The Theater in the Educational Context: Elements of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats

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Abstract

Theater in education has gained global popularity since its creation. It employs the use of different forms of art to promote teaching and learning in schools. The practice has positively influenced the lives of school-going children. One importance derived from its application is the enhancement of students' communication skills. While the educational theater has received a positive light and adopted in many educational fronts, it has also encountered several challenges that have limited its effectiveness. This paper, therefore, seeks to uncover the reality behind theater application in schools by using SWOT analysis. The paper focuses on Egyptian education and schools as the case study. The questionnaire was implemented as a data survey tool in four Egyptian governorates, which included 186 experts and teachers in the various educational departments. The technique examines a given subject analytically and presents its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. From the analysis results, it is observed that school educational theater enhances learners' self-esteem and promotes self-actualization. Several gaps were also pinpointed, including inadequate training among teachers and substandard content quality in the Egyptian education system and schools. The launching of the 2014-2030 educational strategic plans provided several opportunities for strengthening the effectiveness of educational theater. Possible erosion of students' moral values was among the threats identified when applying theatrics in the teaching and learning processes. The study concluded through its results the challenges facing the educational theater in Egypt, despite the problems of lack of funding, technical capabilities, and real opportunities to activate school activities in the educational field. The results of this study will provide an opportunity for different stakeholders in education to examine the nature of theater practices within their jurisdictions carefully, and hence formulate relevant policies to make the practice better and effective in driving the desired academic outcomes.

Keywords: Egyptian education, Educational Theater, Educational Context, SWOT Analysis.

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1. Introduction

Theater in education is defined as the use of theatrics to promote learning. As an educational instrument, theater applies humor to capture student's attention. By interrelating fiction and reality, the technique emphasizes the ideas or content taught in a way that is understandable to students (Waters et al., 2012). The advent of educational theater traces its roots in Coventry's Belgrade Theater during the 1960s (Turner, 2010). Coventry's economy was on a renaissance following the Second World War, witnessed by the rapid growth of its industrial activities, including car manufacturing (Turner, 2010). Alongside economic reconstruction, officials also recognized the need to transform the education sector as a result of a radical change of their citizens' attitudes towards teaching and learning. Theater in education was consequently instituted in a bid to influence positive intellectual transformation by engaging students' imaginations and creating awareness in their social and cultural values (Turner, 2010).

Several studies cite the importance of theater application in the learning process. In a study whose aim was to understand the importance of preschool drama and drama centered education, it came to light that preschool education, drama refined the students' imaginations and the ability for independent thinking (Tombak, 2013). Also, the use of theatrics to promote learning cultivated students' communication skills by enhancing fluency in speech, listening skills, and body language, among others (Basom, 2005). Moreover, another study indicated that the use of educational theater was a practical methodology for teaching social studies in junior secondary schools in Nigeria (Ejiofor & Ken-Aminikpo, 2016). Students who got engaged in that learning approach achieved a deeper understanding of the critical issues surrounding marriage rites (Ejiofor & Ken-Aminikpo, 2016).

Similarly, classroom teachers perceived the technique in a positive light, citing the importance it had towards educational outcomes. In essence, theater in education is a self-awareness enhancement tool, and a bridge between the teachers and students (Isyar & Akay, 2017). Using drama in school also made the learning process more enjoyable and scaled up the levels of self –confidence among students (Isyar & Akay, 2017). Despite the numerous advantages that the technique has towards learning, its adoption has been subject to several challenges that have impeded its incorporation into many academic disciplines, including issues regarding its conformity to various regulatory requirements (Jacobs, 2026). Besides conformity issues, there have been observations that its application has, to some degree, not achieved the desired educational goals.

Educational Theater in Egypt

Egypt, like other Arabic nations, has incorporated theatrics into their schools' curriculum. Students across all three education stages are routinely exposed to one or more theater elements during their learning processes. Educational policies, moderators have always wished to design a comprehensive system of education that widens students' scope of thinking, rather than just preparing them for employment. Supplementing traditional teaching methods with theatrics has, to a greater extent, transformed the Egyptian education system. Classroom teachers primarily promote theater in education. Besides classrooms, theater engagements, school administrators also invite other practitioners in schools, to stage performances relevant to classroom subjects.

