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Noha El Attar

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Role expansion of individual workforce through a drama based organisational intervention

Noha El Attar

Toulouse Business School,
13 Rue Saint-Lambert, 75015 Paris
Email: n.el-attar@tbs-education.org

Abstract: This study explores the impact in organisations of a form of applied art, namely dramatic enactments inspired by psychodrama as a means for role expansion and self-awareness. The goal of dramatic enactments in organisations in this study is to help individual workforce use their imagination to expand their identity away from the roles they play and move toward an inner self-manager (Meta Role) enabling them to expand their role repertoire. The research was a case study entailed conducting individual dramatic video recorded sessions for managers and staff, observing them in the process, conducting interviews to elicit their own reflection of the experience and its effects on their learning and self-inquiry. An abductive thematic analysis resulted in two underlying dynamics: splitting and role exploration. Using this data, this study discusses the impacts of dramatic enactments on individual workforce which aides as an influence on their attitudes towards themselves and their organisation.

Keywords: role expansion; self-awareness; art based research; visual data analysis; dramatic interventions in organisations; self-inquiry; imagination; improvisation.

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Biographical notes: Noha El Attar is an Organizational Psychology researcher and lecturer in multiple Business Schools in France. She is an Expressive Art Director and Founder of The Corporateatro[®] specialised in executive solutions. She earned her Doctorate of Business in Toulouse Business School/France. Her current research interests include art based interventions in organisations, the role of metaphor and improvisation in business and the ethical representation of genders in mass culture. She is known with her brand of non-conventional, experiential learning approach to HR and Organizations. She successfully trained and lectured diverse participants from different industries across the Middle East, Asia and Europe.

1 Introduction

Arts play many roles, at challenging times it can speak to issues in areas such as faith, policies, knowledge, and antiquity. Arts can deliver thought provoking original standpoints on an immense collection of universal ideas. Therefore arts can exist not only in the society but specifically in organisations to encourage critical thinking, nurturing

understanding of different views and thoughts, igniting ideas and challenge dominant attitudes. The question is what kind of art? The objective of this paper is to examine whether dramatic enactments similar to psychodrama inspire organisations not as a therapeutic tool but as a form of applied arts? The reason why this can be a possibility: because psychodrama enactment is an active form of art originally used in therapy; it involves the direct interaction and immersion of participants' imagination emotionally and rationally. Psychodrama might assist participants in both expressing previously suppressed emotions and co-creating answers to the problems they might be facing in their current organisations (Lennie et al., 2021).

The general aim of psychodrama as described by its founder Jacob Levy Moreno (1889–1974) is to scientifically explore the truth through a dramatic method. Psychodrama uses creativity, group dynamics and role theory to help individuals gain a new perspective through better understating and awareness of their roles in life. This understanding and awareness might directly and indirectly impact different stakeholders' awareness and learning in the organisation whether internally and/or externally assumed the suitable culture by management and the organisational safety climate that can foster this type of innovative intervention. There are several bodies of literature that lay the groundwork for conceiving a study to address this question, namely, artistic interventions in organisations and social psychology. This study complements the existing literature by examining the impact of the intersection between those two disciplines on the attitude towards the self of a group of individual employees in the workplace context.

2 Literature review

2.1 Artistic interventions in organisations

Organisations continuously search for new approaches to evolve, learn and innovate. The challenge is complicated because organisations are expected to be competitive, sustainable, and innovative with often very restricted budgets in a demanding changing market. These kinds of challenges need experimentation with renewed approaches and perspectives. One of the new approaches that have emerged over the past decades is the use of artistic interventions in organisations. There is a emergent acknowledgment of artistic, imaginative and emotional processes in organisation and management studies (Beyes and Steyaert, 2012, 2013; Fotaki et al., 2017; De Cock, 2016; Hay, 2014).

In the past years a growing number of researchers, consultants, and artists have written about ways of bringing ideas and practices from the world of the arts into organisations (e.g., Barry and Meisiek, 2010). There is still room for more research to be done in this promising field (Barry and Meisiek, 2010; Antal and Strauß, 2014).

