

Dramatic Play Self-Help Skills Training For Learners With Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders

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ABSTRACT

This research determined the effectiveness of dramatic play in teaching self-help skills to learners with ADHD in Cebu, Philippines. This study used an experimental design. The learner-participants with ADHD, enrollees in 3 SpEd centers in Cebu, were selected through purposive sampling technique in accordance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Necessary ethical standards and considerations were also upheld. The degree of behavior of the ADHD learners was measured using an adopted Vanderbilt ADHD Diagnostic Teacher Rating Scale. While for the task analysis, where the pre-and-post scores or the level of self-help skills generated, an adopted Vineland rating sheet was utilized. Data collected was analyzed through weighted mean for the degree of behavior of the ADHD learners, and paired t-test for measuring the significant improvement of the learners after exposure to dramatic play teaching approach. Findings revealed that in terms of behavior's extent, the learner-participants were inattentive; impulsive and hyperactive; less oppositional and less defiant; and less anxious. The learners' pre-test scores ranged from beginning to developing. The post-test scores scaled from approaching proficiency, proficient, and advanced. The p. value of 0.000 of the three (3) self-help skills proved that there was a significant difference and improvement of the learners' self-help skills performance after their exposure to dramatic play. Therefore, it was recommended that dramatic play be considered and used in teaching the ADHD learners the self-help skills.

Keywords: Special Education, dramatic play, experimental method, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, special education schools, Cebu, Philippines

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching skills to learners with special needs is proven to be difficult and needs more articulation than that of regular students in mainstreamed education considering that each child in special education manifests diverse problems and its degree. Biraimah (2016) stated that there are approximately 93 million to 150 million children who have different disabilities across the world. Pérez-Crespo et. al. (2020) stressed that 7.2% of these children are observed or diagnosed to have a deficit hyperactivity disorders (ADHD) wherein the accompanying manifestations are low attention span; escalating levels of hyperactive disorders; and the apparent core of deficiencies of self-control, cognition, and emotional adjustment. Manalingod (2005) cited that the prevalence of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) ranges from 3% -- 5% of the school-age population. Children with ADHD are more likely to develop depression or anxiety, exhibit disruptive behavior, and have poorer school performance in school as they get easily distracted and out of focus. This fuels the significance of choosing the right pedagogy to attain quality educational outcomes for learners with special needs as they need to receive specialized and individualized instruction that suits best to their unique learning needs and interests.

Ashman & Conway (2017) explained that teaching strategies have significant correlation in developing different forms of learners in special education. Thus, it is extremely crucial that teachers have to be critical with the specific child disability; and sensible in selecting a suitable pedagogy. Alamri & Tyler-Wood (2017) corroborated that for the students to learn effectively, effective selection and utilization of teaching strategies have to be observed. Teaching strategies, as the main vehicle for transmittal of learning from the teachers to their students, have to be varied, enjoyable, and easily relatable for the learners. Otherwise, the knowledge and skills development of the learners may be hampered.

Recently, Dramatic Play teaching strategy -- defined as a type of play where children accept assigned roles, and then act out. It can be seen as a term that refers to

everyday make-believe games that kids naturally enjoy -- emerged from numerous studies. Accordingly, it makes children integrate emotions, thinking and motivation to establish natural connections critical to effective brain functioning. Thus, it develops their communication, socialization, cognitive and self-help/self care or independent living skills (Fromberg & Bergen, 2012). Dramatic play enhances quality holistic development of the nursery school child (Bosah et. al., 2015). Dramatic play enhances creativity wherein children are motivated and at the same time entertained; and unconsciously maximizes the development in cooperation and expression given that it creates brain activity holistically making the entire body more active for learning (Shama, 2016).

In the Philippines, many public-school special education teachers expressed that they are in a difficult position to provide adequate intervention (Ambiong, 2020) in related skill areas of the child with ADHD due to insufficient training; pedagogical alternative strategies; and appropriate assessment and interventions. In the schools where the researchers teach, it has been found that majority of the learners have ADHD and therefore, lack of self-help skills for most of them are unable to follow rules and instructions for a longer period. Self-help skills are essential for gaining independence which aids children with ADHD to be responsible and self-sufficient adults. In parallel, this study was conceived to determine the efficacy of Dramatic Play, as a modified teaching technique, to equip the learners with ADHD with self-help skills that they could use in many situations of their lives.