Similar to the numerous western nations, the development of the theater in Egypt was aided by the Khedive Ismail initiative. After the completion of the Suez Canal in 1869, Khedive Ismail decided to establish the Ezbekia Gardens and the Opera House (Barbour, 1935). According to Abdullah (2009), the theater in Egypt had not played any significant role as a literary genre in the culture of the Arabs. Some critics like Qistaki al-Hamisi stated that Arabs lacked the knowledge of theater (Cited in Abdullah, 2009). Despite the negative comments, modern researchers seek to establish the roots of the theater and its correlation with the Arabic culture. According to Barbour (1935), Egyptians, since the 18th century, developed the habit of going to theaters due to the establishment of organized theater

culture. Barbour (1935) illustrates the enormous contribution of Sanu, a renowned theater fanatic in Egypt. Sanu advocated for Egyptianizing the norms of the western theater by creating plays that revolved around shadow puppets and improvisation.

Sanu had a robust belief concerning the role played by the Egyptian theaters in Egypt. According to Abdullah (2009), Sanu had a tradition of ending his plays with a speech. The speeches talked about the importance of the Egyptian theaters as a moral and educational platform (Abdullah, 2009). Further, Sanu showed that Egyptian theaters played a significant role in socio-politics. Similarly, the education system has incorporated school theater in Egypt as an educational platform and a way of growing the skills of students. The incorporation of school theaters in Egypt acts as an effective way of teaching the Egyptian traditions and heritage. Also, it helps in growing the talents of the students, which encourages the development of extracurricular activities in Egypt (Abdullah, 2009). The sociopolitical aspect portrayed by Sanu caused a great rift between him and the Khedive (Barbour, 1935). Sanu had to flee Egypt, and his theater was shut down. Abdullah (2009) explains that since the conception of the theaters in Egypt, they have always had political affiliations, as illustrated by the unjust actions against Sanu. Therefore, the incorporation of the school theater in Egypt will aid in alleviating the political aspect of theater in Egypt. School theaters in Egypt will aid in enhancing the learning experience of the children through the application of creative drama in the classroom setting. The students will learn the heritage of the country through drama. Although school theaters are present, they fail to offer better learning experiences (Abdullah, 2009). The primary reason for this is the lack of efficient teaching guidelines and adequate funds for the necessary infrastructure. The education personnel needs to address these concerns for the school theaters in Egypt to prosper.

2. Literature Review

Educational Theater

A theater is a form of fine art, which employs the use of live presentations to stage an experienced reality or imagination, to viewers at a particular place. Theater combines the use of songs, speech, dances, or signs in a well-designed fashion to provide an up to date viewer experience and steer its intended purpose (Agofure, 2013). Educational theater involves the application of creative drama in the educational setting to enhance a child's learning abilities, and also achieves specific educational objectives more humorously and entertainingly (Agofure, 2013). Significantly, children get to learn more about life, consequences to every action they take, and the beliefs in themselves or others (Hefferon, 2000). There are two forms in which educational theater takes shape. One type also referred to as a theater for children, involves performances meant to educate and entertain younger audiences (Mages, 2016). Performed by adult actors, the plays address specific objectives, and the audience assumes a passive role, in almost the whole scene. The next form of educational theater involves the use of children or adolescents, to produce and perform a given play (Mages, 2016). The significance of this form is that the children or the audience participate actively and learn during the process (Mages, 2016). In the active participation form, the instructors or the teachers design the scripts and avail them to the students who take roles, rehearse, and stage performances. Alternatively, the students may think creatively and come up with artistic work, then proceed to perform.

Historical Perspective of Educational Theater

Theater in education traces its origin in post-war Coventry, at the Belgrade Theater. After World War II, Coventry instituted a rebuild mission from its ruins (Turner, 2010). Consequently, there was a rapid renaissance in the economy, marked by growth in its car manufacturing industries. In 1958, the Belgrade Theater opened to the public with the ultimate goal of signifying renewal in the cities' way of life following a distressing recession. The city officials also recognized the fact that to attain total transformation, there was a need also to make significant changes in the educational sector

(Turner, 2010). The need for educational reforms had been necessitated by changes in people's attitudes towards education.

The formal application of theater in education was then conceived following the establishment of the Theater Centre London in 1953 by Brian Way (Turner, 2010). One of the fundamental roles that the theater played was engaging the students in creative imagination by allowing them to participate in various sessions such as storytelling activities. In John Newsom's publication dubbed Half our Future, illuminated the fact that applying creative arts in the school's curriculum will equip students at an early stage, with tools to help them navigate through different problems as they present, and also help them come to terms with both the outside world and that within them (Turner, 2010).

Following the appointment of Gordon Vallins as a deputy director, a move to formalize the application of theatrics in education gained pace. He creatively devised a means to encourage participation by establishing a program named Young Stagers, where young people were encouraged to come up with their plays and perform them at the auditorium (Turner, 2010). The Young Stagers later evolved into what would then be known as the Belgrade Youth Theater. Gordon later began to engage the local schools directly regularly, enlightening them about the activities at Belgrade's Theater, including the achievements gained by the Belgrade Youth Centre. The schools would later become actively involved in creative works and facilitated their students' participation. This process saw educational theater becoming more embedded into the schools' curriculum and later adopted widely all over the world (Turner, 2010).

