The contribution of drama pedagogy in developing adolescents' self-confidence: a case study

Aikaterini Asimidou [iD][a], Antonis Lenakakis [iD][b] and Asterios Tsiaras [iD][c]

[a]Music School of Piraeus Greece, Greece; [b]Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece; [c]University of the Peloponnese, Greece

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the contribution of drama pedagogy to the enhancement of adolescents' self-confidence. It presents the results of a research conducted to a sample of 42, 11th grade senior high-school students of the Music School of Piraeus, Greece. Specifically, the research program consisted of 16 weekly workshop sessions attended by the students of the experimental group. The aim was the enhancement of the general self-confidence and of seven domains of the students' special self-confidence via drama pedagogy techniques. The data were collected via a mixed method approach combining quantitative data resulted from questionnaires and qualitative data extracted from observation diaries and semi-structured interviews. The results confirmed the working research hypothesis and the relevant bibliography, since all students of the experimental group improved their general self-confidence and also six out of seven domains of their special self-confidence.

Theoretical background

Adolescence is a special developmental period of our life, which marks the transition from childhood to adulthood (Mundy et al., 2013). This transition is recognised first by a number of biological changes in body structure and second by serious hormonal and sentimental changes strongly related to the uncertainty for the unknown situations that an adolescent has to face after leaving childhood (Rizzi et al., 2020). Loneliness, angst for socialisation and symptoms of depression are also noticed in adolescents' behaviour (Danneel et al., 2020) as they gradually spent less time with their families and enter new learning environments (McElhaney et al., 2009).

Both biological and sentimental changes result in the adolescents' effort to define themselves either by forming their self-image or in connection to it. In this course, they try to answer crucial questions regarding their identity (e.g., 'Who am I?', 'What do I want?', 'How I want to look like?') (Tamburi, 2019). Finding the right answers allows for their transition to the next stage of their psychological and mental development and prevents a possible identity crisis which would create problems to their future development (Elliot et al., 2008). The adolescents' peers undertake also

a central role in the definition of their self-image. Their influence and criticism is of great importance because of the need of young people to be accepted and enter a peer-group (Kloep et al., 2016). Another challenge which proves to be important is also their desire for independence of their socio-cultural environment (Viner, 2005), (Goossens, 2020). All these challenges and developments help the adolescents' evaluate their achievements and realise their feelings regarding the way they control their emotions and discover their 'self'.

An important aspect of this very notion of 'self' is self-confidence, namely how one feels about his ability to fulfill tasks and deal with particular situations successfully (Stajkovic, 2006; Axelrod, 2017). The exact way which one experiences self-confidence is via the general or global self-confidence, the belief that one can succeed everywhere and the special self-confidence, the belief that one may be successful in specific tasks (Benabou and Tirole, 2002; Stajkovic, 2006; Axelrod, 2017). General self-confidence is developed during the early years of our life but it is first realised in adolescence (Umuzdaş et al., 2019). Special self-confidence changes very easily depending on our recent experiences (Oney and Uludag, 2013). Moreover, it also contributes to the formation of the general self-confidence since the latter is considered an aggregation of the specific domains of the former (Suh, 2000; Chen et al., 2001; Wang and Chang, 2018).

Self-confidence is often falsely confused with self-esteem (Oney and Oksuzoglu-Guven, 2015). This latter is the overall assessment of the individuals' value, expressed as a positive or negative orientation towards them (Minev et al., 2018). However, in contrast to self-confidence, self-esteem is irrelevant to the individuals' accomplishments, it is developed gradually and does not change by external influence and (if negative) it may have serious consequences to the individual's mental health.

According to recent studies (Dubrin, 2017), the adolescents' self-confidence is influenced by their personal experiences and achievements, the comparison with the experiences of others, the social environment and their feelings about what is happening to them and how they deal with it. Apart from these factors, a central role in adolescents' self-confidence is played by the new and unknown environment of the secondary school which they enter. Specifically, the high-school evaluation system is traditionally built on the criticism of the students' achievements with respect to their grades, something which plays a critical role to their opinion about their 'self' (Eccles, 2004). Moreover, the equation of high school performance with intelligence creates a highly competitive environment. The students consider school success as an indicator of their abilities which in turn have a strong influence on their friendships (Schapiro et al., 2009), creativity and finally self-confidence (McMahan and Thompson, 2015).

In this framework, drama pedagogy appears to be a useful tool, which combines the aesthetic elements and the collective/collaborative art of theatre with educational purposes (Lenakakis, 2004; Hentschel, 2010; Neelands and Goode, 2015). Theatre and play in education have been both proved to be of great value in many learning fields (Giotaki and Lenakakis, 2015), and in the teaching of many subjects (Laskarides et al., 2019) like mathematics, physical sciences, social education, intercultural education, language teaching, history and music (İşyar and Akay, 2017). Moreover, they also play a great role in the formulation of the various aspects of the adolescent's character and structure.

