

Effects of Rabindrik Drama Play on Self Esteem of Students with Learning Disabilities

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ABSTRACT

Psychological and behavioral processes in health and illness, is a major concern for health psychologists in modern era. Psychological factors including environmental stressors, thoughts, beliefs and anxiety can affect health directly. Health psychologists are constructively working and applying their knowledge to reduce these adverse effects and to improve health by working directly with individual patients or indirectly in large scale public health programs. Factors like self confidence, self esteem and communicative skills which definitely contribute to physical health can be enhanced and brought into focus using technique like “role play” or drama. Role play is an effective and innovative activity which involves patients or participants in a real-life problem situation along with the desire for resolution and understanding that this involvement endangers. It helps participants to built up their confidence, manage their emotional control, enhance their verbal and non verbal communication skills, decision making capability, increasing their self esteem and decorating their overall personality. Present study aims to examine the effect of role play on the self esteem of the learning disabled students facing learning difficulties in academics. Students facing learning difficulties have very low self esteem, low self confidence, unable to respond easily and lacking verbal and non verbal communication skills. A quasi experimental pre-test post-test design was used with control and experimental group with four participants each. The famous story named “Kabuliwala” written by “Rabindranath Tagore” was used as a tool for role play. Number of participants in control and experimental group was decided on the basis of characters portrayed in story. Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (1965) was used to measure self esteem of the students. Mean scores of pre test and post test on self esteem was examined through t-test.

Keywords: *Role Play, Self Esteem, Learning Disability, Learning Difficulty*

Health psychology deals with the overall health of individuals including physical and mental health; it also emphasizes the behavioral, psychological and cultural factors which contribute to the health and illness. Health psychologists study numerous ranges of health issues including smoking habits, religious beliefs contributing to health, emotional problems, living conditions, social support and excess use of alcohol. Mental

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health professionals work together and conduct research to promote health and health care policies using their skills and knowledge constructively. They use different psychotherapeutic methods and counseling strategies to sort out the problems related to personality, self esteem, confidence, communication issues and subjective well being.

Role-play/drama is an effective and innovative, activity based therapeutic learning approach in modern psychology. This modern era considers the needs and interests of learners and keeps it in focus of attention. Role playing can be defined as the involvement of participants and observers in a real problem situation along with the desire for resolution and understanding that this involvement endangers (Joyce, Weil, & Calhoun, 2009). Role playing involves students emotionally and cognitively; incorporates situations, drama, games and demonstrations of real life experiences related to any concept, topic, theory or scenario. According to Henriksen (2004) role play is a medium where a person through immersion into a role and the world of this role, is given the opportunity to participate in and interact with the contents of this world and its participants (p.108). Role playing is exceptionally beneficial for students if implemented by skilled teacher or trainer. Students involved in role playing come to feel the issues, values, beliefs, experiences, conflicts and tensions rather just being a passive observer. Seaton, Dell' Angelo, Spencer & Youngbold (2007) suggest the use of role playing to help in the development of self awareness, self regulation and self monitoring. This strategy works on observation, modeling and reflection of role. The key step to conduct a role play involves defining aims and objectives, defining role descriptors, defining time limit, defining ground rules of safety, debriefing agenda and facilitator's task.

Rabindrik Psychotherapy

Rabindrik psychotherapy is a new emerging psychotherapy in the field of psychological treatment focusing on the process of healing and awakening the self using extracted ideas from the literature of Rabindranath Tagore, the famous writer, poet and Brahma philosopher of west Bengal. Rabindrik psychotherapy includes singing, dancing, painting and drama with the aim to pore out the inner self and awakening the conscience which leads to cure of many psychological problems including learning problems, communication problems, poor writing skills, personality deterioration, low self esteem and low self confidence. It is a therapy where therapist, usually considered as a facilitator, helps the client to understand his own conflicts and trauma using Murta, Raga and Saraswat layer of consciousness and also guides him how to manage these barriers with the help of verbal and non verbal communication patterns. Rabindrik Drama including plays and short stories are frequently known for their rhythmic, optimistic and lyrical nature. Some of the famous drama of Rabindranath Tagore are "Valmiki Pratibha", "Kirtans", "Dak Ghar", "Visarjan", Bhikarini" and "Kabuliwala". He beautifully depicts the lives of ordinary people, women and children, perfectly expressing emotions and feelings with flow and rhythm.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Not a lot work has been done in the field of role playing but enough work provides us a direction towards positive results like improves self confidence, reducing anxiety and fear, improved speaking skills, reducing bullying behaviour, active engagement in co-curricular and physical activities, increased interactive behaviour among students and teachers, and increased self esteem. A number of studies focus on the perfection of communicative skills using role play. P. Klanrit (2005) carried out a study in which development of English-speaking skills by using information gap and role playing was investigated. 38 students from second year business English of Udon Thani Rajabhat Institute in Thailand were chosen as

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sample for the study. In the results it was found that English speaking skills of the students were higher significantly after using the techniques of information gap and role playing. It was found that intensive interaction during role play effectively helped to develop proficiency in communication and English speaking.

