-eight per cent reported that their parents did not want them to take dramatic arts as a subject in Grade 10. As a result, they were persuaded not to choose the subject. Figure 4 indicates the results on teachers' views and contributory ideas on the transformative influence of dramatic arts.

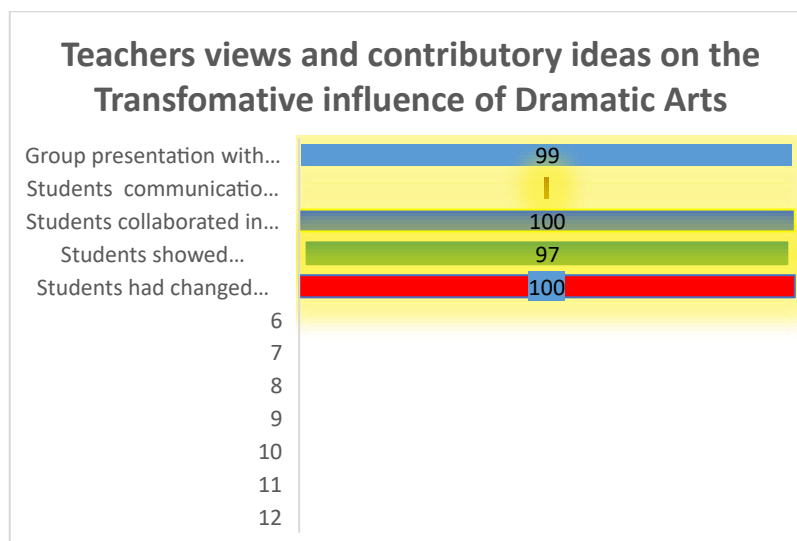


Figure 4: Teachers' views

Figure 4 illustrates that, among the participants, 99% participated with flexibility in group tasks, 99% improved their communication skills as a result of dramatic arts, 100% collaborated very well in their group presentations, 97% demonstrated emotional growth intelligence, and 100% displayed improved positive social behavioural changes.

6. Discussion

Participation in dramatic arts education programmes has been linked to higher academic success among Grade 10 students. The findings show that students who participate in dramatic arts see significant gains in their grades and test scores across a variety of courses (Figures 1 and 3). This finding is supported by research, such as that conducted by Goble et al. (2021), which shows that participation in theatre arts enhances students' academic performance through improved cognitive and non-cognitive skills. In Figure 1, participation in dramatic arts education programmes showed a significant positive correlation with both academic achievement and personal development outcomes among Grade 10 students. Figure 2 highlights the personal development aspects, where dramatic arts contributed to greater self-awareness. Research supports the feasibility and effectiveness of integrating dramatic arts into educational curricula to enhance students' academic and personal growth. The diverse skill set developed through drama—ranging from improved discipline to enhanced social and emotional learning—underscores the value of arts education, as highlighted by Goughnour (2022) and Lorenza (2021). Participants reported increased proficiency in various academic areas, including English, Life Skills, and Mathematics. For example, Participant A stated that participating in dramatic arts helped them to better grasp literary texts, which supports Gibson and Ewing's (2020) claim that arts integration alters the curriculum and improves topic knowledge. Similarly, Participant F observed that the problem-solving and focus abilities acquired via dramatic arts improved their mathematical competence. This is consistent with Liu's (2023) research on the cognitive advantages of arts education, which emphasises the importance of the arts in developing analytical and critical

thinking abilities that may be applied to other academic fields. Dramatic arts have a varied impact on personal development, benefiting both cognitive and emotional growth. Participants reported that dramatic arts improved their memory, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which is consistent with research by Fan et al. (2024) on the psychological benefits of arts participation and its role in fostering cognitive development and overall flourishing in emerging adulthood.