3. Significance of Educational Theater

The educational theater plays a central role in promoting positive academic outcomes. Also, students are equipped with critical thinking skills that enable them to have a better problem-solving approach necessary for handling life challenges in the future (Tombak, 2014). Through performances, all students engage their senses, therefore, enhancing their physical fitness, and thus achieving control and body balance. Also, the spirit of teamwork is conceived within students at a tender age, enabling them to develop a sense of cooperation with their colleagues (Basom, 2005). Besides, essential virtues such as trust and self-discipline infiltrate within the students through their involvement in the creative arts. The attributes instead play a significant role in shaping a person's destiny as far as creating and sustaining interpersonal relationships is concerned. That notwithstanding, theater in education is vital in building up confidence and emotional resilience, both of which are important in a person's daily living (Mages, 2016). Nonetheless, through educational theater, students can appreciate cultural diversity, break down persistent stereotypes, and foster peaceful coexistence. The foundation of a cohesive society is embedded in peaceful coexistence, which in turn promotes both personal and economic development.

Challenges Facing the Acceptance and Growth of Educational Theater

Challenges that impede educational theater from exploiting its full potential, in terms of attainment of the predetermined educational outcomes are;

- Lack of a clearly defined framework outlining the procedure of incorporating and applying educational theater into the schools' curriculum.

- Exposing students to theater activities whose content quality is neither defined nor regulated.

- Relying on poorly trained instructors, to guide students through creative theater activities

- Failure on the part of some teachers to recognize the importance of educational theater and develop the right mentality towards it.

- Deficient infrastructures in some learning institutions to support the educational theater.

- High students' enrollment in schools, increasing students to teacher ratio, hence making it a big challenge for teaching to utilize theater in education effectively.

4. Methodology

Conceptual Framework

Integrating creative arts into education systems seeks to enhance efficiency in learning and improve educational outcomes. The proficient application of educational theater plays a significant role in influencing students' behavior and mindsets. In a study done to explore how schools' settings and students' mindsets influenced the educational outcomes, it was established that students' attitudes contribute significantly to academic achievements (Akey, 2006). By engaging actively in learning activities, students' competencies are enhanced and achieve high self-esteem. Engagement in learning also spurs a sense of fulfillment and the desire to explore more so that they can satisfy their curiosity, hence creating a positive emotional state within them. High self-esteemed students realize that they have total control over their academic performance, believe in their capabilities, and, therefore, strive to excel (Akey, 2006). Students who are not engaged tend to think that they are not capable of achieving anything meaningful and hence fail to put any efforts that would lead them to a successful trajectory. Educational theater, therefore, improves academic performances by raising their engagement levels.

Despite the firm anchorage provided for the educational theater by its positive attributes, infrastructural deficiencies, poor curriculum development, and incompetence among some instructors are factors that pull it back and fail to achieve its intended purpose. Theater in education is a practical oriented learning approach that requires the adequate provision of relevant teaching and learning materials in sufficient proportions. Also, instructors' or teachers' expertise has a high impact on the success of any learning program. The teachers need to understand the effective ways of delivering their instructions so that students grasp the concepts and retain them effortlessly. The framework in which lessons are designed, including the specific learning contents, should be objective to facilitate the learning process. Where there is a lack of a clear outline, teachers tend to use their instincts or the defective teaching manuals hence limiting them from achieving the desired academic outcomes. Egyptian educational theater programs are weakened by the failure of the relevant authorities to provide the right teaching guidelines, boost the teachers' competency scales through capacity building, and allocate adequate funds for schools' infrastructural development.

Aim of the Study

This research seeks to uncover the reality behind the theater application at the Egyptian educational scene, using SWOT analysis. The analysis technique will help to identify the elements of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the education sector concerning theater applications, and provide useful insights tailored towards its maximization and effectiveness. This study also comes at a time when the use of SWOT analysis to unravel issues surrounding education is not well established in Arabic studies. The study findings will provide a solid ground for refining educational theater to take its full advantage and improve educational outcomes.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis, a close examination illuminates the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by an individual organization. An evaluation is done to identify any factors, whether internal or external, that may support or stand in the way towards the attainment of the objectives (Morrison, 2016). Conducting a SWOT analysis provides the necessary foundation of understanding what an entity can accomplish, and that which cannot be achieved, alongside the opportunities to explore, and any possible threats (Ommani, 2011). The conception of a SWOT analysis is a strategic planning tool that was facilitated by Albert Humphrey, a management consultant at the Stanford Research Institute in the 1960s (Gulam, 2015).