In modern times, role playing is being used in therapeutic settings, also called as psychodrama or sociodrama where participants/patients are encouraged to have focus on the feelings of the character. They are encouraged to gain insight about their own feelings as well as others' feelings. Such kinds of activities were applied in the study done by Joyce & Wein (1980) who emphasized the cognitive part of the patients and found positive results.

Role playing develops a sense of effort and task fulfillment among students. According to Schick (2008) participants involved in role play give their full efforts to accomplish the task with motivation and so they acquire all skills during role play. Studies support that role play improves the course interaction between instructors and students and also between students and students which created active learning scenario. Along with such positive results Crow & Nelson found that the role play increases students' positive responses to course content (which was being taught without role play). It significantly increased the confidence level of students to learn new things.

Role playing, if applied under guidance is a technique motivating students in active discussions. Rosell (2005) conducted study with students playing a role of parents dealing with bullying incidents in school. A total of 87 psychology students participated for the study. These researchers emphasized that role playing promotes active engagement of students in discussion by sharing information during the study. In their experiment, students (playing role of parents) were given partial and sometimes false information by bullied children. They were asked to reach a conclusion by discussing the events. As a result of the study it was found that evaluation of the exercise done by students were quite impressive and favorable.

So many students reported about increased self confidence due to interaction session during drama and the time they spent together. They used to feel ashamed and anxious due to the mistakes they committed while speaking. Kusmana (2011), found that role playing significantly enhances the confidence and motivation level of students. As a result of interaction in role playing technique, they also not feel afraid of making mistakes while speaking. All students participated actively during the process of teaching and learning.

Wiegmann, Dansereau & Patterson (1992) examined the relationship between students' verbal ability and memorial benefits as an effect of role playing which was a part of cooperative learning interaction. In their study the researchers provided the students a text on human biology and then assigned the role of teacher/ learner randomly. After that all participants were paired with the same sex student but with opposite role. Then the pairs were asked to study the information cooperatively. After one day all students completed a series of tests to assess their memory. In the results it was found that participants with high verbal ability were benefited more by assuming the role of a learner, while participants having low verbal ability were benefited more by assuming the role of a teacher.

In the learners with language learning disability (LLD), role playing was investigated by Abdoola, Flack & Karrim (2017) as a therapeutic technique to facilitate the pragmatic skills of the learners. Children with LLD face difficulties in social communication, which in turn

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can affect their social and academic achievement negatively. The researchers implemented the pre test post test design. Results after role play implementation revealed that learners with LLD showed improvements in two pragmatic skills: stylistic variation and requesting for clarification.

Overall literature provides us a positive feedback focusing on the effects of drama on the psychological aspects of individual including communication pattern, problem solving skills, confidence level, discussion part, decision making ability and self esteem. It enhances personality and helps to groom with polished dimensions.

Objective

The objective of the study is to examine the effect of role play or drama on self esteem among students facing learning disability specifically focusing on learning difficulty, using Rabindrik Drama Play. Researchers were interested to see if playing drama makes any change in their overall perception towards themselves. Also the study was carried out to find: is there any possibility to cure learning disabled students with the help of Rabindrik drama.

Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that performing role play enhances the overall perception of participants for themselves with an increase in self worth/self esteem. Playing the characters of Rabindrik drama makes them self aware and helps to develop positive attitude and value for them.

Operational Definition of Role Play/Drama

Role play is the act where one person imitates one character, its emotions and actions with the help of dialogues. The person who is involved in role playing uninhibits his own character and personality to portray another character. Stage setup, dressing sense, dialogue delivery and makeup of the person helps to portray the character completely. Role play helps people to bring out their inner self with the help of imagination, verbal and non verbal communication skills and group discussions.

Steps of applying role play,

1. Introducing purpose
2. Selecting students
3. Providing roles to students
4. Setting up the stage
5. Practicing drama
6. Observations

In this study, story written by “Rabindranath Tagore” named “Kabuliwala” is selected for role playing. After introducing the purpose and background, subjects were assigned the roles. Stage was set up with permission of administration and two hour practice was done for 30 days on regular basis. During and after the play practice the behaviour was observed and analysed.