In particular, through drama pedagogy, students discover knowledge via acting certain roles on the basis of their personal experience (Sezerel, 2020). These roles help them express personal thoughts and emotions, which they ignored or never dared to express before (İşyar and Akay, 2017). As a result, the adolescents develop socio-emotional skills (Celume et al., 2020), like the social ability (Tsiaras 2016a), the critical thought (Dima et al., 2021) and the creative imagination (Gündoğan et al., 2013). Drama pedagogy finally gives clues for overcoming shyness, developing language communication (Teruel et al., 2019), building strong friendships (Tsiaras, 2016b) and improving students' creativity (Bailin, 2011; Dai, 2020) through collaboration and dramatic improvisation (Toivanen and Halkilathi, 2014). In such a way, students become members of a group and built strong connections based on solidarity, mutual respect and acceptance of distinctness and strengthen their self-image, their self-esteem and their self-confidence (Lenakakis et al., 2019).

The research

Research aims and questions

The motivations for our inquiry were (i) the study of drama pedagogy as a teaching method suitable for the enhancement of adolescents' belief in themselves, (ii) the need to test the possible hypothesis that music school students have higher self-confidence than others due to their public exposure and finally, (iii) the lack of any relevant research connecting drama pedagogy with the self-confidence of Music school students.

In this context, the principal aim of the research was to investigate the role of drama pedagogy in the enhancement of adolescents' general self-confidence as well as of seven domains of special self-confidence: namely social interaction, mood, school performance, public exposure, athletics competence, appearance and personal relations. Their selection out of many others was based on the Personal Evaluation Inventory (PEI), the questionnaire designed and developed by J. S. Shrauger (1990) which apart from general self-confidence it also measures the seven aforementioned special self-confidence domains which were reported as crucial for the development of general self-confidence by the participants of his study (Shrauger and Schohn, 1995). This questionnaire is also the tool for the collection of the quantitative data of our research.

The participants

The research conducted to a sample of 42, 11th grade senior high-school students from the Music School of Piraeus, Greece. All were volunteers, boys and girls from 16 to 17 years old, coming from middle-class families without economical or other difficulties. However, as it came up later, the majority joined the program with the hope to find help and support to their personal problems (i.e., shyness, difficulties in their social interaction, fear of being exposed in public etc). In the beginning of the research, all participants were divided into an experimental and a control group with 21 students each. Their allotment to each group was made by draw in order to secure higher percentage of randomness in the research sample; the experimental group also included two students with learning disabilities.

Methodology and data collection

The research is based on a mixed method of collecting quantitative and qualitative data which after an originally independent examination and analysis, merge into a combined interpretation and approach (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018). The combination of different methods of data collection has the advantage of analysing the data from different viewpoints and securing the reliability of the research (Cohen et al., 2008).

As mentioned, the main tool for collecting and measuring the quantitative data is PEI, an open response format consisting of 54 items. All PEI items are equally distributed (seven items per domain) to the general self-confidence and to each of the six domains in question except from the athletics competence domain which has five items. Their answers are scored with a 4-grade Likert scale, while the internal coherence of the test is satisfying with the Cronbach a values ranging from 0.67 to 0.86 for males and from 0.74 to 0.89 for females (Blascovich and Tomaka, 1991).

The qualitative data were extracted from the researcher's observation diary, the notes of the critical friend and the semi-structured interviews given by the students attended the program.

The researcher, who was a teacher of the Music School, registered her notes in her diary, retrospectively after the end of each workshop. These notes were combined with those of the critical friend who was also a teacher of the Music School, knew the participants quite well and wrote down his own observations during each workshop session. The interviews were taken a short period after the completion of the research program and included questions investigating the students' judgements regarding: (i) the general self-confidence (i.e., which factors do influence one's self-confidence?), (ii) the seven domains of the special self-confidence examined (i.e., do you think you are strong enough to deliver a public speech?) and (iii) the benefits which the students enjoyed from their participation in the program (i.e., could you list three positive and three negative features of the program?). These questions where addressed exclusively to the participants of the experimental group whereas, due to the limited scale of the research, there was no planning for taking similar interviews from the students' parents and teachers.

The research process

The research took place at the school premises with the consent of the headmaster and the teaching personnel of the Music School of Piraeus. Officially, it was included in the school's extra-curricular activities which often take place outside school hours and are held every year under the supervision of the Secondary Education Board and the Municipality of Piraeus. Special attention was paid to the research ethic rules since children's parents gave their approval after being informed in writing for the aims and procedures of the research. Before the beginning of the interventions, the participants of both groups filled out the PEI questionnaire; the reliability of their answers was secured by the use of pseudonyms. The interventions consisted of 16, 90 minute weekly workshop sessions which took place every Sunday afternoon. All workshops aimed at the experimental group and contained certain activities designed beforehand. On the contrary, the control group had no similar experience.

From a theoretical viewpoint, the workshop sessions organised into three sections. The first (workshop sessions 1–4) introduced the students to the notion of self-confidence understood as the belief to our abilities which may change and get strengthened with continuous effort coming out from inside us. The second (workshop sessions 5–12) aimed at helping the students acquire a deeper knowledge of them and realise which things they are good at by focusing on the seven domains of special self-confidence under examination. The third section (workshop sessions 13–16) focused on the role of the special self-confidence in developing the general self-confidence.