SWOT Analysis Components

SWOT analysis involves evaluating an organization's both internal and external environment. The two main internal components analyzed are the organization's strengths and weaknesses (Olsen, 2020). Strengths analysis is a market-driven, as it evaluates conformity with customer needs for growth and prosperity of the business. The positive attributes in a company that characterizes its strength include efficient employees, plentiful financial resources, and well-organized channels of distribution, among others. Weaknesses analysis is also market-driven and seeks to clarify the drawbacks a business faces when instituting or executing strategies tailored towards satisfying customer needs (Olsen, 2020). Harmful elements that make an entity disadvantaged include poor management, inadequate financial resources, and inefficient distribution channels, among others (Gulam, 2015). The external environmental analysis focuses on the opportunities and threats prevailing within the surrounding businesses. Opportunities are the environmental elements that, when utilized properly, can bring tremendous rewards (Olsen, 2020). On the other hand, threats involve the obstacles that impede positive transformational change, or attainment of the business' goals. While the internal components are controlled within the company by restructuring modes of operation, external factors usually are beyond its control.

SWOT analysis of Educational Theater

SWOT analysis of educational theater borrows the same concept as applied in the corporate world. Through the analysis, factors that are within the school's environment and which have a direct or indirect influence on the efficiency of the educational theater are examined. The internal factors that are evaluated include schools' infrastructure, human resource capacity, and curriculum design. Enhancing self-esteem, promoting self-actualization, and reinforcing emotional intelligence among students are some of the positive elements that anchor educational theater. However, poorly designed teaching guidelines, strained infrastructure, and incompetent personnel contribute to its inefficiencies. The external factors may have an impact on the efficiency of educational theater, although schools' administrators have little or no control over them. Factors out of the schools' officials' sphere of influence include the citizens' fertility rates, and activities of other media or theater practitioners, who are not within the schools' system.

Research Type

The study entailed the use of a survey methodology. The method involves collecting data directly from the sample population. The study focused on acquiring a sample of the experts and practitioners of the educational theater in various schools and education departments in four different Egyptian governorates (Cairo - Dakahlia - Gharbia - Menoufia). The study selected a random sample of 186 participants under this category. The survey was facilitated by closed-ended questionnaires. It was used to capture the research participants' views on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of educational theater in Egypt. For fair analysis, similar questions were provided to each respondent. Closed-ended questions are preferred in quantitative studies, where the respondents are provided with a set of answers, to base their responses (O'Leary & Israel, 2017). In this study, participants were required to either endorse or disapprove the SWOT analysis results. Closed-ended questionnaire surveys have the advantage of facilitating fast and efficient data collection (Eyisi, 2016). The data for this study were collected and analyzed within January and February 2020. Three variables guided the study, including independent variables, dependent variables, and exotic. The independent variables measured educational theater impact on educational outcomes, while dependent variables measured the degree of its influence. Exotic variables identified problems that curtailed efficiency in educational theater. The statistical analysis involved the computation of percentiles from the data collected. Based on the variables of the study, the analysis calculated the percentiles of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of theater in education. Lastly, the researcher conducted a Chi-

square test for independence to assess the presence of a relationship between educational theater and academic outcomes.

Data Collection Methods

The study took a survey methodology facilitated using closed-ended questionnaires as the primary data collection instruments. The applied side of the study required the use of some colleagues and friends to distribute the questionnaire tool to the study sample in four different Egyptian governorates, where 186 responses out of 400 questionnaires were printed. It is efficient and relatively easy to obtain data from a large sample population through the use of questionnaires (Mathers et al., 2009). Besides, they effectively aid in evaluating the attitudes, opinions, preferences, and behavior of a large population, quickly and cost-effectively, compared to other methods (Abawi, 2017). The data primarily entailed the responses derived from the questionnaires. Additionally, the study also relied on other secondary sources to compile the information available on the subject (Johnston, 2017). Secondary data sources include journals, books, and newspapers, among others (INTRAC, 2017). The secondary data sources that were used in this study include peer-reviewed journals, websites, and various book resources.

After issuing relevant information about the study, including what the research aimed at and the methods that would be used in data collection to the officials and students in the selected learning institutions, approval was granted by the schools' administrations, which set the ball rolling for the study. The questionnaires were administered in January and February 2020.