In addition, individuals made emotional and social progress. For example, Participant A stated that dramatic arts increased their self-confidence, whereas Participant G emphasised enhanced collaborative abilities. This is consistent with Goughnour's (2022) study on the social and emotional learning abilities produced by arts education, which emphasises the importance of the arts in developing empathy, resilience, and effective communication skills. Halverson (2021) also explores how the arts may improve education by establishing a more interesting and supportive learning environment that allows students to gain important life skills. Students' social skills and connections improve dramatically when they participate in dramatic arts activities. Participants reported enhanced cooperation, collaboration, and communication abilities. For example, Participant G discovered that dramatic arts boosted their capacity to work in groups, which was useful for group assignments spanning many topics. This finding is confirmed by Nalbur's (2021) research on interdisciplinary art education, which focuses on the development of self-confidence and collaboration abilities through arts integration.

Participating in dramatic arts also improved emotional intelligence and self-perception. Participant I reported a gain in self-esteem and confidence, whilst Participant B reported improved emotional control and empathy. These findings are congruent with Ma and Subbiondo's (2022) study of how drama-based education fosters personal change through increased emotional awareness and autonomy. Students reported increased empathy and communication skills, all of which are necessary for social interaction and personal growth (Johnson et al., 2021). Teachers also observed meaningful increases in their students' interest in other areas and academic accomplishments, which they ascribed to the holistic nature of dramatic arts education (Lee et al, 2020).

The discussion focused on the need to incorporate arts-based pedagogies into regular classroom settings to give students a more gratifying and dynamic learning environment, as seen in Figure 3. It also emphasises the need for more research to investigate the effects of dramatic arts education after Grade 10 and to address challenges in implementing such programmes on a larger scale (Anderson et al, 2019). Involvement in dramatic arts education has been strongly linked to improved academic success among Grade 10 pupils. The study found that students' academic achievements were due to the abilities they obtained in dramatic arts. For example, Participant A claimed that their English grades increased greatly as a result of their enhanced understanding of literary works, a conclusion echoed by Gibson and Ewing (2020), who discussed how arts integration may alter and deepen academic learning. Participant F said that

problem-solving and the ability to focus developed via dramatic arts improved their mathematical ability, which is consistent with Liu's (2023) research on the cognitive benefits of arts education. Furthermore, the data showed particular ability increases in disciplines such as English, Life Skills, and Mathematics. Students, such as Participant H and Participant I, said that the creativity and critical thinking skills obtained in dramatic arts improved their engagement and performance in other disciplines. This is congruent with the findings of Goble et al. (2021) who discovered that theatre arts engagement improves both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, ultimately leading to enhanced academic performance.

Dramatic arts education has also been linked to major human development advantages, including improved cognitive abilities and emotional growth. Participants claimed that participation in dramatic arts increased their memory, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. For example, Participant B said that analysing scripts and characters improved their critical thinking, which is supported by Fan et al. (2024), who emphasise the psychological advantages of arts engagement in supporting cognitive growth. In terms of emotional and social development, individuals, such as Participant A, cited an enhanced self-confidence to perform on stage, while Participant G stated improved collaboration abilities. These findings are consistent with Goughnour's (2022) research on how arts education promotes social and emotional development by developing empathy, resilience, and effective communication abilities. Halverson (2021) emphasises the transformational power of arts education in fostering a supportive and engaged learning environment.

Participation in dramatic arts dramatically improves students' social skills and connections. Participants reported improved cooperation, collaboration, and communication skills. For example, Participant A stated that working together in dramatic arts taught them the value of teamwork, which is corroborated by Nalbur's (2021) research on how arts education boosts self-esteem and collaborative abilities. Participant B noted that learning to listen to others' opinions helped their teamwork abilities, matching Lorenza's (2021) description of dramatic arts education as inclusive and helpful. Dramatic arts education has been instrumental in improving students' communication skills. Participants, such as Participant A, found themselves more articulate and confident when speaking in front of others, while Participant G learned the importance of active listening. This aligns with the findings of Fan et al. (2024), who highlighted the impact of drama education on enhancing communication skills. Participants also noted improvements in non-verbal communication, such as body language and emotional expression, that are crucial for effective interpersonal interactions.