To enable such dramatic intervention to be conducted in organisations, particular conditions are important. Robert Landy explained three considerations to adapt drama based interventions to organisations. First, that it is crucial to understand the nature and culture of the organisation as well as the individual needs of each protagonist. Individual employees arrive to the spontaneous stage in job-related roles. Action and drama are very unfamiliar and maybe strange to them. Though the elucidation of drama-to-job-to-life may be apparent to some, the understanding of drama-to-job-to-life may not be to them.

Second, Landy explained that it is important for the drama directors to consider their own style and motives. They should ask themselves what is appropriate for the situation. What flexible actions that might be taken to maximise the benefits of the intervention in a non-familiar context? Third, adapting to organisational culture is important for the protagonists' safety. Some dramatic techniques are not feasible to undertake in certain cultures. Fourth, Landy also emphasised that the purposes of the dramatic interventions in organisations are educational rather than therapeutic in nature (Landy, 2000).

Research by Berthoin Antal demonstrated the necessity of top management support in order for artistic interventions to get through in organisations. She described three forms of support needed from top management: initiating, encouraging reflection about the process, and empowering the participants to move the results into real life (Antal, 2014). Her papers also emphasised the balance between experimenting with non-conventional artistic interventions in organisations and the automatic, simplistic assumption that arts stimulate creativity for employees and that it will be transferred automatically to the organisation (Antal, 2014). There might be some unfavourable consequences, for example: the confrontations between dissimilar people might reinforce stereotypes, and they might prompt defensiveness rather than engagement (Friedman and Antal, 2005). There is also a potential risk of making work-related choices 'under the influence of' exciting artistic experiences, when people's zeal may override their rational thinking (Antal, 2014). Issues of authority and control are also raised in the literature on artistic interventions as a potential downside. This was the focus of Timothy Clark and Iain Mangham's study on the use of 'Theater of the Oppressed' in a company in UK (2004). Their analysis revealed how the potential of the arts to address underlying issues in an organisation can be masked by authority in the organisation. (Clark and Mangham, 2004; Antal, 2014).

The findings of this study showed an extension to what have been studied before by previous scholars in this field. These findings were summarised in seven possible implications for individual employees in organisations. Those seven possible implications are: role expansion, growth of the witnessing self, enhanced authenticity, release of self-editing processes, seeing different perspectives, catharsis, fun and play. Table 1 shows the possible implications of dramatic interventions in general, potential challenges for applying dramatic interventions in organisations and possible effects of dramatic interventions in organisations.

Table 1 Possible implications and potential challenges for applying drama interventions in organisations

<i>Implication</i>	<i>Implications in drama</i>	<i>Potential challenges in organisations</i>	<i>Possible implications in organisations</i>
Role Expansion	Increase role repertoire, expressions of suppressed roles, increased sense of connection with others, trying new ways, exercising a broader range of choice (Emunah, 1994)	Leadership and Management might not accept these new roles and the subsequent decisions or actions chosen by employees. Issues of authority and control might arise (Clark and Mangham, 2004; Antal, 2014)	Communication with a diverse range of 'others' Less conflicts Variety of decision making choices. Team cohesiveness. Innovation. Acceptance of diversity

Table 1 Possible implications and potential challenges for applying drama interventions in organisations (continued)

<i>Implication</i>	<i>Implications in drama</i>	<i>Potential challenges in organisations</i>	<i>Possible implications in organisations</i>
Witnessing Self	Awareness and insight development, more choice, control behaviour, self and others understanding (Emunah, 1994; Blatner, 2007)	Reinforcing defensiveness rather than engagement (Friedman and Antal, 2005)	Rational thinking Objectivity Seeing the big picture Developing insight Possibility of change
Release of Self Editing process	Freedom, creativity, release of the “well-adjusted adult”, exploration of newness (Spolin, 1999; Blatner, 1988)	Making work related choices under the influence of the artistic interventions zeal (Antal, 2014)	Creativity Innovation Mistake tolerance environment
Seeing different perspectives	Thought reflection, allowing recreation and refining, permission to see different perspectives (Jones, 2001)	Reinforcing stereotypes rather than collaboration or acceptance (Adler, 2002; Friedman and Antal, 2005)	Coping with change Better communication Less Conflict More acceptance and understanding of diversity
Catharsis	Release of unexpressed emotions that can stand as a barrier to full thoughtfulness (Landy, 1994)	In groups, if the environment is harsh and cruel, that would be a very high risk of hurting the protagonist rather than allowing him or her release pent up emotions (Feldhendler et al., 1994)	Emotional intelligence Stress release Rational decisions
Fun and Play	Playfulness, freedom, creativity, spontaneity, greater tolerance of oneself (Emunah, 1994)	Due to the probable assumption from the top management that creativity will be automatically transferred (Antal, 2014) to the workplace. That might add pressure of exaggerated expectations from the top management onto the employees	Sparks creativity and innovation. Stress release

