



## TRUST IN CHILDREN – THE ROLE OF THEATRE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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### Abstract:

**Introduction:** In today's crisis of values, the demand for more trust between people, who will then shape social contexts and institutions, becomes more urgent than ever. However, since trust, by definition, refers to the vulnerability that one person shows to another because of the expectations that the former has for the positive behavior of the latter (Mishra, 1996. Tuzun, 2007), it is important to consider what creates that trust.

**Purpose:** The role of theatre in education in creating social relationships of trust between primary school children. **Methodology:** A quantitative methodological approach was followed, and results were analyzed through the statistical program SPSS 26.0. **Results:** Social relationships between children over time, although they cannot be evaluated by their teachers themselves due to the limited time available, are an existing phenomenon. The children, having understood the position of their classmate, in the context of the lesson, have accepted his diversity, as a result, ending up in sharing experiences with each other, either inside or outside the school environment. However, even though social relations may not be successful, the course has at least helped in respect for others, which has a positive impact even in marginalization phenomena. **Conclusion:** Theater in education can be the means to create social relationships in children who have attended it for a reasonable period of time, because, with the techniques and reflection it offers, it helps children develop social skills, which can, in turn, create social relationships.

**Keywords:** theatre in education, trust, social relationship between children in primary education, social skills

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## 1. Introduction

In today's crisis of values, the demand for more trust between people, who will then shape social contexts and institutions, becomes more urgent than ever. However, since trust, by definition, refers to the vulnerability that one person shows to another because of the expectations that the former has for the positive behavior of the latter (Mishra, 1996. Tuzun, 2007), it is important to consider what creates that trust. Mainly if it is due to some individual characteristics of each person or is the result of some social conditions. In this context, children attending primary education were considered the most suitable population for examination for two reasons: The first is that these are people who are for the first time in an environment outside the safe family's environment that they had known until then and that was responsible for shaping their character and behavior. The second is that they are at a developmental stage that allows any knowledge to function reflexively for similar behavioral action in the future (Harris, 2007).

Trust appears in the literature as a basic foundation of social relationships between people, both adults and children (Rotenberg, 1991). This element, however, shows the way, or rather, one of the ways in which trust is located, it cannot be considered as a characteristic. The characteristics, shown by the various definitions of the specific concept, are numerous and of different kinds and forms (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). In children, however, who are the target population of this research, the most recognized of these characteristics are trustworthiness and emotional trust (Rotenberg et al, 2005). Trustworthiness, because it is linked to the consistency of words and actions (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999. Powell & Heriot, 2000) and emotional trust, because it is linked to ensuring emotional integrity, that is, not causing emotional harm to the person who it expresses trust (James, 2002). Therefore, two elements related to the concept of trust, one as an indicator and the other as an attribute, are social relations and emotion respectively. Therefore, anything that can produce these two elements or even promote them, is likely to help build trust accordingly.

Theater is such a means. The actor, in the process of embodying a role, is called upon to portray a character on stage. He is, therefore, forced to use all the emotion he needs to convey it properly. However, to achieve this and to succeed in becoming convincing to his audience, it is not enough to simply express the emotion that he considers suitable for the particular character, but to fully understand his psychological state and approach it with the maximum possible accuracy (Zhang et al, 2023). For this reason, the actor is called upon to combine his imagination, his experience in life with rich psychological techniques. As a result, he develops empathy (Goldstein, 2009), which he can then use in his personal life, in his relationships with other people (Smith, 2006). Emotions, however, are also caused by the spectators of the show, which are born either from the identification with the hero and the obstacles he encounters or from the imagination cultivated in the context of the show (Evans, 2022). Knowledge, in fact, that it is fiction, frees them even more and pushes them to experience the emotion in question even more intensely because it is not accompanied by the corresponding consequences (O' Toole et al, 2014).

On the other hand, because both the performances and the process of preparing a performance take place in a social context, where the actors of the show are called upon to interact with each other and with the audience, they are created both with each other (performers) and the audience (public) socialization opportunities (Emunah, 1994). In this way, social relationships and social bonds are developed, which, whether lasting or not, contribute to the formation of the individual's social identity, which can lead to other social relationships (Snow et al, 2003).

Therefore, since theater can have these advantages for the individual, both from a personal and a social point of view, it was deemed necessary to investigate it as a tool in education to create trusting relationships between children. The research focused on four key elements, which make up the vulnerability that defines trust from its definition: the engagement that is created with educators in the context of the lesson, the social relationships that develop between children, the cooperation that is cultivated and the acceptance of otherness as characteristics of trust. In this article, however, only one of these research questions, which is social relations, will be presented.