The study found a robust relationship between dramatic arts engagement and enhanced self-esteem and confidence. Participants, such as Participant A, felt a sense of success after performances, which increased their self-esteem. Participant B overcame their anxiety of public speaking and gained confidence in front of an audience. These findings are congruent with Ware's (2024) research into the impact of theatre education on socio-emotional learning and leadership development, notably, in terms of self-confidence and assertiveness. Dramatic arts

instruction also improved pupils' emotional control and empathy. Participant B mentioned becoming more outgoing and confident via acting, whilst Participant D emphasised the importance of support from peers and teachers in developing confidence. These findings are consistent with those of Ma and Subbiondo (2022), who investigated the impact of drama-based teaching in promoting emotional awareness and self-regulation.

Figure 1 shows enhanced critical thinking, problem solving, and self-confidence. Personal development and self-management were also seen when academic performance improved. This is consistent with the findings of Zakopoulos et al. (2023), who examined the overall advantages of theatre instruction. Participants expressed strong levels of interest and drive, highlighting dramatic arts education's transformational potential. Figure 2 depicts instructors advocating for the inclusion of dramatic arts in Grades 10 through 12, emphasising the need for university-level training and professional development for teachers. This validates the conclusions by Fan et al. (2024) regarding the significance of teacher preparation in theatrical instruction. Teachers also emphasised the need for parent workshops to encourage pupils to participate in dramatic arts, highlighting the overall advantages and community-building possibilities of arts education (Halverson, 2021). Figure 3 demonstrates a conviction in the importance of teacher training and professional growth in the dramatic arts. This highlights the transforming power of arts education, which promotes self-expression and holistic development beyond traditional academic constraints (Leavy, 2022). The study found that dramatic arts education improves academic achievement, personal development, social skills, communication, self-esteem, and emotional control. The study promotes the incorporation of dramatic arts into school curricula, emphasising its ability to establish a supportive, inclusive, and transformational learning environment.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that a dramatic arts education has a strong transformative influence and a deep and complex impact on Grade 10 students' academic achievement and personal growth. This study investigated how involvement in theatre improves academic achievements by boosting critical thinking, communication skills, and topic knowledge. Furthermore, dramatic arts have been demonstrated to greatly increase students' self-esteem, confidence, emotional intelligence by promoting good social interactions and a sense of belonging in the school community.

These results led to practical recommendations, such as incorporating theatre into curricula, providing professional development for educators, and developing inclusive extracurricular programmes that are regularly evaluated and refined to suit the changing requirements of students. These projects maximise the benefits of drama that include improving students' cognitive and socio-emotional skills. Furthermore, relationships with local theatrical companies, the use of technology, and the encouragement of family improve students' learning experiences and widen their exposure to the arts. Dramatic arts education can allow Grade 10 students to perform academically while also preparing them for future success in

an increasingly complicated and interconnected society. Exposing students to the dramatic arts promotes their development by developing emotional intelligence, resilience, and empathy. The study also emphasised the need to include dramatic arts in curricula to help pupils grow holistically. Equitable access for all children means that educators and lawmakers must prioritise strong dramatic arts programmes within the school curriculum. Furthermore, instructors require professional development opportunities, such as seminars and short courses, to incorporate dramatic arts into student education.

Furthermore, collaboration among educational institutions, cultural groups, and local communities will result in mutually beneficial collaborations that emphasise the transformational power of dramatic arts instruction. Including dramatic arts throughout the curriculum from Grade 10 to Grade 12, and even beyond, would build environments in which students thrive intellectually, emotionally, and socially. This study highlights the transformative potential of dramatic arts education in providing students with essential skills for navigating a rapidly changing world, offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and curriculum designers. Dramatic arts education enhances academic success and also contributes to holistic personal growth, making it a valuable component of secondary education.

8. Limitations

The study on the transformative influence of dramatic arts education had several limitations. The sample size may not be representative of the broader student population, limiting the generalisability of the findings (Leavy, 2022). Self-reported data from participants may have introduced bias, as students may have overstated the benefits due to social desirability or personal enthusiasm. The study's cross-sectional nature limited the ability to establish causality between dramatic arts participation and the observed benefits. Additionally, external factors influencing students' academic and personal development were not controlled, which could have confounded the results (Schoch, 2020). Further longitudinal research is needed to substantiate and expand upon these findings.