II. Review of Related Literature and Studies

This study is anchored on B.F. Skinner's Operant Conditioning Theory which is grounded upon the idea that learning is a means of modification in evident behavior and that changes in behavior are outcomes of an individual's reaction to events that happen in the situation. The learners' exposure to dramatic play immerses them to an in-depth involvement where they tend to enjoy for they can express their vigor freely in a productive way (Cornell, 2018). One of the distinct

characteristics of operant conditioning makes a person respond out of an external stimulus, and develop such habit naturally as it sets their mood already (Blackman, 2017).

Meanwhile, Jean Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory claims that understanding how children gain knowledge and the nature of intelligence play a vital role in knowledge acquisition or cognitive development. ADHD learners are known to have an ongoing pattern of inattention or hyperactivity-impulsivity that hampers learning. They are often impatient, do inappropriate interruption at times, and show unruly behaviour against the established rules. Hinshaw et al. (2018) elaborated that children with ADHD have difficulties in self control and emotional adjustment which unfortunately affects cognition that subsequently disrupts school performances, problems with study skills, and trouble in social interactions. Thus, conventional teaching strategies may more likely not work for this type of learner. Dramatic play's feature of game-or-role-based approach offers the learners with ADHD not just a good avenue to unleash their energy, but also to further improve their ability to follow instructions and socialization skills as they would be accustomed to doing those due to constant activities engagement duration and frequency (Bridge et. al. 2020).

Dramatic play (DP) also gives the value of acceptance to one another, distinguishes pretend and real, and learn to adjust their actions. Within the structure, respondents involved in dramatic play can adopt a double objective where they spot themselves as being inside a play and outside the play (Kravtsov & Kravtsova 2010; 2014). Stanton & Chapman (2015) corroborated that with dramatic play involved in the teaching-learning process, level of interaction among students, in diverse learner-centered games as facilitated by the teacher, highlighted as one of the most enjoyable yet efficient way of life-long skills obtainment.

Olukotun (2013) attested that children learn more efficiently and gain more knowledge through play - based activities such as dramatic play, art, and social games. Play therapy is a viable intervention to help children with special needs to strengthen

adaptive behaviors and develop stronger social relationships (Randall et. al. 2015). Khomais et. al. (2019) found out that there was a significant positive correlation between dramatic play and self-regulation among the pre-schoolers; and the dimension of interactions among the learners during dramatic play was a predictor of self-regulation. Germeroth et. al. (2019) supplemented that dramatic play is an essential element of a child's growth and development for it equips them a better self-regulatory skills. Dramatic play enables children to play roles; and create scenarios. This allows them to pay attention and focus at high levels compared to undramatic situations (Ivrendi, 2016; Savina, 2014). Thus, it becomes a key factor for the children to be holistically developed as it provokes engagements of their physical, intellectual, social, and emotional skills (Loizou et.al., 2019; & Romadona et. al., 2020). Holistic development is dependent on how the children demonstrate each area of his skills as they may have their own unique individual characteristics. Undoubtedly, those areas of growth are interrelated for the growth in one area more likely reinforces and promotes growth in the other areas.

Though dramatic play tends to consume a lot of time and requires great effort for both the teachers and learners, but still, the results showed that children's engagement in peer play significantly improved the children's self-regulatory and number sense skills (Ivrendi et. al, 2016). Dramatic play, as an approach in transforming children with special needs, however, needs to be planned and executed properly by the teachers. Non-usage of appropriate props, unclear instructions, and improper executions of the tasks during dramatic play may hamper the child's creativity and delay the improvement. Thus, dramatic play has to be articulately tutored (Mellou, 1995).

The numerous studies mentioned above positively identify dramatic play to be effective in developing the child's self-regulation, adaptive behaviour, socialization and intellectual skills; however, as observed, less to no studies yet conducted as to whether or not dramatic play can enhance and foster self-help skills among children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

considering that special education has to have specially designed instruction that meets the unusual needs of students Daniel et. al. (2009). Nowadays, providing teaching strategies that should fit to the diverse classifications of ADHD is extremely urgent as the continuous rise of ADHD classification in a global scale remains apparent. Hence, this paper generates the below research questions or objectives.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research determined the effectiveness of dramatic play in teaching self-help skills to learners with ADHD in Cebu, Philippines. Specifically, this answered the following questions:

1. As evaluated by the teachers, what is the degree of behavior of the ADHD learners as to:
 - 1.1 inattention;
 - 1.2 hyperactivity;
 - 1.3 oppositional defiant disorders; and
 - 1.4 anxiety?
2. Using task analysis, what are the pre-test and post-test scores of the ADHD learners?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the ADHD learners after their exposure to dramatic play in teaching them self-help skills?