These theoretical aims were practically pursued via drama pedagogy techniques (i.e., educational drama, drama play, improvisation, playback theatre). Specifically, educational drama enhances the students' knowledge of themselves helping them realise their abilities and talents; drama play and improvisation are useful tools which familiarise the students with the idea of public exposure and also cultivate creativity by giving people the chance to test new ideas without the fear of being negatively criticised; playback theatre encourages the students to express their thoughts about themselves and discover the reasons of their low self-confidence by sharing them with their peers.

As it has been mentioned already, after the completion of the 16 week research program, the participants filled out again the PEI questionnaire and gave semi-structured interviews; the aim was now to check out the possible changes in their self-confidence feelings.

The results

The quantitative results

The analysis of the quantitative data was carried out by the SPSS program. The measuring scale used was evaluated with respect to its internal consistency and it was found highly consistent. The a Cronbach value was 0.831 for the experimental group and 0.891 for the control group; therefore, the test was considered a reliable quantitative research tool. For each research question, both a zero and an alternative hypothesis were set, whereas the p-value index was defined as 0,05. However, the evaluation of the questionnaire with the Shapiro–Wilk test showed that the parameters examined by it in both groups were not regularly distributed. Particularly, 22 out of 54 items for the experimental group and 26 items for the control group showed p-value >0.05. Therefore, instead of the t-test, it was used the non-parametric Wilcoxon test, in which every index represents the average for each of the seven special-confidence domains measured before and after the interventions.

The statistic processing of the data after the end of the research program led to the following results:

(a)
In the control group, all variants under examination showed values higher than 0,05 (p-value > 0,05), something which corroborates that there were no divergences in our measurements either before or after the workshop sessions for that particular group (see Table 1).

Table 1. Wilcoxon test (control group).

Test Statistics[a]

	TotalKAM–TotalKAP	TotalDM–TotalDP	TotalEEM–TotalEEP	TotalSXM–TotalSXP	TotalDEM–TotalDEP	TotalSEM–TotalSEP	TotalGAM–TotalGAP	TotalAM–TotalAP
Z	−1,399[b]	−1,159[b]	-,626[b]	-,885[b]	−1,208[b]	-,061 [c]	-,334[b]	-,131[b]
Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	,162	,246	,531	,376	,227	,951	,738	,896

Table 2. Wilcoxon test (experimental group).

Test Statistics[a]

	TotalKAM – TotalKAP	TotalDM – TotalDP	TotalEEM – TotalEEP	TotalSXM – TotalSXP	TotalDEM – TotalDEP	TotalSEM – TotalSEP	TotalGAM – TotalGAP	TotalAM – TotalAP
Z	−3,505[b]	−2,167[b]	−3,321 [c]	−3,269 [c]	−3,184 [c]	−2,408 [c]	−3,825 [c]	-,306[b]
Asymp.Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,000	,651

Key
social interaction (TotalKAM – TotalKAP)
mood (TotalDM – TotalDP)
physical appearance (TotalEEM – TotalEEP)
personal relations (TotalSXM – TotalSXP)
public exposure (TotalDEM – TotalDEP)
school performance (TotalSEM – TotalSEP)
athletics competence (TotalAM – TotalAP)
general self-confidence (TotalGAM – TotalGAP)

b.In the experimental group, six out of seven domains of the special self-confidence showed values lower that 0,05 (p-value < 0,05). Such a result shows great statistical divergences before and after the workshop sessions (see Table 2).

The domains of the special self-confidence that were particularly improved were social interaction, mood, physical appearance, personal relations, public exposure, school competence as well as the general self-confidence (p-value <0.05). On the contrary, there was no improvement of the athletics competence (p-value 0.651 > 0.05).

The qualitative results

The examination of the qualitative data revealed a positive influence of the research program not only in the domains of the special self-confidence examined but also in the general self-confidence. This is in absolute correspondence with the quantitative data presented. The contribution of the research to the enhancement of the students' self-confidence can be found in the answers of their interviews. In what follows, we give some indicative examples of their feelings with respect to the domains of the special self-confidence under discussion. All statements are classified with reference to the particular domain of self-confidence they are related to. Moreover, they are accompanied with information (given in brackets) concerning the student pseudonym and the number of the workshop session. The main source of each statement is the researcher's diary unless otherwise stated. A general comment is also added in the end of each section.

Social interaction: in the beginning of the program some students expressed their negative feelings: 'I feel like a foreigner here' (Mary, 1st), 'I don't know whether I want to come to the workshop because I'm antisocial' (Panos, 1st), 'Whatever I say I think that the others are mocking me; maybe this is not true but this is how I feel' (Rena 2nd). Soon after, in the course of the workshops, a change in their attitude was noticed: 'Even when there is an argument, the students are not getting angry; there is a competition for a while, but later on they all agree' (Critical friend, 5th), 'there are no cliques of two or three children; they interact to each other without problem' (Critical friend, 6th). In the end of the program, the students' statements expressed a positive picture, not only regarding their peer relations but also their relations with their family members: 'I had no difficulties in making friends but I feel that the friendships I made in the program will last forever' (Katia, 16th), 'The relationship with my mother was improved because I can now be in her position and I feel I understand her better' (Zoe, 16st), 'When I was playing the parent role in an improvisation, I was thinking of my parents and our fighting. Now I decided to build a more calm relation and I made it' (Nick, interview). This change which is corroborated by the quantitative data (p-value −3,505 < 0,05) is interpreted by the development of a feeling of collectivity and co-operation via the workshops (especially the drama education and the improvisation). Moreover, they also learned how to put limits into their relations to other people. This possibly changed the adolescents' perception about how the others (especially their parents) see their behaviour and therefore controlled their possible egocentrism (Minev et al., 2018).