9. Recommendations

Based on the research findings, practical recommendations could maximise the benefits of dramatic arts education for Grade 10 students' academic accomplishment and personal growth. Recognising the necessity of incorporating dramatic arts as a formal subject across the curriculum may enhance student outcomes. Schools may integrate dramatic arts into various subjects, such as using oral presentations, role-playing in history or acting out scenes in English Literature, Life Sciences, and Social Studies, to make learning enjoyable and memorable. This experiential learning approach promotes stronger connections with the material and improves academic performance across various areas. Professional training for teachers and developing extracurricular drama clubs might further support student development. Inclusive and accessible dramatic arts programmes foster a positive environment that boosts self-esteem and confidence among all students. Continuous assessment of the impact of dramatic arts will ensure programme effectiveness and improvement. Partnerships with

theatrical organisations will bring real-world knowledge into the classroom thereby enriching students' learning experiences. Integrating technology and encouraging reflection and self-assessment will enhance learning and creativity, contributing to both academic and personal growth.

The Department of Basic Education should incorporate dramatic arts as a formal subject across the curricula. Additionally, schools can combine dramatic arts instruction into disciplines other than typical theatre classes. For example, in history class, role-playing may be used to teach life skills, life sciences, or historical events, while in English class, students may act out scenes from literature. Integrating theatre into multiple classes may make learning more enjoyable and memorable. Experiential learning will allow students to grasp complicated topics and promote a stronger connection with the information, resulting in increased academic performance across a variety of areas. The Department of Basic Education should offer professional training in dramatic arts at universities and other sites of teacher training to develop specialists who will be deployed to teach dramatic arts for the benefit of schools. Teachers trained in drama will be able to create more dynamic and engaged classroom environments. This will improve students' critical thinking, creativity, and communication abilities, thus contributing to both academic and personal growth.

Schools should develop and establish extracurricular drama clubs and theatrical groups that enable students to participate in dramatic arts beyond regular school hours. Extracurricular programmes provide students with additional opportunities to hone their talents in a less formal environment. These programmes will help students to gain confidence, enhance their social skills, and develop a feeling of community and belonging. They also provide pupils with a forum to demonstrate their abilities, which can boost self-esteem and drive. Dramatic arts programmes must be inclusive and accessible to all students, especially those with impairments or those who are less likely to participate in typical academic activities. An inclusive dramatic arts programme would foster a positive environment in which all students feel respected and appreciated while inclusion results in higher self-esteem and confidence among pupils who would otherwise feel marginalised. Furthermore, diversified engagement may improve the learning experience for all students by exposing them to new viewpoints and skills. This requires routinely evaluating the impact of dramatic arts instruction on students' academic performance and personal development. Continuous evaluation will assess the efficacy of theatrical programmes and suggest areas for improvement. Surveys, interviews, and academic performance tracking give significant insights into how dramatic arts affect students' learning and development.

The study recommends forming relationships with local theatrical organisations and professional actors to bring real-world knowledge and inspiration into the classroom. This will provide students with learning experiences, seminars, live performances, and mentorship possibilities inspiring students' to study and/or pursue professions in the arts. This study suggests using the dramatic arts as a tool for social and emotional learning (SEL) to assist students to develop empathy,

self-awareness, and emotional regulation. Dramatic arts activities challenge students to take on diverse roles and views that improve their empathy and understanding of others. Drama-based SEL also allow students to enhance their emotional intelligence.

A longitudinal study which may engage families and the community in dramatic arts-related events and activities will create a supporting network for students and confirm the importance of dramatic arts education may be of help. Hosting performances, open rehearsals, and theatre workshops for families may foster a feeling of community and shared involvement in student growth. This study suggests using technology and multimedia in dramatic arts instruction in order to improve learning and promote creativity. Using technology, such as video recordings, virtual reality, and online collaborative tools, will broaden the scope of dramatic arts teaching. These technologies provide students with additional methods to produce, share, and reflect on their work, making drama more interesting and accessible. This study encourages reflection and self-assessment by providing students with regular opportunities to reflect on their experiences and analyse their growth in theatre. Reflection and self-assessment allow students to internalise what they learn and see their own progress. Journals, peer comments, and self-evaluation questionnaires also encourage students to critically reflect on their experiences and identify areas for future growth. This, in turn, will improve both their academic skills and their personal growth.

10. Reference

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