IV. METHODOLOGY

This study used an experimental design in which the participants performed the pre-test, underwent the dramatic play teaching strategy, and took the post-test self-help assessment. The sixteen (16) learners with ADHD were the participants who were selected thorough purposive sampling technique in adherence with the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The mentioned learners were officially enrolled in three (3) SpEd centers in Cebu, Philippines. Necessary ethical standards and considerations were also done to uphold the research ethics considering that the participants were minors. The degree of behavior of the ADHD learners is measured using an adopted Vanderbilt ADHD Diagnostic Teacher Rating Scale. While for the task analysis where the pre-and-post scores or the level of self-help skills generated, an adopted Vineland rating sheet was utilized. Both abovementioned tools were administered and rated by the teachers based on the students' manifestations and performance. Data collected was analyzed through weighted mean for the degree of behavior of the ADHD learners, and paired t-test for measuring the significant improvement of the learners after exposure to dramatic play teaching approach.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Teachers' Evaluation on the Degree of Behavior of the Learners with ADHD in Terms of Inattention, Impulsivity/Hyperactivity, Oppositional Defiant and Disorder, and Anxiety

| INDICATORS | A | OF | OC | N | Mean | Verbal Description |
|--|---|----|----|---|------|--------------------|
| | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | |
| A. Inattention | | | | | | |
| 1. Fails to give attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork. | 2 | 7 | 7 | - | 2.69 | Often |
| 2. Has difficulty sustaining attention to tasks or activities. | 4 | 6 | 6 | - | 2.88 | Often |
| 3. Does not seem to listen when spoken to directly | 5 | 9 | 2 | - | 3.19 | Often |
| 4. Does not follow through on instruction and fails to finish schoolwork (not due to oppositional behavior or failure to understand) | 3 | 10 | 3 | - | 3.00 | Often |
| 5. Loses things necessary for tasks or activities | 4 | 7 | 5 | - | 2.94 | Often |
| AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN | | | | | 2.94 | Often |
| STANDARD DEVIATION | | | | | 0.18 | |

| B. Impulsivity/Hyperactivity | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|----|------|--------------|
| 6. Fidgets with hands or feet or squirms in seat | 3 | 7 | 3 | 3 | 2.63 | Often |
| 7. Leaves seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected | 4 | 3 | 9 | - | 2.69 | Often |
| 8. Has difficulty playing or engaging in leisure activities quietly | 2 | 6 | 8 | - | 2.63 | Often |
| 9. Talks excessively | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3.06 | Often |
| 10. Interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games) | - | 7 | 9 | - | 2.44 | Occasionally |
| AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN | | | | | 2.69 | Often |
| STANDARD DEVIATION | | | | | 0.23 | |
| C. Oppositional Defiant and Disorder | | | | | | |
| 11. Loses temper | 7 | - | 9 | - | 2.88 | Often |
| 12. Actively defies or refuses to comply with adults' requests or rules | 4 | 5 | 7 | - | 2.81 | Often |
| 13. Initiates physical fights | 6 | - | - | 10 | 2.13 | Occasionally |
| 14. Lies to obtain goods for favors or to avoid obligation (i.e., "cons" others") | - | 3 | - | 13 | 1.38 | Never |
| 15. Deliberately destroys others' property | - | 6 | 4 | 6 | 2.00 | Occasionally |
| AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN | | | | | 2.24 | Occasionally |
| STANDARD DEVIATION | | | | | 0.62 | |
| D. Anxiety | | | | | | |
| 16. Is fearful, anxious, or worried | 3 | 3 | - | 10 | 1.94 | Occasionally |
| 17. Self-conscious or easily embarrassed | - | 4 | 2 | 10 | 1.63 | Occasionally |
| 18. Is afraid to try new things for fear of making mistakes | 8 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2.88 | Often |
| 19. Blames self for problems, feels guilty | - | 4 | 6 | 6 | 1.88 | Occasionally |
| 20. Feels lonely, unwanted, or unloved; complains that "no one loves him/her." | 2 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 1.94 | Occasionally |
| AVERAGE WEIGHTED MEAN | | | | | 2.05 | Occasionally |
| STANDARD DEVIATION | | | | | 0.48 | |
| AGGREGATE MEAN | | | | | 2.48 | Occasionally |
| STANDARD DEVIATION | | | | | 0.53 | |