Mood: the participants expressed their joy from the very beginning of the program: 'We started at last!' (Katia, 1st), 'I feel very happy that there will be something interesting to do on Sundays' (John, 1st). This positive attitude increased further, since 'many students come to the workshops half an hour earlier wanting impatiently to start' (Critical friend, 4th). Additionally, in the last five sessions of the program at least 10 out of 21 students expressed their sadness that the program was about to end: 'I don't want to stop' (Nick 15th), 'I feel always nice when we are here' (Mary, 14th), 'When we start, I forgot all my problems and my mood is getting better' (Zoe, 15th). The main point here is that drama pedagogy creates an optimistic atmosphere in the class which changes the bad feelings. On the other hand, it should be noticed that mood is a special-confidence domain which, however, reflects our feelings in a particular moment. Therefore, although it may (theoretically) influence the general self-confidence, this influence concerns exclusively this particular moment and not a longer period (Shrauger and Schohn, 1995). In this context, the positive reaction of the students with respect to the program does not contradict their restrained behaviour as regards their social interaction (see above).

Physical Appearance: in the beginning of the workshop sessions, 15 out of the 21 students of the experimental group felt uncomfortable and stated that they were not satisfied with their appearance: 'I don't feel good when everybody looks at me' (Helen, 1st), 'I never thought that someone will find me beautiful' (Katia, 1st). The other students, although they did not seem to have a problem, systematically avoided describe themselves as good looking people: 'I could never say such a thing for myself. Let the others say that' (Zeta, 2nd). This situation changed radically in the course of the program as the students understood that beauty (as well as other things) is a relative notion. At first, this view was reflected in the statements of 5 students: 'In the 50's Miss Greece was fatter than

me' (Rena, 6th), 'It's impossible for everybody to like us' (Mary, 7th); however, by the end of the program it was accepted by all 21 participants of the experimental group. This is due to the fact that the students seem to accept that a negative belief does not necessarily reflect the view that the others had for them (Guennif, 2002).

An interesting point here is the finding that appearance plays a crucial role to adolescents' life especially for the girls chiefly because it is also connected to personal relations, and this often creates negative feelings for the adolescents. Thus, given the chance for students to express their embarrassment regarding that matter particularly via the playback theatre and share the problem with their peers was critical for the acceptance of their body. That was the reason why that particular domain showed statistically a considerable improvement (p-value $-3,321 < 0,05$).

School performance: in the beginning of the program at least 18 students connected school performance with self-confidence: 'I feel ashamed to speak in public. That's the reason why I rarely raise my hand although I know the right answer to a question' (John, 2nd), 'A perfect student is perfect everywhere' (Rania, 3rd). Drama pedagogy techniques, such as drama play, improved their attitude towards the school classes and their teachers: 'The students attending the program are more open people and speak a lot in the classes. They also show empathy for their teacher; I feel that during a class they are trying to be in my position and see things from my point of view' (Critical friend, 6th), while it also highlighted the importance of action and effort for school success: 'In the past whenever I had a low grade, I thought I was stupid. Now I simply know that I didn't try much' (George, 16th), 'I feel sure for myself; that's the reason I'm more active in the class now' (Nick, 16th). The qualitative data agree with the quantitative results (p-value $-2,408 < 0,05$) and the relevant literature (Morris, Morris, 2001; Laird, Nelson Laird, 2005; Otacioğlu, Otacıoğlu, (2008); Anderson and Dunn, 2013; Cicek and Palavan, Cicek and Ö, (2015)) about the relation of drama pedagogy and school performance in various subjects. However, it should be noted that due to the short duration of our research, it was not possible to find out its imprint to the students' school grades. Therefore, we understood it as the students' desire to improve their profile inside the classroom.

Public exposure: in theory, the students of the Music school due to their participation in concerts and music events are familiar with public. That is the reason that six students refered no problem of public exposure. On the other hand, 15 participants reported difficulties in speaking in public: 'In a concert I have studied hard and I know how to cope with my mistakes. But when I have to talk in public on a subject I know nothing about I feel anxious' (Nina, 3rd), 'I would faint if I had to speak in public' (Vera, 1st). 'It's really stressful when I know that everybody is looking at me' (Rena 1st).

A notable improvement started from the 6th workshop session and on, when the students competed for the leading roles in the improvisations: 'I always want to act on stage, because in the past I couldn't do that and now I feel very strong for that' (Zoe, 7th), 'It's nice to overcome your fear. I feel very strong that I managed that' (Vera, 15th). A quite interesting point which came up from the interviews though was that the essence of the problem was the external criticism (by parents and friends) and not the public exposure as such. Thus, their participation in drama pedagogy exercises like improvisation and drama play which develop collectivity and the sense of acceptance by their peers make the adolescents feel easier and express themselves without fear and angst, (Murillo, 2007; Toy, 2012).