3 Methods

This study originated in organisational practice, the aim of which is to examine if dramatic techniques similar to psychodrama would develop self-awareness in individual employees. The data for this research is collected through

- 1 video- recorded observations of each dramatic intervention for each participant
- 2 semi-structured interviews
- 3 field notes.

The rationale for choosing the qualitative approach is to examine thoughts and feelings of individual employees in order to update new concepts or theories for applying artistic interventions in organisations. The field work started on December 2018 until July 2019.

3.1 Multiple supporting roles in the organisation

The roles of the HR Director, the Organisational Development, IT and the Procurement team were crucial to authorise and execute the research project. Their contribution was divided into several phases. The following phases conceived in different time intervals from the beginning until the end of the field work:

Phase 1: Authorisation of the research project: The HR director discussed the project with the management team after our discussions. She was able to get approvals for using the space, ways of communicating the project, provide the theatre props, video recording equipment, ensuring anonymity and comfort of the employees.

Phase 2: Planning, scheduling, announcing and purchasing: The organisational development team prepared and communicated the announcement through the organisation intranet. They also provided personalised information for curious employees who dropped by their office to ask about more information about the project. They then started scheduling times with me, informing the procurement team about the equipment needed and booking the space that will be transformed into a studio or spontaneous stage.

Phase 3: Execution: The Organisational Development team, IT team and the Procurement team all worked in parallel to ensure the project started on time, with all necessary equipment.

Phase 4: Announcement: Volunteers (2 employees) helped in acting and creating a video that complemented the announcement to explain the project in an audio visual way. That was very helpful in introducing the project in a non-threatening way to employees.

Phase 5: Handling pop-up problems: On the first day, similar to any project, there were some issues in the recording equipment. The IT team and the Organisational Development team managed to quickly solve the problem wisely without affecting the participants.

3.2 Participants

The choice of participants started with the choice of the organisation, which was a purposive approach to sampling, seeking an organisation that will have the capacity to explore such non-conventional research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994, p.202). Only one organisation out of three was more receptive due to their current issues concerning expanding and uncertainty, trust in me because of our several years of work together in organisational development projects and their willingness to explore new methods of learning, diagnosis or data gathering. At the time of the research the company was characterised by tensions between the management team and the staff due to lack of communications about the future and whether they will continue in this local market or focus on expanding in other global markets. There was a void of communication which left employees in a state of confusion, ambivalence and indecision about themselves and the future. The organisation permitted only 20 participants to volunteer in the research

project for work load reasons. Later, 3 participants declined, so the sample size was 17 individual employees, who were between 24 and 38 years old, a female to male ratio of 3 : 1.

3.3 Ethics

General principles across the various codes of practice for ethical research encompass: obtaining informed consent, protection of research participants (including confidentiality and anonymity), not doing harm to participants, voluntary participation and the right to withdraw, assessment of potential benefits and risks to participants (King and Horrocks, 2010). The invitation to participate in the study included information about the study design, data analysis, confidentiality, and voluntariness. To ensure that the participants remained anonymous to each other and to their organisation, the video material was recorded and given to each participant right after the dramatic intervention and another copy was with me under strict anonymous conditions by blurring the visual identification of the participants.

3.4 Data collection process

Each individual employee had a dramatic session which was divided into 3 phases: Pre-drama interview, During Drama Intervention and Post-Drama interview. Post-drama interviews were conducted at two points in time: one was right after the drama and another was 3 months later. This time gap was intended to allow reflexivity and mindfulness of the participants while watching their recorded dramas in retrospect. The following subsections will elucidate Individual dramatic enactments, data analysis and findings from the drama, pre and post interviews.