## 2. Literature Review

The concept of Theatre in Education (TIE) is explored extensively in both older and contemporary literature under various terminologies, including theatrical play, drama, theatre in education, theatre for development, social theatre, community theatre, interactive theatre, process drama, and more. This diversity in terminology often leads to confusion, making it challenging for scholars to classify and understand TIE—whether it should be regarded as an art form, an educational tool, or a method of social intervention (Katsaridou, 2014). Constitutionally, TIE is recognized as "*theatrical education*" and integrated into national curricula, highlighting its institutionalization (Presidential Decree 132/10-4-1990, Official Gazette 1373/18-10-2001, Official Gazette 303/13-3-2003). However, studies show that TIE extends beyond theatrical performances (Govas, 2006). The theatre pedagogy model used in the curriculum combines pedagogical, aesthetic, and social objectives, as noted in both domestic and international research (O'Neill, 1995).

These techniques are classified into four categories (Neelands & Goode, 2000):

- 1) Context-Building Techniques: Establish the dramatic framework.
- 2) Narrative Techniques: Relate to the development of the plot and story.
- 3) Poetic Techniques: Involve the creation of representations using language and gestures.
- 4) Reflective Techniques: Deepen participants' response and reflection on the dramatic experience.

The choice of technique, or the order in which techniques are applied, is determined by the teacher, considering the participants' age, experiences, interests, and theatrical background. The teacher must also be ready with alternative solutions if any technique proves unsuitable (Avdi & Chatzigeorgiou, 2007).

Additional techniques include brainstorming, which helps children engage with different topics; the integration of music to enhance atmosphere and aesthetic sense; and

the use of visual arts to guide the creation of context for the drama (Katsaridou, 2014). A notable technique that significantly influenced the program is Forum Theatre, created by Brazilian pedagogue Augusto Boal (Boal, 1981). This approach transforms the audience from passive observers into "*spect-actors*" who can intervene, act, and reflect on social issues, thus empowering themselves (Neelands, 2004).

Another profound influence on the field is Paulo Freire's concept of "*problem-posing education*" (Freire, 1977), which encourages active participation, critical reflection on daily life, and questioning of accepted norms. This approach fosters the development of responsible, critical citizens, capable of contributing to the transformation of society. In simpler terms, it embodies the notion of "*humanization*" (Freire, 1977).

### 3. Materials and Methods

The research was carried out in the summer of 2022 (June – September) in two phases: the pilot-test (duration 20 days) and the main one. Quantitative approach was chosen as a methodological form, due to the examination of the existence of a relationship (whether theater in education creates trusting relationships in children in primary education) instead of the reason for the existence of this relationship (Manjunatha, 2019) and the questionnaire was used as a tool, as it was the most easy way to collect the large number of people to whom the specific research was addressed (Farnsworth, 2019). The third category of the questionnaire, related to the research question presented in this paper, consisted of 6 questions (5 closed and one open). The sample consisted of 407 theater teachers who taught theater in primary education for at least one academic year.

The analysis was carried out with the statistical program SPSS, v. 26, where the frequency distributions, descriptive and other characteristics of the respondents were estimated, calculating percentage distributions and differences, using 95% confidence intervals (95% CI). Statistical significance was calculated with the  $\chi^2$  test (Chi-Square Test), due to the determination of data normality (Test of Normality).

### 4. Results and Discussion

In the question about the possibility of the children who attended the theatre in education class to find themselves at a common party, after an invitation of one of them to someone else who did not associate with each other before, the answers are generally positive. Although something like this cannot be proven at first sight, because almost half of the teachers interviewed (49.9%) give a neutral answer, if examined more closely, it will be found that the percentage of positive answers ("somewhat likely" option and "likely" option) cumulatively is greater than the percentage of negative responses ("somewhat unlikely" and "unlikely") (total 32.7% versus 17.5% respectively). Also noteworthy is the fact that the extreme negative ("unlikely") is in single-digit percentages (4.7%), while the extreme positive ("likely") is more than double of that (10.8%) (Table 1).