General self-confidence: the uncertainty in the beginning of the program: 'I don't expect major changes in my behaviour in such a short period' (Panos, 1st), 'There are many different things involved; it will not be easy, but we will have fan' (Andri, 1st) was replaced by strong feelings since the students started to understand better themselves: 'I feel that I now know better myself and that I can rely on me' (Rena, interview) and were impressed by their achievements in the end of the interventions: 'I never thought I could speak easily in public' (Vera, 8th), 'I'm sure for myself because I feel accepted' (Katia, 7th), 'I'm able to communicate with everybody' (Mark, 6th). The aftermath was that any improvement is the result of willpower: 'I want to try more because I think that when you try hard, you can do everything you want' (Nick, interview). Statements like this agree with the view that the general self-confidence is built cumulatively on the basis of special self-confidence and also with the impression that a strong belief in our abilities strengthens the feeling that we can be effective in any task (Kanazawa, 2004).

Athletics competence: as it has been mentioned, athletics was the domain which had no progress in the program. Despite this, after the 6th workshop session: 'the students were more ready to move and ran in the room' (Critical friend, 6th). What is more, statements like: 'I cannot ran' (Vera, 1st) were revised. Yet such developments were not enough to confirm our alternative research hypothesis. Hence the lack of improvement (p-value 0.641 > 0,05). A possible explanation was that, according to their statements, 29 out of the 42 students of our sample had never a systematic involvement in sports.

Personal relations: the main question addressed to the students was how they see the opposite sex. 19 students of the experimental group stated that this issue does not bother them in this period of their life: 'There's a lot of reading and there's no time for such matters' (Katia, 2nd), 'The majority do not have any experience. But even if we had one slight experience this is not enough to make us say something interesting about' (Rena 3rd). However, although in the drama play exercises they all take the roles of couples, the qualitative findings did not confirm the serious progress recorded by the quantitative analysis (p-value −3,269 < 0,05). A possible interpretation is that in this period of life adolescents give more emphasis to companionship rather than to intersexual relations. In other words, they feel that the need of being accepted and enter a peer group is a much more interesting priority. This attitude may be understood with reference to the low self-confidence of the young people in the physical appearance domain (see above).

Discussion and conclusions

The first aim of the research was to investigate the role of drama pedagogy techniques in developing adolescent self-confidence. The quantitative and the qualitative results of the research showed an improvement in the general self-confidence of the participants. All changes noticed in the behaviour of the students seem to be linked with the drama practices (i.e., educational drama, playback theatre, drama play and improvisation) which gave students the chance to explore their body and their emotions. Particularly, the shy students felt being accepted by their peers and were encouraged to express and share their thoughts and emotions openly. At the same time, they developed their imagination; they realised they can create things and accordingly they started believing in their ability to complete any task. These observations are in full correspondence with the results of

other research studies which are available in the literature, and connect the drama pedagogy practices with the development of self-confidence (Yamasaki et al., 2016; Gürler and Konca, 2016; Palavan, 2017; Umuzdaş et al., 2019; Rizzi et al., 2020).

The second aim of the research was to check out the possibility of changing the seven domains of special self-confidence in question. More concretely, the improvement of the students in the domain of social interaction concerns the relations with their family members as well as with their peers. In the drama pedagogy workshops they were able to work in groups, to exchange ideas and feel equal to the people which they have common aims with. As it has been pointed out (Sirisrimangkorn and Suwanthep, 2013; Tsiaras, 2016b), drama techniques enable the development of social skills like communication, empathy, solidarity and interest for the others.

The self-confidence in appearance was gradually enhanced. The participation in the drama pedagogy workshop gave students the opportunity to explore themselves (Hughes and Wilson, 2004). They faced the negative emotions created by the uncertainty for their appearance and they learn how to cope with them. All students functioned as a mirror to each other; this helped them see themselves through the others eyes. Moreover, activities like playback theatre revealed that the perception of physical appearance is subjective and changeable.

Mood enhancement started from the first workshop session. Improvisation and drama play developed the creativity of the students and made them feel happy. This conclusion confirms the view that drama pedagogy creates a pleasant and happy atmosphere. The students are engaged in more creative activities than those used in a standard school class and feel positive although this feeling is temporary and changeable.

The results concerning the student's public exposure were interesting too. The original thought of the researcher was that music school students, due to their participation in concerts and music events on a regular basis, would have no difficulties of being exposed to an audience. However, the qualitative analysis of their interviews revealed that at least 16 of the 21 participants felt inferior in other public activities. The main reason behind that feeling was the fear of criticism from their environment. Therefore, it cannot be overcome inside the special environment of a music school. Drama pedagogy created an atmosphere of trust and acceptance, which eliminated their fear and shyness in a more effective way (Witerska, 2020).

This feeling of safety and trust inspired by drama pedagogy also improved the school performance of the students, since self-confidence is considered a strong factor of knowledge assimilation (Stankov, 2014). However, in our study, the short-term duration of the research did not allow a connection between the students' self-confidence in school performance and their school grades. Nonetheless, it accounted for their extroversion and participation in the classes due to the lack of fear of being ridiculed by their schoolmates.

The domain of athletics competence showed no improvement. This was an expected result, since the majority of our sample expressed no interest or systematic engagement in sports. In personal relations there was a small progress, since the main interest of adolescents is to be accepted and enter a peer group. As a result, any improvement in this domain can only be seen as part of the general self-confidence improvement.