Data Analysis Methods

To test whether there is a correlational relationship between categorical variables, chi-square was tested, the resultant data were compiled and analyzed by SPSS data analysis software. The software aided in the computation of percentiles of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of theaters in education. The researcher further conducted a chi-square test of independence to identify if there is a correlation between the impacts of educational theater and academic outcomes. The results of the analysis are shown below:

5. Results and Discussions

Strengths of Theater in Education

Responding to the strengths that educational theater has and its influence on the leaners' lives, 173 participants (Table 1) representing 93% of all the respondents agreed to the fact that enhancing self-esteem was a factor that strengthened educational theater practices. They observed that through educational theater, students changed how they perceived themselves and became more confident when handling other class activities. Notably, academic performances were also scaled up.

Table 1. Enhancing Self-Esteem in Educational Theaters

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
	No	13	7.0
Valid	Yes	173	93.0
	Total	186	100.0

In addition, students' educational theater had played a significant role in advancing self-actualization among students, This is in response to the first question of the study about the strengths that characterize the theater as an educational method and the extent of its influence in the educational system. 75.3% (Table 2) of the respondents supported the self-actualization component

representing more than half of the total responses. This is an answer to the second study's question about the extent of the influence of theater activity in Egyptian educational institutions in enhancing self-awareness of the importance of this medium in their academic career.

Table 2. Promoting Self-Actualization in Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
	No	46	24.7
Valid	Yes	140	75.3
	Total	186	100.0

In the study's question about the extent of the theater's contribution as an educational method in enhancing the emotional aspect of students 'personality and raising their academic achievement level, it was found that 72.6% (Table 3) endorsed the emotional growth as a strong pillar that educational theater stood on. Emotional resilience achieved, positively transformed the learners' academic outcomes

Table 3. Enhancing Emotional Growth in Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
	No	51	27.4
Valid	Yes	135	72.6
	Total	186	100.0

Weaknesses of Theater in Education

Regarding the question about the obstacles that face the educational theater and prevent the achievement of its goals and the formation of its weaknesses, it was revealed that 80.6% (Table 4) of the respondents unanimously approved that theater in education was ineffective in driving the desired academic outcomes due to lack of a well-designed curriculum that outlined efficient procedures of applying theatrics at the school's level, including the nature of content that should be staged. The quality of content that students are exposed to, in the form of theater performances was unacceptable. Some performances are dominated by violence and offensive language, which was morally harmful to the students.

Table 4. Unregulated Content Quality in Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
	No	36	19.4
Valid	Yes	150	80.6
	Total	186	100.0

In the question of the study about the quality of the curriculum prepared for the school theater and the availability of training plans provided by the educational departments in the governorates covered by the study. It was found other weaknesses that educational theater faced as concurred by 96.2% (Table 5) respondents, was the lack of relevant training and capacity building among teachers. Inadequately trained teachers, guiding children through creative arts, limited the effectiveness of educational theater since some teachers had no clue of how well to guide their students.

Table 5. Incompetency Among Instructors of Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percent
	No	7	3.8
Valid	Yes	179	96.2
	Total	186	100.0

Opportunities in Educational Theater

In the study's question about the training plans and support for government schools that do not have enough funding from the Ministry of Education, it was found that 77.2% (Table 6) of the study participants supported the 2014-2030 strategic plans as an opportunity to streamline educational theater. The policy framework provided the enhancement of schools' infrastructure, training teachers, and prioritizing schools from impoverished backgrounds by providing proper support.

Table 6. Improving School's Infrastructure in Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
	No	42	22.8
Valid	Yes	144	77.2
	Total	186	100.0

The study raised a question about the availability of a guide for the teacher in the application of educational theater techniques, and the results showed that 90.1% (Table 7) of the study participants perceived curriculum restructuring as an opportunity for improving efficiency in educational theater. It represented 169 participants out of the 186 presents for the study. The sample population against curriculum restructuring was 9.9%, which represented 17 participants out of the 186 presents.

Table 7. Redesigning School's Curriculum in Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
	No	17	9.9
Valid	Yes	169	90.1
	Total	186	100.0

In the study's question about the role of the educational theater in developing the creative skills of students and enhancing the curriculum in a way that contributes to raising the level of artistic sense and the level of their academic achievement, it was found that 88.2% (Table 8) observed that educational theater would benefit immensely when the students are mentored to advance their studies in the creative arts and possibly assume teaching roles. This matter would enhance the levels of expertise and probably educational outcomes for students.

Table 8. Mentoring Students for Teaching Roles in Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	No	22	11.8
	Yes	164	88.2
	Total	186	100.0

Threats in Educational Theater

The study raised questions about the threats facing the theater as an educational method, and the extent of its impact on the acquisition of educational values and its impact on social conditions in Egypt, the study also raised a question about the percentage of students participating in school activities, including theater in light of the challenges facing the educational system in Egypt.