Note: N = 16, Verbal Description and Scale Range: 4 = Always (AL) – 4.00 to 3.51; 3 = Often (OF) – 3.50 to 2.51; Occasionally (OC) – 2.50 to 1.51; Never (N) – 1.50 to 1.00

In terms of Inattention, Table 1 disclosed that indicators 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5's weighted means fell within the range scale of 2.51 to 3.50, and an average weighted mean of 2.94 still of the same range scale with a number description of 3 and verbal description of "often" (OF). This means that teachers observed that the learners with ADHD almost always: failed to give attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork; had difficulty sustaining attention to tasks or activities; did not seem to listen when spoken to directly; did not follow through on

instruction and fails to finish schoolwork; and lost things necessary for tasks or activities. In its entirety, it meant that the students' extent of behaviour was categorized to be inattentive.

In terms of impulsivity or hyperactivity, Table 1 revealed that indicators 6, 7, 8, 9 had the weighted means within the range scale of 2.51 to 3.50, with a number description of 3 and verbal description of "often" (OF). This signified that the teachers found the learners to be frequently: fidgeted with hands or feet or squirmed in seat; left the

seat in classroom or in other situations in which remaining seated is expected; initiated physical fights; and talked excessively. While indicator 5 had the weighted mean of 2.44 with a numerical description of 2 and verbal description of occasionally (OC); this conveyed that the students sometimes interrupted or intruded on others. An average weighted mean of 2.69 likewise meant that as a whole, the students' extent of behaviour was categorized to be indeed impulsive and hyperactive.

Moreover, in terms of oppositional and defiant disorder, Table 1 communicated that indicators 11 and 12 had the weighted means within the range scale of 2.51 to 3.50, with a number description of 3 and verbal description of "often" (OF). This meant that the teachers evaluated the learners to be oftentimes: lost their temper; and defied or refused to comply with adults' requests or rules. Indicators 11 and 15 had the weighted means within the range scale of 1.51 to 2.50 rated numerically as 2 and verbal described as "occasionally" (OC). This meant that the learners sometimes: initiated physical fights, and destroyed others' property. 2.24 average

mean manifested that the learners were less oppositional and less defiant.

Furthermore, in terms of anxiety, Table 1 substantiated that indicators 16, 17, 19, and 20 had the weighted means within the range scale of 1.51 to 2.50, with a numeric description of 2 and verbal description of "occasionally" (OC). This embodied that the teachers judged the learners to be sometimes: fearful, anxious, or worried; self-conscious or easily embarrassed; blames self for problems, feeling guilty; feeling lonely, unwanted, or unloved; complaining that no one loves him/her. However, Indicator no. 18 with 2.88 weighted mean conveyed that the learners almost always were afraid to try new things for fear of making mistakes. The average weighted mean of 2.05 with a numeric rating of 2 and verbal description of occasionally manifested that learners were having less anxiety.

Lastly, the overall 2.48 weighted mean and an overall standard deviation of 0.53 confided that the teachers' evaluation on the learners with ADHD's degree of behavior was categorized to be occasionally recurring and of moderate extent.

Table 2. The Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores of the ADHD Learners before and after Exposure to Dramatic Play

| SELF – HELP SKILLS | PRETEST | % | PROFICIENCY | POST TEST | % | PROFICIENCY |
|--------------------|---------|--------|-------------|-----------|--------|-------------------------|
| BRUSHING TEETH | 11.94 | 47.76% | Developing | 21.88 | 87.52% | Proficient |
| USING THE BATHROOM | 10.00 | 40% | Beginning | 16.13 | 64.52% | Approaching Proficiency |
| WASHING HANDS | 14.75 | 59% | Developing | 23.31 | 93.24% | Advanced |

n = 25

Proficiency Level Legend: 23 – 25 Advanced; 19 – 22 Proficient; 15 – 18 Approaching Proficiency; 11 – 14 Developing; and 10 and below Beginning

Table 2 showed that the learners with ADHD's pre-test scores and proficiency levels before their exposure to dramatic play were: brushing teeth - 11.94 (developing); using the bathroom – 10.00 (beginning); and washing hands – 14.75 (developing). This meant that the said learners did not properly execute the steps of the identified three (3) self-help skills yet. This result was not surprising for the learners were not taught with the correct procedures of brushing teeth, toileting, and hand washing. Guskey (2018) explained that a pre-test is a form of formative assessment administered before the start of a new lesson to gauge the existing understanding of the competencies as stated in the learning objectives to serve as a benchmark in determining what areas need to be improved and be given more emphasis during the lesson delivery.