Summing up, drama pedagogy had a strong impact on the enhancement of both general and special self-confidence for these adolescents. However, the small sample of students and the special school type put limits to our study. This calls for a larger research

plan, which should pay attention to five parameters: (i) a greater number of participants, (ii) a study of a larger sample of schools of any type from any region of the country, (iii) a possible examination of the relation between self-confidence and the social and cultural background of the students involved (i.e., family, culture, ethnic minority), (iv) an extended investigation of the role of parents and school teachers and (v) an implementation of the research tools (i.e., interviews and questionnaires) repetitively for a longer period to ensure the duration of the results.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributors

Aikaterini Asimidou has been a High School teacher of music since 1996. In 2008, she became a member of the teaching personnel of the Music School of Piraeus. In 2020, she received her MA in Drama and Performing Arts in Education and Lifelong Learning from the School of Fine Arts of the Department of Theatrical studies of the University of the Peloponnese. Her research interests concern the implementation of Drama Pedagogy techniques in helping the students develop their self-confidence, and developing drama techniques in teaching music.

Antonis Lenakakis is Associate Professor of drama/theatre pedagogy at the Department of Early Childhood Education, Faculty of Education of the Aristotle Univesity of Thessaloniki, Greece. He has taught drama/theatre pedagogy on a graduate and post graduate level at the University of Fine Arts of Berlin and at the Universities of Vienna and Cyprus, as well as at several Greek Universities. His research interests include drama/theatre pedagogy theory and practice in formal, non formal and informal education and in teachers' training, and his writings are included in Greek and international journals, conference proceedings and collective volumes.

Asterios Tsiaras is Professor in the Department of Theatrical Studies at the University of the Peloponnese. He has written articles and papers on many different aspects of Drama Education and Dramatic Play. His current research interests are focusing on the teaching of poetry through drama and the contribution of drama in increasing the emotional intelligence of young people.

ORCID

Aikaterini Asimidou http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0893-5970
Antonis Lenakakis http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8914-1384
Asterios Tsiaras http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6169-6433

References

Anderson, M., and J. Dunn (eds.). (2013). *How Drama Activates Learning. Contemporary Research andpPractice*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Axelrod, R. H. (2017). Leadership and Self-confidence. In J. Marques and S. Dhiman (edited by), *Leadership Today: Practices for Personal and Professional Performance* (pp. 297–313). Springer.

Bailin, S. (2011). Creativity and Drama Education. In S. Schonmann (edited by), *Key Concepts in Theatre/drama Education* (pp. 209–213). Springer & Sense Publishers.

Benabou, R., and J. Tirole. (2002). Self-confidence and Personal Motivation. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 117(3), 871–915. https://doi.org/10.1162/003355302760193913

Blascovich, J., and J. Tomaka. (1991). Measures of Self-esteem. In J. P. Robinson, P. R. Shaver, and L. S. Wrightsman (edited by), *Measures of Personality and Social Psychological Attitudes* (pp. 115–160). Academic Press, Inc.

Celume, M. P., T. Goldstein, M. Besançon, and F. Zenasni. (2020). Developing Children's Socio-emotional Competencies through Drama Pedagogy Training: An Experimental Study on Theory of Mind and Collaborative Behavior. *Europe's Journal of Psychology*, 16(4), 707–726. https://doi.org/10.5964/ejop.v16i4.2054

Chen, G., S. M. Gully, and D. Eden. (2001). General Self-efficacy and Self-esteem: Toward Theoretical and Empirical Distinction between Correlated Self-evaluations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25(3), 375–395. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.251

Cicek, V, and Ö, Palavan. (2015). Impact of drama Education on the Self-Confidence and Problem Solving Skills of Students of Primary School Education. In *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on E-Learning and E-Technologies in Education (ICEEE 2015),* (pp. 24 – 34). Indonesia: Tangerang.

Cohen, L., L. Manion, and K. Morrison. (2008). *Μεθοδολογία εκπαιδευτικής έρευνας (μετ. Σ. Κυρανάκης, Μ. Μαυράκη, Χ. Μητσοπούλου, Π. Μπιθάρα & Μ. Φιλοπούλου)*. Μεταίχμιο.

Creswell, J. W., and V. L. Plano Clark. (2018). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. SAGE Publications, Inc.

Dai, J. (2020). Promoting Children's Creativity through Drama in Education. *Studies in English Language Teaching*, 8(2), 68–81. https://doi.org/10.22158/selt.v8n2p68

Danneel, S., F. Geukens, M. Maes, M. Bastin, P. Bijttebier, H. Colpin, K. Verschueren, and L. Goossens. (2020). Loneliness, Social Anxiety Symptoms and Depressive Symptoms in Adolescence: Longitudinal Distinctiveness and Correlated Change. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 49(11), 2246–2264. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-020-01315-w

Dima, A., E. Kaiafa, and A. Tsiaras. (2021). Evaluation of the Educational Drama as an Innovative Method to Be Adopted by Teachers in order to Enhance Critical Thinking Skills of Students in Primary School. *Open Journal for Educational Research*, 4(2), 103–116. https://doi.org/10.32591/coas.ojer.0402.03103d

Dubrin, A. J. (2017). *Human Relations for Career and Personal Success: Concepts, Applications and Skills*. Pearson Education.