3.5 Individual dramatic enactments

The dramatic interventions were in the form of individual monodramas based on the request of the organisation and the individual employees to allow personal self-inquiry rather than traditional group based drama interventions in organisations which in some cases turn into a political demonstration rather than true self learning.

The dramatisation took several phases to allow the participants to smoothly transition from reality to imagination. First, warming-up: the protagonist expressed their reason of attending the session and what would they like to explore dramatically. Each protagonist used the space using their bodies through dramatisation (Kipper, 1967). Second, Story: protagonists started narrating the workplace issue that they would like to enact (Blatner, 1997). Third, Invitation of Auxiliaries: an auxiliary is the position taken by other participants in a role- playing exercise, or psychodrama, in order to mimic particular situations for the protagonists. In this study, when auxiliaries started to emerge in the narration, the protagonist picked from the theatre props what suited the auxiliary as a symbol (Blatner, 1997, 2007). Fourth: Soliloquy: the protagonist started a dialogue with the imagined auxiliary until there was nothing else to say (Kellermann, 1984; Yaniv, 2012). Fifth: Role reversal: the protagonist reversed roles with the auxiliary; the auxiliary was the organisation or the management team in their dramatic enactments. Role reversal was used for 2 objectives: for the individuals to release pent-up emotions, in other words for catharsis, and to provide information about the auxiliary (Blatner, 1997, 2007). Sixth:

Mirroring: the protagonist move out of the scene by symbolically stepping out from the imaginary stage to take an outsider view of the scene. This step was used for 2 objectives: it distanced the individual employee from the scene and allowed new perceptions to emerge (Blatner, 1997, 2007). Seventh, The Wish: the protagonists acted out their wishes for the future (Jones, 2001; Blatner, 2007). Eighth, Closure: From the protagonist's cues, the dramatic enactment was put to an end gently (Jones, 2001; Blatner, 2007). Table 2 shows the reader the description of each stage of the dramatic intervention, its purpose and how the enactments are used in the organisational context and with individual protagonist rather than a group setting.

Table 2 Adaptation of drama procedure to working with individual employees in an organisational setting

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description in drama</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Adaptation in the study</i>
Warm Up (10–15 min)	The protagonists explore the space, the props, and the stage; their bodies and start to be warmed up for the enactments	To gradually act as a buffer between the real world and the imaginary world of drama	Protagonists explore the space, the props, the stage their bodies and starts to be warmed up for the enactments
Story (5–10 min)	Protagonists share a real story that they are facing in their life that causing a kind of disturbance	For the director of the drama and the audience to understand the issue facing the protagonist	Protagonists share the issue that is bothering them at the workplace
Invitation of auxiliaries (5–10 min)	Protagonists attain a real encounter with themselves and the significant others in their lives. Bringing the significant others on the stage	To start a dialogue with the counter roles	Protagonists attain a real encounter with significant others in their workplace. Theatre props and objects were used representing auxiliaries
Soliloquy (10–15 min)	Protagonists confronts the auxiliaries about their thoughts, feelings and anything that could not be said in their reality	Catharsis, Concretisation of challenging emotions, Perspective gaining	Protagonists confront the auxiliaries about their thoughts, feelings and anything that could not be said in their reality
Role reversal (10–20 min)	Provides the protagonist the opportunity to experience the role of others in their lives and to experience themselves as others see them	Perspective gaining, Learning to cope with counter roles	Provides the protagonists the opportunity to experience the role of others in their lives and to experience themselves as others see them
Mirror (5–10 min)	Provides the protagonist to see the full picture in the role of the audience	Seeing the whole scene as an outsider, Balancing conflicts between counter roles, Starting to find solutions	Provides the protagonist to see the full picture in the role of the audience

Table 2 Adaptation of drama procedure to working with individual employees in an organisational setting (continued)