**Table 1:** Openness of the children who have completed the study cycle in the theatre in education course to invite to a possible party their classmates who until before the course did not hang out with

	Frequency (N)	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Unlikely	19	4,7	4,7	4,7
Somewhat unlikely	52	12,8	12,8	17,4
Neither	203	49,9	49,9	67,3
Somewhat likely	89	21,9	21,9	89,2
Likely	44	10,8	10,8	100,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	

In the question about the possibility of creating long-term social relationships between classmates who have completed the study cycle in the theater in education course, a repetition is observed in the way the percentages develop with the first question that concerns more individual cases of socializing with each other. The neutral answer, that is, again surpasses all the rest, but shows a drop of more than 5 points in its percentages (from 49.9% to 44.2%). These units are reaped by the positive answers, which from 32.7% that appeared cumulatively in the first question ("somewhat likely" and "likely" option), now show 38.1% in total, while the negative answers ("unlikely" option and "somewhat unlikely") cumulatively remain at almost the same percentages, with a negligible increase of 0.2 points (from 17.5% to 17.7% between the first and second question respectively) (Table 2).

**Table 2:** Possibility of creating long-term social relationships by the pupils who have completed the study cycle in the theater in education course

	Frequency (N)	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Unlikely	11	2,7	2,7	2,7
Somewhat unlikely	61	15,0	15,0	17,7
Neither	180	44,2	44,2	61,9
Somewhat likely	101	24,8	24,8	86,7
Likely	54	13,3	13,3	100,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	

In the question about the possibility of more frequent socializing between children that before attending the theater in education course for a reasonable period of time did not exist as a possibility, the answer "somewhat likely" appears in 38.6%, less than one point below (percentage 37.8%), the answer "neither", and further down, the answers "likely" (percentage 17.2%) and "somewhat unlikely" (percentage 6.4%). That is, although, in this particular question, "unlikely" is not given as an option, "somewhat unlikely", which is the first extreme downward option, shows a very small percentage, in relation to the totality of the most positive answers. Of course, the same is true of the extreme positive response ("likely" option), which is more than 20 points below the middle response with the lowest percentage ("neither option"). However, the extreme positive response is almost three times as many as the extreme negative (Table 3).

**Table 3:** Possibility of more frequent socializing between the children who have collaborated in the theater in education course

	Frequency (N)	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Somewhat unlikely	26	6,4	6,4	6,4
Neither	154	37,8	37,8	44,2
Somewhat likely	157	38,6	38,6	82,8
Likely	70	17,2	17,2	100,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	

In the question about the openness shown by the children towards their peers after completing the theater in education course, something different is observed with the previous two questions in the category: the option "somewhat likely" for the first time appears with higher percentages (43.2%) than the option "neither" (36.6%), while the option "somewhat unlikely" has particularly reduced percentages (only 2.5%), which could be considered even to be within the limits of statistical error. On the contrary, the option "likely", which is the extreme positive answer, is found in approximately the same percentages (by 0.5 points higher) as the same answer option of the previous question. That is, the positive answers cumulatively exceed 60% (total percentage 60.9%), the neutral answer is a few units more than half of them (36.6% percentage), and the negative answer is in single digits and particularly low percentages (Table 4).

**Table 4:** Openness of children who have attended the theater in education course for a reasonable period of time towards their classmates

	Frequency (N)	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Somewhat unlikely	10	2,5	2,5	2,5
Neither	149	36,6	36,6	39,1
Somewhat likely	176	43,2	43,2	82,3
Likely	72	17,7	17,7	100,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	

In the question about the extent to which the theater in education course can help to deal with marginalization phenomena, one more difference appears compared to the previous questions. The two largest percentages are concentrated in the two most positive answers, with little deviation one from each other (37.3% for the "somewhat likely" option and 34.2% for the "likely" option). However, the medium response, which is considered neutral (24.8% for the "neither" option) is also at quite high levels. On the contrary, the percentages of negative responses are very low, which, cumulatively for both options, the percentage is less than 5% (2.7% for the option "somewhat unlikely" and 1.0% for the option "unlikely") (Table 5).

**Table 5:** Contribution of the theater in education course to the reduction of marginalization phenomena in the school context

	Frequency (N)	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Somewhat unlikely	4	1,0	1,0	1,0
Neither	11	2,7	2,7	3,7
Somewhat likely	101	24,8	24,8	28,5
Likely	152	37,3	37,3	65,8
Somewhat unlikely	139	34,2	34,2	100,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>407</b>	<b>100,0</b>	<b>100,0</b>	