Eccles, J. S. (2004). Schools, Academic Motivation, and Stage-environment Fit. In R. M. Lerner and L. Steinberg (edited by), *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology* (pp. 125–153). John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Elliot, S., T. Kratochwill, J. Cook, and J. Travers. (2008). *Εκπαιδευτική ψυχολογία: αποτελεσματική διδασκαλία, αποτελεσματική μάθηση (μεταφρ. Μ. Σόλμαν – Ευ. Καλύβα, επιμ. Α. Λεονταρή)*. Gutenberg.

Giotaki, M., and A. Lenakakis. (2015). Theatre Pedagogy as an Area of Negotiating and Understanding Complex Concepts by Kindergartners in Times of Crisis: An Intervention-based Research Study. *Προσχολική & Σχολική Εκπαίδευση*, 4(2), 323–334. http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/ppej.8837 .

Goossens, L. (2020). Theories of Adolescence. In S. Jackson, and L. Goossens (edited by), *Handbook of Adolescent Development,* (pp. 11–29). Routledge: Taylor and Francis.

Guennif, S. (2002). From Knowledge to Individual Action: Confidence, the Hidden Face of Uncertainty. A Re-reading of the Works of Knights and Keynes. *Mind and Society*, 3(2), 13–28. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02513146

Gündoğan, A., M. Ari, and M. Gönen. (2013). The Effect of Drama on the Creative Imagination of Children in Different Age Groups. *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi (H.U. Journal of Education)*, 28(2), 206–220.

Gürler, İ., and M. Y. Konca. (2016). Effects of Using Dramatic Texts on Self-confidence Development: An Experimental Study. *Turkish Online Journal of English Language Teaching (TOJELT)*, 2(2), 103–112.

Hentschel, U. (2010). *Theaterspielen als ästhetische Bildung. Über einen Beitrag produktiven künstlerischen Gestaltens zur Selbstbildung*. Schibri–Verlag.

Hughes, J., and K. Wilson. (2004). Playing a Part: The Impact of Youth Theatre on Young People's Personal and Social Development. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 9(1), 57–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/1356978042000185911

İşyar, Ö. Ö., and C. Akay. (2017). The Use of "Drama in Education" in Primary Schools from the Viewpoint of the Classroom Teachers: A Mixed Method Research. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(28), 201–216.

Kanazawa, S. (2004). General Intelligence as a Domain-specific Adaptation. *Psychological Review*, 111 (2), 512–523. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.111.2.512

Kloep, M., L. B. Hendry, R. Taylor, Stuart, and I. – Hamilton. (2016). *Development from Adolescence to Early Adulthood*. Psychology Press.

Laskarides, A., A. Kontoyianni, A. Tsiaras, and C. Zoniou. (2019). Teaching Adolescents Civil Law: Process Drama as a Tool for Achieving Legal Literacy Antigone. *Yaratıcı Drama Dergisi*, 14(1), 243–260. https://doi.org/10.21612/yader.2019.014

Lenakakis, A., D. Kousi, and I. Panges. (2019). 'Do Women Know How to Drive?' Eesearch on How Theatre Pedagogy Contributes to Dealing with Gender Stereotypes. *Preschool and Primary Education*, 7(1), 19–36. https://doi.org/10.12681/ppej.19347

Lenakakis, A. (2004). *Paedagogus Ludens*. Erweiterte Handlungskompetenz von Lehrer(inne)n durch Spiel- und Theaterpädagogik. Schibri.

McElhaney, K. B., J. P. Allen, J. C. Stephenson, and A. L. Hare. (2009). Attachment and Autonomy during Adolescence. In R. M. Lerner and L. Steinberg (edited by), *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology: Individual Bases of Adolescent Development* (pp. 358–403). John Wiley & Sons Inc.

McMahan, I., and S. Thompson. (2015). *Adolescence*. Pearson.

Minev, M., B. Petrova, K. Mineva, Petkova, R. Strebkova, and M. Petkova. (2018). Self-esteem in Adolescents. *Trakia Journal of Sciences*, 2(2), 114–118. https://doi.org/10.15547/tjs.2018.02.007

Morris RV. (2001). Drama and Authentic Assessment in a Social Studies Classroom. *The Social Studies*, *92*(1), 41–44. 10.1080/00377990109603974

Mundy, L. K., J. G. Simmons, N. B. Allen, R. M. Viner, J. K. Bayer, T. Olds, J. Williams, C. Olsson, H. Romaniuk, F. Mensah, S. M. Sawyer, L. Degenhardt, R. Alati, M. Wake, F. Jacka, and G. C. Patton. (2013). Study Protocol: The Childhood to Adolescence Transition Study (CATS). *BMC Pediatrics*, 13 (1), 160. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2431-13-160

Murillo, M. F. (2007). *Critical Teaching. Drama as an Approach to Communicative Learning and Development*. Teaching research project retrieved from: http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/D504237.pdf

Neelands, J., and T. Goode. (2015). *Structuring Drama Work*. Cambridge University Press.