Table 2 also presented that the learners' post-test scores and proficiency levels after their exposure to dramatic play in terms of brushing teeth was 21.88 weighted mean with a verbal description of proficient. This meant that the learners showed competence and regularly followed the

targeted behaviors or steps in turning on the faucet; opening the toothpaste cap; putting toothpaste to toothbrush; brushing teeth in proper direction; and rinsing the mouth. The self-help skill of using the bathroom had 16.13 weighted mean and verbally described as approaching proficiency. this connoted that the learners committed 2-3 errors that needed prompting and support in pulling down and lowering clothing; using the toilet; pulling up lower clothing; flushing toilet; and washing hands. In terms of washing hands, it had the 23.31 weighted mean and a verbal description of advance. This indicated that the learners performed independently and consistently without any prompt needed in turning on faucet; wetting both hands; rubbing hands with soap; rinsing hands with water; and turning off the faucet. The post-test results clearly yielded noticeable positive disparity of the scores as compared to the pre-test scores. This could possibly be a sign of improvement that needs to be validated with an inferential statistics by comparing the pre-test and post-test results (Goldstein, 2018; Hutagalung & Adams 2020).

Table 3. Test of Significant Difference after Their Exposure To Dramatic Play in Teaching Them Self-Help Skills

| SELF – HELP SKILLS | MEAN | STANDARD DEVIATION | T-VALUE | P-VALUE | REMARKS | DECISION |
|--------------------|-------|--------------------|---------|---------|-------------|----------------------------|
| BRUSHING TEETH | | | | | | |
| PRETEST | 11.94 | 1.57 | -19.406 | .000 | Significant | Reject the Null Hypothesis |
| POSTTEST | 21.88 | 1.78 | | | | |
| USING THE BATHROOM | | | | | | |
| PRETEST | 10.00 | .966 | -7.199 | .000 | Significant | Reject the Null Hypothesis |
| POSTTEST | 16.13 | 3.32 | | | | |
| WASHING HANDS | | | | | | |
| PRETEST | 14.75 | .775 | -27.112 | .000 | Significant | Reject the Null Hypothesis |
| POSTTEST | 23.31 | 1.14 | | | | |

Note: The Test of Significant Change of the Skills at $p < 0.05$ level of significance

Table 3 presented the test of significant difference divulged the three self-help skills - brushing teeth, using the bathroom, and washing hands – had all the p. value of 0.000.

This indicated that was a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the learners with ADHD after their exposure to dramatic play as a pedagogical

intervention administered to them to enhance their abovementioned areas of self-help skills for the computed values are smaller than the critical values of 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the 3 null hypotheses were all rejected. Despite the learners' behaviour profile as inattentive; impulsive and hyperactive they performed to have acquired the skills in brushing teeth, using the bathroom, and washing their hands. This result cemented that dramatic play was an effective teaching strategy to be used in developing the self-help skills of the learners with ADHD. Efficacy of dramatic play in teaching learners with special needs was further elaborated by Takosabe et. al. (2021) stated that daily play programs had helped improve children's executive function development because its focus on children's self-directedness. Goldstein (2018) also illuminated that dramatic play games had uniquely improved emotional control in young children for it encouraged participation, performance, and collaboration among the learners. Stanton & Chapman (2015) and Acosta (2019) corroborated that with dramatic play ignited the learners' enthusiasm due to the heightened level of social interaction among students or between teachers and students that would positively resulted to achieving and attainment of session or lesson's intended learning outcomes. Dramatic is a viable pedagogical tool that would develop the children with special needs holistically for through social engagements, their physical, intellectual, social, and emotional skills were shaped and enhanced (Romadona et. al., 2020). Thus, dramatic play must be part of pre school curriculum (Bosah et. al., 2015).

VI. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, conclusions were drawn that the learner participants were inattentive, impulsive and hyperactive, less oppositional and less defiant, and less anxious. The learners' pre-test scores ranged from beginning to developing. The post-test scores scaled from approaching proficiency, proficient, and advanced. The p. value of 0.000 of the three (3) self-help skills proved that there was a significant difference and improvement of the learners' self-help skills performance after their exposure to dramatic

play. Therefore, it was recommended that dramatic play be considered and used in teaching the ADHD learners the self-help skills.

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