These two previous questions constitute two issues that concern that threatened educational theater where possible moral erosion among students if the government, through policymakers, does not move swiftly to address the issues related to the kind of content students are exposed to, as concluded by 88.2% study participants.

Table 9. Erosion of Moral Values in Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	No	22	11.8
	Yes	164	88.2
	Total	186	100.0

Also, 83.3% respondents shared the opinion that the government's directive to provide equal educational opportunities would scale up the enrollment levels in schools, thereby overstretching the limited facilities to accommodate the students, and a high number of students in one classroom, will curtail student-teacher close contact, and hence limit the applicability of educational theater.

Table 10. High Student's Enrollment in Educational Theater

Responses		Frequency	Percentage
	No	31	16.7
Valid	Yes	155	83.3
	Total	186	100.0

Hypothesis Testing

Null hypothesis: there exists an independent relationship between the impact of educational theater and academic outcomes.

Alternative hypothesis: there exists a dependent relationship between the two variables.

Table 11. Chi-square Test for Independence

Responses	Strength	Weakness	Total
Yes	8	36	44
No	128	154	282
Total	136	190	326
	11.59	Chi-square	
	1	df	
	.0007	P-value	

The study conducted a chi-square test for independence to assess the presence of a relationship between educational theater and academic outcomes. The results identified that the number of observations of the strengths and their impact on the educational level was eight out of 136 strengths. The observed weaknesses were 36, which showed an impact out of a total of 190. Since the p-value is less than the alpha level (0.05), the alternative hypothesis is rejected and hence concluded that the impact of educational theater and academic outcomes are independent.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, theater in education influences the wellbeing of both students and society positively. Through educational theater, students' self-esteem is scaled up, as their physical and emotional resilience also strengthens. Besides, they become more self-conscious, an element that is vital to their wellbeing. However, weaker practitioners, poor content quality, and lack of a clearly defined educational theater curriculum are some of the obstacles that stand in the way of educational theater as an efficient teaching and learning tool. The 2014-2030 education strategic plans of Egypt provide an opportunity for the practice to be streamlined, so that the educational objectives of applying theatrics, are attained, and avert the forecasted threats. This study, therefore, serves as a reflection of the reality behind the educational theater. Educational practitioners, policy regulators,

and other stakeholders need to keenly analyze the findings to aid in formulating useful and objective guidelines that will ensure efficiency in applying theater in education. The individual components of the SWOT analysis are discussed below.

Educational Theater Strengths

Enhancing Students' Self Esteem

Theater in education as a teaching and learning aid plays a central role in developing students' self-esteem. As noted by Hefferon (2000), cultivating high self-esteem among young children through the use of school theater performances improves not only academic performances but also promotes high students' retention rates in school. Although different schools in Egypt have given varied definitions of self-esteem and its measurement scales, Lohan & King (2016) broadly described the self-esteem concept as the perceptions that people have towards themselves, and how they are evaluated. Self-esteem is anchored in five pillars, which influence how people perceive or evaluate themselves. The five pillars involve a person's innate capabilities in terms of his intellect, appearance, and personal integrity. Also, self-esteem is influenced by the feelings of uniqueness and self-worth, achievements in life, feelings of one's ability to take control of his life, and feeling adorable (Hefferon, 2000).

Nurturing self-esteem is not only an essential determinant of educational outcomes but also shapes and adjusts students' behavior and emotions (Lohan & King, 2016). The ease in which a person can create and sustain positive interpersonal relationships with his or her immediate environment, his respective decision-making abilities, and problem-solving competencies are a direct function of the type of self-esteem natured within him or her (Bruno & Njoku, 2014). Low self-esteem is manifested in individuals who always feel tired and are less motivated to undertake particular tasks. Feelings of hopelessness, failure, and depression, always take center stage within low esteemed people. Consequently, they become extremely anxious, with feelings of inadequacy, sweeping their real personality, and get overwhelmed with negativity (Bruno & Njoku, 2014). They neglect any duties assigned to, while others opt to resign by believing that they are worthless.