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Description in drama</i>	<i>Purpose</i>	<i>Adaptation in the study</i>
The wish (10–20 min)	The protagonist is offered some kind of super power or fantasy wish by the drama director	Opens beyond normal thinking, Permits the utilisation of imagination, Permits surplus reality and imagination of the future	The protagonist is offered some kind of super power or fantasy wish by the drama director
Closure and de-rolling (5–10 min)	The drama director asks if the wish is a good ending or if protagonists like to have another closure. De-rolling is metaphorically undressing all props and bringing back auxiliaries to their original roles	Gradual movement from the imaginary world back to the world of reality	The drama director asks if the wish is a good ending or if protagonists like to have another closure. De-rolling by putting all props outside the stage
Sharing after drama (30–40 min)	The protagonist rests and starts listening to sharing and resonating feelings and thoughts from others. It is important to note that sharing after the drama is free from judgements or advising	An opportunity for the protagonists to see how the audience resonated with their drama, Audience usually resonates with the role and the counter role, Giving a chance for the protagonist for validation and/or further understanding	The protagonist rests while listening to sharing and resonating feelings and thoughts from others. Individual sharing with the director of the drama in case of mono drama

Duration of drama enactments may differ according to each individual employee readiness and inclination.

3.6 Data analysis process

The data was qualitatively analysed following five phases recommended by Yin: Compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding (Yin, 2009). There was a continuous movement between the data collected and the data analysis in an organised fashion. Audio and visual data were broken down into smaller fragments, which may be considered the disassembling procedure. This was followed by using themes (or codes or clusters of codes) to regroup the fragments into different groupings and sequences that might have been in the original recorded videos and interview scripts. The last phase is the reuniting procedure. The reuniting was facilitated by representing the data in a tabular form and then in a thematic network which created a new narrative (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Several modes of analysis were carried: First mode was simultaneous analysis with the process. Then, a revision was conducted based on the audio transcripts followed by analysing the visual data separately, to avoid the mistake of focusing only on the verbal word (Antal and Friedman, 2017). After considering different methods of data analysis both grounded-theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) together with thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001) was used. The data was attempted with flexibility and anticipation of any emerging unexpected surprises according to the nature

of abductive studies. A member of the organisational development team was invited to read the field notes and the audio transcripts to reach an interrater agreement without disclosing the identity of participants.

4 Findings

The pre-drama and post-drama findings showed that the dramatic intervention enhanced Self-awareness and self-inquiry of the individual employees. The most important dimension was the Meta-self or the self-educator. The Meta-self in this study is the inner guide that supported the individual employees in creating their aimed ideal Self. This thoughtful awareness and creation of an inner guide might impact the individual employee, which can guide management actions, ethical decisions and justice enactments in organisations.

4.1 Pre-drama interviews: attitude towards-self

Employee attitudes and behaviours studies have become increasingly important in predicting employee behaviour at work (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). A simple definition of attitude is a mindset or a proclivity to act in a certain way as a result of one's experience and temperament (Pickens, 2005). Perceptual and cognitive processes impact people's attitudes about objects in their environment. The person's behaviour toward the thing is then influenced by these attitudes. Such attitudes frequently lean in one direction or the other, for example, in favour of or against the item (Van der Vliet and Hellgren, 2002). Attitudes assist us in defining how we see situations as well as how we act in response to the scenario or object (Pickens, 2005).

In this study a group of participants described unhelpful or negative affectivity towards themselves. For instance, two managers expressed their helplessness and hesitation during their drama enactment in their role as a manager. Another group of participants described helpful or positive affectivities towards themselves. For example, ambition, success, confidence, passion: "I am working here since the company was first established. I used to leave work at 1 am and could not find any transportation to take me home. I really loved my work and believed in the purpose of the company".

Table 3 shows a summary of attitudes towards self that emerged in the pre-drama interviews. Some participants had more than one response as shown in the table. Some participants had mixed attitudes towards themselves and some participants were uncertain or clueless.