Finally, in the open question of the category, where the educators are asked to optionally express their opinion on the way the theatre in education course affects the social relations between the children who have attended it for a reasonable period of time and the closed questions did not cover them, those who answered, give important information about how to choose the specific answers that are particularly helpful in explaining them. In particular, while some talk about the interactions that children develop in individual cases, they do not express an opinion about the longer social relationships, as the frequent change of schools that they are forced to do every year or every two years at most does not allow them to observe. Therefore, in such a case, it can be easily explained that the choice "neither" prevails in these two questions, as they answer intuitively based on what they know and observe today. On the other hand, despite the prevalence of positive answers to the question of openness, the possibility of increased communication between children and the reduction of marginalization phenomena, the neutral answer, which is also high in percentage, is explained by the fact that their perspective is short-term or even inductive and it is not due to any identified finding, as they are not given this opportunity because of the frequent movements and the non-teaching of the subject in classes after the 4th grade of primary education.

In searching for how the social skills of primary school children are affected and the impact that the drama education course has on them, it was deemed necessary to look at it cross-sectionally. Thus, in the first phase, research was sought that studied the social skills of children of this age, which can constitute the basis for the creation of social relationships, both with peers and with other people, in the present and in the future. In the second phase, it was searched for research that referred to the role of theater in education and, in the third phase, those that combined theater in education with social skills.

Social skills, as a means for the interaction of individuals in a social environment, are considered a very important factor for the quality of human life, because they help to develop their social aspect (Baton et al, 2019). Sociability, although a main characteristic of man, as he is a social being by nature, is acquired. It needs, that is, the use of the appropriate tools for its cultivation. Given, however, that the sooner this characteristic appears in life, the more influential it will be and, by extension, the scope for the positive effects to be multiplied, these social skills should also be acquired early in life respectively. Social skills are directly related to social behavior and in a proportional way. That is, the more social skills there are, the more positive the social behavior. Accordingly,

the younger the person who develops these skills is, the more time there will be for the manifestation of social behavior, as it will be applied for the first time to peers (Altaftazani et al, 2020). For this reason, care should be taken early on for appropriate training (Suswandari et al, 2020). Therefore, the environments in which a person finds himself in the first years of his life (family, school, etc.) should fulfill the corresponding conditions (Begazo et al, 2019).

In research, for example, done by Cumberledge (2017) on the benefits of the school band for children, it was shown that the social behavior developed by its members was beneficial both for the character of the children and for the school and the educational institution that took place. On the other hand, from the research of Lefringhausen et al (2021) carried out in primary schools in the provinces of Andalusia, it was found that students aged 6-12 who are educated in a multicultural environment, such as these schools, can and develop social skills that encourage respect and tolerance of diversity. They help, in this way, to a harmonious coexistence of all students and an inclusive education, which constitutes the basis for similar behavior in the future in other settings as adults.

In the same pattern, other research has shown that social skills can contribute to the improvement of children's mental health and well-being (Guerra & Brandshaw, 2008), which can have a positive effect even on their cognitive functions (Perry, 1999), as well as and in their academic goals or their attitude as citizens, while, at the same time, they can act protectively in the appearance of psychological symptoms, such as aggression, depression and anxiety (Greenberg et al., 2003). Specifically, collaboration and communication skills, for example, can act as reinforcements in students' academic success, because, the latter, they will be able to express, analyze, present and discuss creative ideas, feelings and thoughts (Kafai, 2002), while, at the same time, they will be able to help active participation in the learning process (Kumpulainen & Mutanen, 2000). Another social skill, empathy, contributes to understanding the emotions of other students, resulting in better management of any antisocial behaviors that may develop (Feshbach & Feshbach, 2009). In Rehber's (2009) research on elementary school students, it was shown that children with low empathy had higher levels of aggression. Something similar, that is, to what was shown by an earlier study that studied children in primary education who were involved in activities that included emotional elements, such as problem-solving games and group discussions, and it was shown that they displayed positive social behavior and better learning outcomes (Feshbach et al, 1984).

On the other hand, theater in education, through the variety of its characteristics (genre and techniques), as a teaching tool, has acquired a great pedagogical value in recent years (Cutillas-Sanchez, 2006). Research carried out in Europe and Latin America showed its significant contribution both to the development of educational skills, such as linguistic (Blanco-Martinez & Gonzolez-Sanmamed, 2016. Mages, 2018. Padilla-Buele & Iniguez-Ordenez, 2017), social and policies (Cutillas-Sanchez, 2015. Padilla-Buele & Iniguez-Ordenez, 2017) and cultural awareness and expression (Muszynska & Urpi y Galazka, 2017) as well as in the development of skills, such as creativity (Blanco-Martinez & Gonzolez-Sanmamed, 2016. Cutillas-Sanchez, 2015. Erdogan, 2013. Muszynska & Urpi



y Galazka, 2017). At the same time, however, it seems to play an important role on a cognitive and behavioral level, as several other studies have shown benefits in relation to various life skills and health issues, such as smoking (Thrush et al, 1999), nutrition (Must et al, 2000), bullying (Beran & Shapiro, 2005), etc.