Operational definition of self esteem

Self esteem is the feeling about overall perception of a person towards himself. It is the inner feeling which tells the person how much worth he has for his life. His confidence level, his will to respond and ask the questions; wish to achieve new goals and his own freedoms to

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express his feelings are the domain of self esteem. If a person seems less confident, does not respond or responds a little socially; does not ask questions; has belief that he would not achieve much in his life and could not be able to take decisions will be considered to have low self esteem. Contrary to this, person who freely expresses his feelings, responds well, asks questions, has positive thoughts about himself, analyses his negative characteristics, is confident for his decisions and actions; is communicative socially and has belief that he would achieve his life goals has high self esteem.

Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (1965) a ten item self report instrument is the most reliable and concrete measure to assess self esteem and its domains overall. It evaluates both positive and negative feelings of the subject about self. All items are answered using a 4 point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of four female students facing learning disability/learning difficulty were selected purposefully from Mahila College, Ara for the study. Quantity of students was kept as per requirement of the portrayed characters in the play with the age range 19-23 years. Students were from the population who were facing learning difficulties, were unable to express their inner self, did not respond easily in the class; had very low confidence, very low decision making capability and low self esteem. Students were chosen on the basis of their regularity in class attendance. Each student was told the purpose of the experiment and contacted personally to gain her consent.

Research Design

It is a quasi-experimental mixed methodology research design aimed to examine the effectiveness of performing drama on self esteem. This design combines quantitative as well as qualitative data for its interpretation. Quantitative data was collected using suitable measures (Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale, 1965) during pre test and post test of the experimentation. Qualitative data was also collected using in-depth interviews with open ended questions. Scores of control and experimental group were compared on pre test and post test and explained using personal interviews given by the participants.

Statistical Analysis

“Difference method” of t test was used to compare the mean difference between two groups. Personal interviews were also taken to collect qualitative data.

Experimental Procedure:

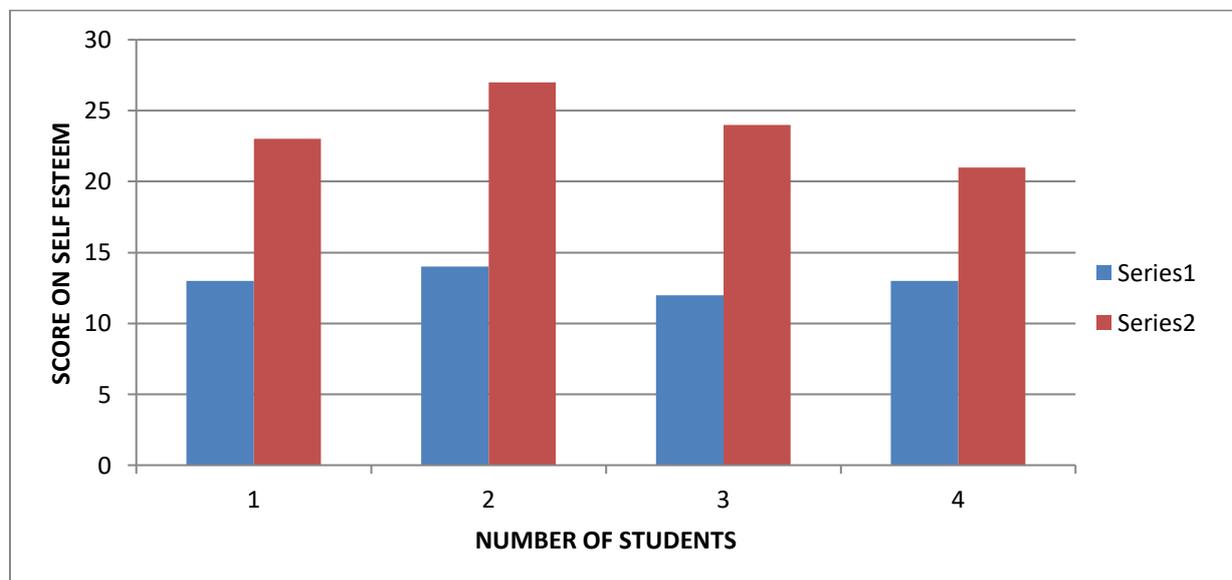
Participants were experimented on pre test and post test. A total of 4 characters are there in the story and so 4 students are experimented. Pre test was done on self esteem and role play was applied with the group. The story was told to the participants with special focus on their dialogues and emotions. Dialogues were translated into Hindi language. After practicing 30 days of drama with two hours per day, self esteem was again tested. Subjective evaluation of the participants related to their self esteem was also noted by the researcher.