Table 3 Patterns in attitude towards-self in pre-drama interviews

	<i>Negative attitude</i>	<i>Uncertain attitude</i>	<i>Positive attitude</i>	<i>Mixed attitude</i>
<i>Self-blaming</i>				
<i>Self-Critical</i>			<i>Ambitious, Successful</i>	<i>Self-critical and Ambitious.</i>
<i>Hopelessness</i>			<i>Confident</i>	<i>Hesitation and Confidence</i>
<i>Helplessness</i>			<i>Passionate</i>	
<i>Hesitation</i>		<i>Clueless</i>	<i>loving to work</i>	
Number of participants	11	2	8	4

4.2 *Post-drama interviews: attitudes towards-self*

Post-drama interviews were conducted with the same group of individual employee 3 months after performing their dramatic enactments. A group of participants described helpful or positive affectivities towards themselves after their drama enactment. The helpful or positive affectivities towards themselves were categorised as follows: Taking responsibility for their mistakes, taking authority for themselves, unrestrained and self-empowerment. For Example: “I felt that I am taking too long in the victim role” “I must go look for new opportunities even if I am 60. Age is not important” “I like being seen and recognised, I want to take actions and leave something useful for others instead of just being an employee” “I do not know exactly what’s stopping me, fear or laziness”. “I feel happy I took action and applied and got accepted in another job. I want to meet new people and learn new skills.” “I resigned and currently staying with my children” “It felt really good to finally take a decision that I really wanted and longed for years.” “I feel that I am starting to wake up, I spent too many years in self-pity and in a comfort zone that I do not like.” The remaining five participants described unhelpful affectivities towards themselves in differing intensities. These affectivities were as follows: Stagnation in the role of being manipulated, or waiting for someone or something to happen, or feeling ambivalent, or hiding, or feeling low self-confidence.

Table 4 shows a comparison of attitudes towards self Pre and Post the dramatic enactment.

Table 4 Pre and post drama patterns towards-self

		<i>Negative attitude</i>	<i>Uncertain attitude</i>	<i>Positive attitude</i>	<i>Mixed attitude</i>
		<i>Self-blaming and Self Critical</i>		<i>Ambitious, Successful and Confident</i>	<i>Self-critical and Ambitious.</i>
		<i>Hopelessness, Helplessness and Hesitation</i>	<i>Clueless</i>	<i>Passionate and loving to work</i>	<i>Hesitation and Confidence</i>
Pre drama patterns	Number of participants	11	2	8	4
Post drama patterns	Number of participants	2	1	12	1

4.3 *Observational data*

Current selves were expressed by participants in two body image categories during the dramatic enactments. These two categories were: eight expansive gestures and body images while thirty one gestures and body images were contractive. These categories were derived from observing the body images of participants during their spontaneous enactments and while utilising the space in the beginning, middle and end of the dramatic enactments.

The *Expansive body images* were open, utilising the space and moving freely on the spontaneous stage, they also showed conversational gestures using their hands while having a conversation in the scene or enactment. And lastly a facial expression shown by some protagonists that was considered expansive was smiling and laughing in a childish

or shy manner. Protagonists were laughing at themselves or smiling at the idea of spontaneous play and imagination. Some protagonists' faces were smiling while their bodies were still.

The *Contracting body images* were in a still or frozen body posture. Some showed closed hand gesture either on their chest or on their stomach. Others placed their hands on their waist as if waiting for something to happen in a frustrated way. Some protagonists' heads were down and their eyes were also looking downwards, as if they were ashamed of themselves or very sad. Other protagonists placed their finger on their chin in a skeptical or confused manner.

Future selves were expressed through the protagonists' body images, facial expressions and gestures at the end of the dramatic enactments. Those future body images were analysed in four main categories: utilising the space and their bodies, nurturing and embracing themselves, polarisation or extremes, protection or violence. Protagonists showed similar utilisation of space, whereas nurturing and embracing oneself were obvious in females rather than male protagonists.

4.4 Summary of pre and post drama changes from both audio and visual data

Nearly 30% of the employees showed no significant change in their attitude towards themselves. Some participants showed slight relief or catharsis though. The remaining 70% of the employees showed changes which appeared with varying intensities, starting from slight changes of attitude towards self to very high awareness, recognition of different roles, the desire to take actions inside and outside the organisation and creating or exploring new roles. Table 5 shows the summary of changes for each participant pre and post the drama intervention.