In more specialized cases, focused on specific types of theater in education, very interesting data also emerged, which not only confirmed what the aforementioned researches showed, but also gave more detailed information about the type of benefits. In the case of puppetry, for example, which can be either didactic (presenting a sensitive social issue) (Dunst, 2014) or educational (creating a performance with all that goes with it) (Hamre, 2012), in addition to enhancing creativity and changing attitudes and behaviours, multiple benefits were found, such as communication skills, a positive and supportive classroom climate and the promotion of cooperativeness in a group (Kroger & Nupponen, 2019).

Specifically, as far as communication skills are concerned, they were found to be enhanced through increasing and improving classroom discussion, increasing communication and creating a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, as well as interaction between teacher-students and students among themselves (Ahlcrona, 2012. Korosec, 2013. Moriguchi et al, 2015). A typical example is the study by Simon et al (2008), who used puppets in science lessons, where a puppet appeared with a problem to be solved. The use of the puppet by the educators prompted them to formulate open questions to the pupils which had the potential to provoke more thinking and, by extension, more opportunities for conversation and interaction between them. It was observed, in fact, that the children were fascinated by the process and participated both by solving the questions of the puppet being used and by freely unfolding their thoughts, and this was the case not only with the most sociable children, but also with those who were more closed and had less self-confidence. Regarding the positive climate in the classroom, it was found to occur due to its effect both on classroom management and on an emotional and therefore individual level, such as increasing motivation (Evans et al, 2009). In the research by Keogh et al (2008), for example, where again puppets were used to teach science, the children showed particular interest in discussions with the puppet and the problem it presented, while they also expressed a willingness to inform it about the result of their own investigations, which translates into motivation for active engagement with the issue. In terms of enhancing creativity, it has been found to occur by encouraging students to exercise their imagination in order to develop creative and cognitive skills, as well as understanding information before creating a puppet show (Ahlcrona, 2012. Bredikyte, 2002. Korosec, 2013). A typical example is Ahlcrona's (2012) research, where, during teaching with puppets, children humanized the doll and imagined the thoughts, feelings and objects of perception it had and interacted with it. Regarding the cooperative level, with the puppet theater, children were more easily integrated into a group and worked together (Korosec, 2013. Mehrotra et al, 2007. Remer & Tzuriel, 2015). Remer & Tzuriel' research (2015) is typical, in which all the children in the class they studied worked cooperatively with the doll that was used, recognizing it as an equal member with them, pushing them to active participation. Finally, regarding the behavioral level

and changing attitudes, the puppet theater gave the children a new perspective on a situation, as they treated each doll as a complete personality that presented its own dimension to the issues at hand and, therefore, helped them to understand their position (Whiteland, 2016).

To conclude, in the third phase of the analysis, theater in education is related to social skills both from the methods and techniques used within it and from the very nature that most types of theater have and are included in theater in education, which requires the participation of children in groups and cooperation between them. In the first case, theater in education seeks to transform the student from a passive recipient to an active subject and his active participation in various activities that take place within the course (Rodriguez, 2008). In the second case, theater education seeks to send a message to the recipients of the lesson, whether it is the audience of a theatrical performance staged as part of the lesson or the participants themselves in this performance (Sloman, 2011).

A typical example of the first case is the research of Abid (2020), who applied the hot seat<sup>ii</sup> strategy for three weeks to middle school students, in the first grade (primary education), in order to test their reading ability. The pupils (63 people in number), who divided into two groups, where one was the experimental group (applied the said strategy) and the other the control group (did not apply the said strategy), randomly selected them and analyzed the data by t-test. The results showed an improvement in the pupils' understanding of the specific strategy and multiple benefits for the class, as well as an increase in the students' motivation to participate in the lesson.

A typical example of the second case is the research of Harvey et al (2000), who organized the Dram Aide program, which included theater workshops and theatrical performances in which children through participatory techniques and a school "open day" showed their art about their AIDS awareness. After the end of the program, which lasted 6 months, it was found that the children who participated in it showed a more positive attitude towards people who suffered from this disease, as well as increased self-efficacy and self-confidence in prevention issues for this disease. It is noteworthy, however, that the children who participated in this program proved to be more aware of the issues related to the disease, which they showed in their attitudes, in contrast to the children who only received information about the disease from literature, disease, which they only surpassed in knowledge.