Nelson Laird TF. (2005). College Students? Experiences with Diversity and Their Effects on Academic Self-Confidence, Social Agency, and Disposition toward Critical Thinking. *Research in Higher Education, 46* (4), 365–387. 10.1007/s11162-005-2966-1

Oney, E., and G. Oksuzoglu-Guven. (2015). Confidence: A Critical Review of the Literature and an Alternative Perspective for General and Specific Self-confidence. *Psychological Reports: Mental & Physical Health*, 116(1), 149–163. https://doi.org/10.2466/07.PR0.116k14w0

Oney, E., and O. Uludag (2013). Classification of Self-confidence: Is General Self-confidence an Aggregate of Specific Self-confidences? *6th International Conference on Service Management*. June 20 – 22, Kyrenia: Cyprus.

Otacıoğlu, G. S. (2008) Prospective Teachers' Problem Solving Skills and Self-Confidence Level. *Educational Sciences: Theory & Practice, 8*, 915–923

Palavan, Ö. (2017). Impact of Drama Education on the Self-confidence and Problem-solving Skills of Students of Primary School Education. *Kastamonu Üniversitesi Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 25(1), 187–202.

Rizzi, V., C. Pigeon, F. Rony, and A. Fort-Talabard. (2020). Designing a Creative Storytelling Workshop to Build Self-confidence and Trust among Adolescents. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 38, 100704. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100704

Schapiro, M., B. H. Schneider, B. M. Shore, J. A. Margison, and S. J. Udvari. (2009). Competitive Goal Orientations, Quality and Stability in Gifted and Other Adolescents' Friendships: A Test of Sullivan's Theory about the Harm Caused by Rivalry. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 53(2), 71–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0016986208330566

Sezerel, H. (2020). Campus Guiding and Creative Drama. *Yaratıcı Drama Dergisi*, 15(1), 101–112 doi: 10.21612/yader.2020.006.

Shrauger, J. S., and M. Schohn. (1995). Self-confidence in College Students: Conceptualization, Measurement, and Behavioral Implications. *Assessment*, 2(3), 255–278. https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191195002003006

Shrauger, J. S. (1990). *Self-confidence: Its Conceptualization, Measurement and Behavioral Implication*. SUNY Buffalo: Éditeur inconnu.

Sirisrimangkorn, L., and J. Suwanthep. (2013). The Effects of Integrated Drama-based Role Play and Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD) on Students' Speaking Skills and Affective Involvement. *Scenario*, 7(2), 37–51 https://doi.org/10.33178/scenario.7.2.5 .

Stajkovic, D. A. (2006). Development of a Core Confidence-higher Order Construct. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91(6), 1208–1224. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.91.6.1208

Stankov, L. (2014). Non Cognitive Predictors of Academic Achievement and Intelligence: An Important Role of Self-confidence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 55(7), 725–732 https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2013.07.090 .

Suh, E. M. (2000). Self, the Hyphen between Culture and Subjective Well-being. In E. Diener and E. M. Suh (edited by), *Culture and Subjective Well-being* (pp. 63–87). MIT Press.

Tamburi, J. (2019). *Power, Beauty and Legitimacy of Adolescence Understanding the Teenage Period*. Clink Street Publishing.

Teruel, T. M., V. Alfonso-Benlliure, and D. Lee Fields. (2019). The Impact of Theatrical Experiences on Young Adults in Spain. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 24(2), 192–200. https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2018.1494562

Toivanen, T., and L. Halkilathi. (2014). Investigating Pupils' Group Creativity in Drama – Teacher Trainees Fostering a Creative Classroom Environment. *International Journal of Research in Education Methodology*, 5(3), 757–766. https://doi.org/10.24297/ijrem.v5i3.3901

Toy, B. Y. (2012). Perceptions of Teacher Candidates regarding the Instruction of Pedagogical Courses by Using Drama Method: The Development and Learning Course Example. *International Journal of New Trends in Arts, Sports & Science Education*, 1, 125–136.

Tsiaras, A. (2016a). Enhancing School – Aged Children's Social Competence through Educational Drama. *The Journal of Drama and Theatre Education in Asia*, 6(1), 65–90.

Tsiaras, A. (2016b). Improving Peer Relations through Dramatic Play in Primary School Pupils. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 17, 18. http://www.ijea.org/v17n18/

Umuzdaş, S., A. Doğan, and M. S. Umuzdaş. (2019). Impact of Musical Creative Drama Education on Self-confidence of Pre-school Children. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 7(11), 10–22. https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v7i11.4471

Viner, C. D. R. (2005). Adolescent Development. *BMJ*, *303*(7486), 301–304. doi:10.1136/bmj.330.7486.301.

Wang, Y., and Y. Chang. (2018). How Specific and General Self-confidence Affect Assortment Decisions. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 46(10), 1687–1696. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.7063

Witerska, K. (2020). *Play It Out Loud. Using Drama for the Social Inclusion of Shy Children*. Lodz: AHE.

Yamasaki, K., Y. Murakami, T. Yokoshima, and K. Uchida (2016). Effectiveness of a School-based Universal Prevention Program for Enhancing Self-confidence: Considering the Extended Effects Associated with Achievement of the Direct Purposes of the Program. *24th European Congress of Psychiatry/European Psychiatry 33S (2016) S290–S643*. Cambridge University Press.