

**ENHANCING STUDENT MOTIVATION
AND LIFE SKILLS THROUGH THEATRE ARTS:
A CASE STUDY OF A SCHOOL DRAMA FESTIVAL**

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The traditional education system is often criticized for its focus on exams, heavy syllabi, and rote memorization, frequently leaving limited space for cultivating essential life skills such as teamwork, leadership, and creativity. This research investigates the impact of theatre arts on student motivation, engagement, and skill development through a case study of a school drama festival involving 130 students from Grades 6 to 12. The festival, which showcased five theatre productions, proved to be a significant success, highlighting the potential of artistic activities to engage students in meaningful ways. Students attended drama practices eagerly, even rising early for school on festival days, marking a significant change in attitude from their typical reluctance toward routine school activities. Parents noted this shift with surprise, observing that their children, who generally needed encouragement to attend school, were now motivated to participate actively in drama-related activities. The festival also notably impacted isolated and introverted students who were more willing to collaborate and engage positively with their peers. The research problem addressed in this study is the educational gap left by traditional teaching methods that often overlook the development of practical, real-life skills. This study explores how integrating artistic activities like theatre can bridge this gap and foster both personal and social development among students. A qualitative methodology was employed, including participant observation, 12 interviews with parents, and three (03) focus group interviews with student participants. The findings reveal that theatre arts transform students, enhancing skills often neglected in conventional education systems. Participation in drama increased student motivation and improved their ability to work collaboratively, lead effectively, and apply creativity in real-world contexts. In conclusion, the research underscores the potential of theatre as a powerful pedagogical tool, advocating for more artistic programs in schools to provide a holistic educational experience. The success of the drama festival illustrates that theatre can complement traditional learning by equipping students with vital skills for personal growth and real-life application, thereby addressing the limitations of an exam-focused system.

Keywords: Theatre arts, student motivation, skill development, educational innovation

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