RESULTS

Table 01: Showing a comparison of pre test and post test on self esteem.

PRE TEST	POST TEST	D	D ²	t (df= 3)
13	23	-10	100	9.69*
14	27	-13	169	
12	24	-12	144	
13	21	-08	64	
		$\sum D = 43$	$\sum D^2 = 477$	

*sig. at .05 level



The table is showing the scores of participants during pre test and post test of the experiment. We can clearly see the difference in the post test scores as an effect of Rabindrik drama. The difference between two groups is $\sum D = 43$ and $\sum D^2 = 477$. The mean difference is $t = 9.69$ which is significant at .05 level of significance, indicating a noticeable difference between two groups on self esteem. This clearly shows that role play has an effect on self esteem of the students with learning disability. In the pre test, subjects reported very few good qualities within themselves as they found themselves worthless and unimportant in comparison to other students around them. Three of the four participants reported that their parents never believed their effort as girls. They had friends with shy nature and less active. They agreed not to have much in their life to be proud of. They never participated in any activity like dance, music and drama nor were they academically fair. They had a feeling if they could do something productive and better, they could have more respect for them and so they had negative attitude towards themselves and felt as a failure.

DISCUSSION

As we can see the self esteem scores on pre test and post test, we can predict performing drama is effective on self esteem of the participants with learning disability. During interview after post test the participants reported a noticeable change within themselves. While asking about their ability to do most of the things other people do, they agreed and accepted that now they feel they are not less than others in any way. Earlier they used to think they could not perform on stage as they could not get any chance to do so or no one trusted them. But now they trust themselves. The reason behind this was, as they explained, the teacher praised them on their small acts, dialogues and practices. Many times on stage

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they used to be facilitated in front of the audience. They reported they are losing their fear of stage and communicating through performing drama. The role play allowed them to repeat the dialogues loudly with the aim to impress the audience. In such a way they reduced their hesitation to speak and increased self confidence. The results are in support of Kusmana (2011) who emphasized on role play as a medium to enhance confidence and motivation of the students. It is the 'interaction' during drama playing which makes the students less afraid to commit mistakes while speaking.

The participants accepted, as a result of role play drama, they have something to be proud of that is their performance and expression skills. They couldn't believe their performance, motivation and dialogue delivery. They reposted expertise and proficiency in speaking skills and selection of proper words. Klanrit (2005) also reported the effectiveness of role play on speaking skills in English language. The researcher found intensive interaction between participants and teacher as a medium to develop the proficiency.

One participant reported while practice was going on in the proper dress and makeup, she felt an increase in her emotions and expertise in expression. She said "it was not just a play for her. It seems freedom for her. She felt as if she became free from her bounded self. After drama she feels light. She never reported this feeling within herself before...." The participants reported a good amount of respect for themselves as everyone was praising them for their effort and was being surprised for such performance. Another participant discussed her heart feelings and said that she was feeling regret for the failures in her last life. Her words were "I could have done better in my 12th standards. I used to think I am not smart and fast like other girls. I had nothing good nor did I have any charm in my personality. After playing the role of 'Kabuliwala' (lead character in the play) I wonder I could do that role perfectly. How could I? My personality has changed. My views have changed. Now I believe I can achieve everything I want. Role play has increased trust in me."

This study was done with an objective to see the effectiveness of role play on self esteem of learning disabled students using Rabindrik drama play as a tool with the hypothesis that it will help to reduce learning difficulty symptoms. As Abdoola, Flack & Karrim (2017) considered role play as therapeutic technique for LLD (language learning difficulty) students focusing that it facilitates the pragmatic skills like stylistic variation and requesting for clarification. Our results and subjective experience of the participants move us towards a positive direction providing positive indications that Rabindrik drama play can be used as a therapy for learning disabled students by exploring their 'Saraswat' layer of consciousness. It helps to reduce their learning difficulty symptoms in 'Murta' and 'Raga' layer. It enhances their self esteem, speaking skills, motivation, self confidence, communication pattern and liking towards themselves. Rabindrik drama play helps to reduce fear and anxiety, negative thoughts, regression and their own pessimistic view towards them.

Limitations of the study

1. Study was conducted including only four participants.
2. Selection of play was of researcher's interest.
3. Every time stage was not provided for role play. Many times, practice was done in a classroom setting.
4. Dialogues for the play were written as per story and translated into Hindi as participants were able to speak and understand only Hindi.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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