Self-esteem is nurtured from a tender age through children's associations with parents at home, and their experiences in school. Incorporating drama and other theater forms into the school's curriculum provide a solid ground for children to become more aware of themselves in a positive way, bridge any self-deficiency perceptions within them through healthy interactions with their teachers and other students. The journey towards positive self-esteem begins at the classroom level when a teacher forms creative groups and incorporates students into the groups formed. Students' feeling of belonging, which is essential in nurturing self-esteem, is conceived at the group level. Within the groups, students are encouraged to think creatively and come up with consistent performances to reinforce the lessons taught. Through teamwork, students feel more loved, and support one another, a matter that fosters the collaborative spirit into adulthood (Hefferon, 2000). The teacher also plays an essential role in creating a positive learning environment by designing the lessons artistically. As an artist, the teacher employs different techniques and skills to attain the desired learning objective. Through critical and creative thinking, students tend to feel more competent in specific activities. Feeling kind towards themselves boosts their self-esteem. The positively nurtured self-esteem allows a student to take full advantage of the learning opportunity and strives towards attaining good results academically. Teachers who see their students excel feel proud of their fruitful work and feel more motivated.

Promoting Self Actualization

The educational theater considers self-actualization as one of its main objectives. Kurt Goldstein, who is credited as the first person to define what self-actualization is, described it as the use of a person's inherent potential and abilities to influence or determine what they what to become

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(Jena & Dorji, 2016). The concept became famous following the introduction of the hierarchy of needs by Maslow. His hierarchy of needs concept coined the idea that for a person to become self-actualized, he or she needed first to become aware of who they are (Jena & Dorji, 2016). A person may leverage the potential discovered not only for their benefit but also in making other peoples' lives better. Educational theater contributes immensely towards self-actualization, by inviting students to cooperate, and have a shared responsibility. In the process, each one of them discovers who they indeed are, and their capabilities (Waters et al., 2012).

Through active engagements in different activities such as drama, poetry, or music, the students gain new experiences, and perceptions that shape their understanding of different life components, and their primary transformational role. When teachers take active roles in the performances, they provide a different experience, from the one a student is accustomed to in their formal student-teacher interactions providing an opportunity to learn through a wider lens. The self-awareness that is created through educational theater fuels the students' desire to explore greater heights academically, after realizing their capabilities and what they want in life. The newly acquired motivation drives, magnificent academic performances that everyone within the students' circle appreciates.

Emotional Enhancement and Personal Growth

The human brain undergoes slow and steady development, right after birth, and progresses through childhood to adulthood. However, the early stages after birth play a central function in determining the personal and emotional growth of a child. It is, therefore, prudent to provide children with an environment that meets their basic emotional needs alongside other social and educational necessities. One strategic approach that facilitates the enhancement of children's personal, emotional, social, and cognitive functions is through artistic (Rowe, 2018). Earlier in life, activities such as singing, dances, and poems, among others, help to enrich their confidence levels, and also provide an opportunity for self-discovery. When students take part in drawing activities, the feelings harbored within them are revealed through their choice of colors.

Similarly, their emotions can equally be revealed by their body language when dancing, or through musical rhythms, when they play musical instruments (Rowe, 2018). The class teachers have the responsibility of observing and identifying the non-verbal cues, then take necessary steps to provide psychological support. Children undergoing one or several forms of emotional turmoil can develop positivity by engaging in activities that teach them better ways of coping with difficulties and ways in which they can express themselves. Therefore, educational theater helps students attain emotional resilience to stay focused on their academics and relate better with the people around them.

Weaknesses of Educational Theater

Despite the strengths that are attributed to the use of theatrics in facilitating teaching and learning activities, there are also several weaknesses that the practice faces that makes it challenging to attain the desired educational outcomes. The weaknesses include;

Unregulated Content Quality

The primary function of educational theater is to supplement the learning process. The goal is attained by giving the theories learned, a practical face that makes it easier for students to grasp and retain the concepts delivered in class. However, some performances are designed poorly, a matter that makes them lose their appeal towards the target audience. Most of the content developers fail to take into account the underlying students' needs and end up exposing performances that are dominated by vulgar language. Besides the indecent language, some of the scenes portray violence and explicit adult content, both of which are inappropriate to school children. Different movements have

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expressed concern regarding the nature of performances staged for children, and the underlying moral consequences of promoting such contents within the school environment, and the society at large.

Many activists have argued that instead of fostering positive growth among school-going children, the nature of performances would sway them in the wrong direction. Therefore, activists advocate for strict adherence to professional standards when creating any content whose target audience is children. Artists involved in creating educational content need to make good use of their expertise and knowledge in understanding the specific needs of children, and align them to learning objectives, to create highly professional content. Artistic works that are well created can be performed from the child's standpoint, to scale up their concentration levels, and also provide an interactive session and an overall smooth learning experience.