Table 5 Summary of changes for pre and post drama intervention

<i>Employee</i>	<i>Pre drama attitude</i>	<i>Post drama attitude</i>
Sam	Workplace Issue: Felt manipulated for going the extra mile but with no returns. Revengeful feelings, Violent intentions	Participant's attitude did not change and was stagnant in the role of being manipulated. Not able to see a different perspective
Mady	Workplace Issue: bored, underdeveloped	Participant's attitude did not change, stagnant in the 'waiting: role'
Helen	Workplace Issue: ambivalence, confusion, apathetic, unclear objective	Participant's attitude did not change, stagnant in the ambivalent role
Marwa	Workplace Issue: Escaping and hiding in the organisation	Participant's attitude did not change, stagnant in the hiding role
Nancy	Workplace Issue: lack of self confidence	Participants' attitude slightly changed. Stagnant role of low self-confidence
Edward	Workplace Issue: lack of recognition and appreciation from leadership, trouble making, feeling of loss and regret	Significant awareness and recognition of different roles to choose or act upon. Discovering other interests and other talents
Alexander	Workplace Issue: ambition not fulfilled, not recognised by leaders	Significant actions and decisions taken inside and outside of organisation

Table 5 Summary of changes for pre and post drama intervention (continued)

<i>Employee</i>	<i>Pre drama attitude</i>	<i>Post drama attitude</i>
Martin	Workplace Issue: limited resources, need to work on vacations, no rest or personal care	Significant awareness of self and needs
Daisy	Workplace Issue: ambivalence and confusion, lacking an objective	Significant awareness of other roles, significant actions towards fulfilling those hidden roles
Farida	Workplace Issue: ambivalence, lacking an objective	Significant planning of new objectives and new roles
Mary	Workplace Issue: neither recognition nor rewards, using the organisation as an escape or exile	Significant decision to quit and start own business instead of wasting self and organisational time
Amelia	Workplace Issue: excessive worry about others and overprotecting others in the team	Significant awareness and hunger for different roles. Recognition of stagnant role of “mother”
Amber	Workplace Issue: boredom, underdevelopment	Significant awareness of clear objectives. Recognition of stagnant ‘waiting’ role and deciding to explore other roles
Nora	Workplace Issue: ambivalence, confusion, lack of confidence	Significant awareness of clear objectives. Slight change in the confidence
Antoinette	Workplace Issue: no change, no promotions, no development	Significant awareness of responsibility. And taking authority of mistakes instead of blaming others or the organisation
Nicole	Workplace Issue: waste of time, no real value or work	Significant action to pursue another organisation. Recognition of the need of being flexible and taking a different decision when circumstances change
Sarah	Workplace Issue: lack of communication from leaders, very high uncertainty	Significant action taken towards the organisation

All names are imaginary to protect participants’ anonymity.

5 Discussion

The analysis of the data showed that drama had a general progressive impact on employees’ attitudes towards themselves. These findings coincide with what Emunah (1994) mentioned: “In general, increased self-esteem and renewed energy and optimism in life are manifested during and immediately after the performance, and one to three months following the performance period” (Johnson and Emunah, 2009).

The current study confirmed what previous scholars have argued and extended the theoretical framework by showing how dramatic enactment resulted in a reduced sense of hopelessness and helplessness, improved attitude towards self, increased role portfolio, improved self-confidence, improved spontaneity and freedom of expression, increased the sense of objectivity and perspective, expanded a positive attitude towards self.

6 Unfolding dynamics

6.1 Role exploration

Blatner defined role exploration as showing greater flexibility towards alternative roles alternative and new possibilities (Blatner, 1992). Most protagonists showed new diverse attitudes towards themselves, compared to the pre-drama attitudes which were polarised in two extremes only. This change in how they see themselves might be due to: first the enactment of their future self in the drama renovated to alternative roles and new possibilities, which described in the literature by Blatner as showing greater flexibility and fitting together (Blatner, 1992). Through imagination their stagnant unhelpful roles were altered and new future roles were created. Second: protagonists watched their playback dramas in the video recordings and most of them felt irritated to see themselves playing the old role over and over again. This irritation was explained by the participants to be due to the distortion of what they thought they were and the reality of what they really are, and this might have left them motivated to try different roles. Third, some participants explained that the enactment gave them the imaginary autonomy they lacked in their real life. Once they got the autonomy they were ambitious for, they gave themselves permission to transform, play other roles, prioritise what they wanted to do and maybe feel better emotionally. The findings in this study coincides with Sternberg and Garcia's work in organisations who emphasised that the participants went back to their workplaces with renewed potency and views (Sternberg and Garcia, 2000). This renewed potency might affect their attitude towards their organisations in terms of new possibilities and flexibility with internal and external stakeholders.