Incompetency Among Instructors

There is a significant variance in the level of expertise among instructors within the Egyptian school system. Three main factors influence how teachers undertake their roles. The factors include their knowledge, levels of expertise in teaching, and their professional attitudes or beliefs (Rahman et al., 2011). Inadequate in-service training for teachers to handle the creative element of educational theater contributes to its ineffectiveness as an educational tool. In many learning centers, teachers had not been mentored to undertake particular theater activities. Lack of appropriate training placed some teachers at the worst trajectory since they could hardly figure out how best to incorporate theatrics in their teaching process so that their students are equally advantaged. Ineffective implementation of the relevant policies in the education sector to facilitate extensive training of teachers has been a significant impediment towards realizing the efficiency and effectiveness of Theater in Education (Olaniyan, 2015). Having the right skills is essential when taking students through theater performances since it allows the instructor to balance creativity with the lesson's objectives so that students' learning is maximized (Vila i Tana, 2018). An effective teaching methodology is one that allows active participation between the teacher and students. By participating actively, the teacher can closely monitor the students and address any questions or difficulties experienced.

Opportunities

One of the most significant opportunities that educational theater in Egypt will benefit from being the governments' strategic plan to enhance schools' infrastructure and mentor officials taking part in educational theater (Nasr, 2014). Besides, the ministry of educations in Egypt seeks to redesign the schools' curriculum to enable efficient incorporation of educational theater and other learning activities. By providing a more customized curriculum, teachers will have the relevant tool of reference when implementing educational theater activities (Nasr, 2014). Educational theater in Egypt will also be promoted in marginalized areas of the nation, following the government declared in its 2014-2030 strategic plans, to provide equal opportunities for all school-going children, while prioritizing students from poor backgrounds (Nasr, 2014). Educational theater is also a viable employment avenue in Egypt for students who advance and specialize in specific disciplines. Schools in Egypt will, therefore, benefit to a greater extent, given the significant number of highly skilled trainers that will be available. Educational theater in Egypt, in particular, will be strengthened, given the skilled personnel who will ensure professionalism is upheld when discharging their duties. Through educational theater, students will also gain useful skills and competencies in specific areas such as music, drawing, and poetry, among others. The skills acquired may help them generate income to keep their life moving.

Similarly, Egyptian schools that promote educational theater appropriately may attract sponsorships by creating pieces of art that have an aesthetic value. The funds generated may then be used in other useful educational programs such as purchasing books or hiring highly experienced instructors, to advance further Educational theater in their respective schools (Olaniyan, 2015).

Students exposed to different arts may be inspired to advance their studies in other artistic fields and specialize in different disciplines such as play writings, advertising, and acting, among others. The inspiration will consequently be a source of employment into specialized domains such as the film industry (Oshionebo & Asen, 2017).

Threats

The two main factors threatening the significance and applicability of educational theater in Egypt are the kinds of material students are exposed to and the government declaration of enhancing equity in service provision. Without having swift and precise interventions that will outline the quality standards that the educational content should meet, educational theater in Egyptian schools stands a chance of eroding the students' moral values and impacting their lives negatively. The government's decision to provide equal educational opportunities for all children would lead to increased student enrollment in schools; therefore, the available infrastructure and human resources will not be able to accommodate the upsurge. The first step that the Ministry of Education should take is to expand the infrastructure in schools, provide the relevant teaching aids, alongside employing more teachers who are well trained, to match the forecasted high students' enrollment.

7. Recommendations

The government, through the Ministry of Education in Egypt, should organize and conduct sensitization forums involving teachers in all the learning institutions across the country. The sensitization forums are meant to inform the practitioners of the importance of educational theater in Egyptian education systems. Sensitization should base on the long-term advantages of educational theater in Egyptian schools, rather than relying on the immediate benefits, such as making the learning process entertaining. Curriculum developers in the Egyptian education system have the responsibility of conducting extensive research on how to design an efficient curriculum. They should take into account the students' needs and the desired educational outcomes, to align them efficiently with educational theater goals in Egyptian schools.

Policy regulators have to outline the quality standards that educational theater in Egyptian schools should meet clearly. The provisions should define the nature of content appropriate for specific age groups. Creative content should stick to the professional standards set in place. Regular supervision needs to be done in Egyptian schools to ensure adherence to quality standards. Regular in-service training should be conducted across the country to equip the teachers with the relevant skills for conducting educational theater activities. The training modules should then be made available to all instructors to allow easy references and ensure that all activities are done correctly. The Egyptian government has to allocate more funds to enable school administrators to improve the infrastructures in their respective institutions and also to purchase the necessary teaching and learning aids.

Scope for Further Research

Social scientists should consider exploring the curriculum review process and provide recommendations that curriculum developers will utilize when designing an efficient study program incorporating educational theater in Egyptian schools.

Acknowledgment

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