6.2 Splitting

Splitting (also called black-and-white thinking or all-or-nothing thinking) is the failure in a person's thinking to bring together the dichotomy of both positive and negative qualities of the self and others into a cohesive, realistic whole (Carser, 1979). In this study splitting is defined as a polarised attitude towards themselves before the dramatic enactment either in an extreme expanding (positive) way or in an extreme contracting (negative) way. The unhelpful/negative attitude towards themselves is categorised in two major groupings, self-sabotaging and letting go of their own authority. The reasons for this might be because of the dilemma between trying a new workplace and the fear of exploring, the underestimation of their own capabilities, the belief that they are too old to start over and who would accept them after this age (although the age studied was between 24–38 years old), the participants perceived lack of confidence, laziness and/or satisfaction of status quo, economic reasons and the fear of not finding an alternative income. Another reason underlying the employees' splitting attitude might be because of their need to know one right thing. The descriptions in the pre- interviews were related to their gestures and enactments in the beginning of the drama. They were either stiff with crossed hands and blaming eyes or showing a conversational, smiling facial expression. Blatner highlighted that distancing oneself is the most appreciated benefit of role dynamics, since people can distance themselves from their stagnant polarised roles. This distance can enable their identification with the Meta-role which creates more balance and equilibrium (Blatner, 1991a, 1991b). The Meta-role can also enable individual

employees gain different perspectives and therefore guide their attitudes towards their organisations and stakeholders in different ways.

7 Conclusion

With the growth of a more complex world, an increasing need for multidiscipline interplay is inevitable. In the beginning, the case study was inspired by the magical space of diversity, spontaneity and interdisciplinary offered by most artistic spaces. This inspiration led the research to explore whether artistic interventions in the organisation could open a temporary space with the freedom of exchange, awareness of the individual employees and therefore making a different choice, decision or learning about themselves or others. After the examination of the work of other significant scholars, this exploration has been validated. The dramatic enactments examined with individual employees showed that two thirds of the participants displayed attitude change towards themselves, their organisations and the future they envision, whether inside or outside the organisation after their enactments. The findings revealed that participants who had shown significant change in their attitudes after their dramatic enactments were those who had been open to explore and reflect upon their unfamiliar enactments after the dramatic session.

8 Challenges, limitations and future research

Working with applied arts in organisation is a challenging endeavour due to the complex nature of organisations and also the complexity of artistic interventions. The difficulty was in data interpretation and the challenge of analysing huge amount of audio, visual and field data. The limitations of the study were two imperfections: First, in the small sample size which makes it difficult to generalise as expected in case studies. Second, the sample was relatively homogenous as all employees were working in the same organisation which gives limited variability to the study. More empirical research in different organisations with different managerial positions is desirable to apprehend the potentials and restrictions of drama as an artistic intervention as relatively new to organisational and human resource development. Future researchers who are interested in examining in the same field may want to explore further research areas extending the study to group settings to explore more of group dynamics and team cohesiveness in relation to dramatic interventions.

9 Theoretical and managerial contributions

The findings in this study complement and extend other scholars who considers psychological failing as a state of unmoving, solid patterns which got fixed; as if the stiff adopted role(s) no longer included the means required to activate the process of recognition and actualisation. Repeating stiff ways of being and acting restrict all transformation scenarios that are much needed in organisations nowadays. Once a role freezes, the individual becomes unable to adapt to the multiplicity of a new situation.

The ‘transitional space’ offered by dramatic enactment might be stirring for the expansion and progress of organisations and teams. As a managerial implication, this study might encourage practitioners from the Organisational Development and Management teams to explore two considerations. The first, practitioners might want to dig below the surface to uncover the patterns that trap employees in unhealthy models of survival and to find alternative ways through which transformation and creativity can be developed. Drama here acts as an investigative tool. Second, individual employees and management teams might find drama a new way of releasing defensive behaviours either towards or from employees and the organisation in a more constructive manner creating positive psychological organisational climate.

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