Another typical example of the second case is the research of Perry et al (1999), who evaluated the participation of pupils in the first to third grades in the game 2 Smart 2 Smoke, which involved a variation of the story "Three Piglets". That is, it was about the story itself only that the Bad Wolf of the story could not tear down the house because he was smoking. The children were asked to act out the story, each taking on a role, changing the ending. After the end of the show, there was a discussion about the consequences of

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<sup>ii</sup> It is that technique of drama in education related to a fast-paced vocabulary game (Wile, 2013), in which all students participate in the order they sit in the game. Its goal is to understand the motivations, background, emotions and personality of each participant, as well as their relationships with other students (Billikova & Kissova, 2013).

smoking and relevant advice was given to stop smoking. When this part was also completed, the children were asked to act out the Bad Wolf, who this time was a non-smoker. The results of the research showed that the process had an effect on the children's psychology, and they fully understood the danger of the smoking habit.

Compared to our research, the results obtained from those presented in this section are similar, i.e. they reach the same point. If, however, there is any doubt about this assumption, since the various investigations do not examine the same data and therefore cannot be compared, a closer study of the data in conjunction with the correspondences derived from theory will clarify the correlation in question. That is, one can talk about social relations and on the other about social skills, however, from the theory it seems that social skills also lead to social relations, so the existence of social skills also proves the existence of social relations. Thus, if theater in education is related to social skills, that is, it is able to create social skills in the children participating in the lesson, it can also produce social relationships, as it forms the background for them.

## **5. Recommendations**

In conclusion, apart from the findings drawn, it is useful to make some suggestions for future research on the topic, in order to either consolidate the specific results or discover a new aspect that was not visible at this stage of the research. Two proposals that are considered worthwhile to study in the future are, firstly, the examination of other populations apart from the theatrical education teachers, and secondly, the investigation with a different methodological approach (e.g., qualitative research, experiments, etc.).

In the first case, a study that includes the parents of the children, teachers from other specialties, or even the principal of the school where the children attend, either individually or in combination, would provide clearer and more reliable conclusions.

On the other hand, in the second case, a study that reaches a conclusion using a different methodological approach from the quantitative one used here would assist in a more thorough examination of the subject and open the way for its deeper understanding, as it would offer a more comprehensive approach.

## **6. Conclusion**

This article investigates how two of the main elements of trust (social relations and emotion) can be produced. Thus, emphasizing the younger ages, such as children attending primary education, because their appearance in the given period of time can lay the foundation for maintaining confidence in their adult life and, therefore, satisfy the need of the societies, an attempt was made to find some fields that could produce the required elements. In this context, given that theater is such a field, where both emotion and interaction, and by extension, social relationships can be created, it was considered useful to investigate whether this also happens with theater in education.

Five closed-type and one open-type questions were asked. The first had to do with whether theatre in education can be the cause for the creation of individual social

relationships between children. The second had to do with whether the theater in education subject can be the cause for the creation of long-term social relationships between children. The third, with the possibility that the children's cooperation in the theater in education subject, will also lead to interaction between them. The fourth, whether the theatre in education course helps the children to become more social and this mood can be seen towards their classmates and, the fifth and last question, with whether the theatre in education course can soften the perceptions of diversity among children and thus to reduce the phenomena of marginalization in the school space. Regarding, however, the open-ended question, here only the theatre in education teacher respondents were given the opportunity to talk about theatre in education and social relations and it was not covered by the closed questions.

From the responses of the educators who participated in the research, it appeared that theatre in education is an influential course in the relationships between pupils, which can be either short-term or long-term in nature. Thus, although the continuity of social relations, because it depends on many factors, cannot be charged to theatre in education in case the duration is not as expected, their development can be considered due to it. Pupils, within the context of the course, both with the techniques (work in groups, active learning, etc.) used and with the critical thinking cultivated by the topics covered in it, can find themselves in different situations and thus evaluate the different results that arise from them. All this, in fact, in a safe environment, without the risks and possible harmful consequences that similar behavior can have in real life. In this way, pupils are given the opportunity to experience different perspectives and understand the position of their classmates, not just hear it. So, if something like this happens, the probability that these people will try to coexist with each other can increase accordingly. If this, however, is done in individual cases, generally over time or at the level of association or simple acceptance of the existence of the other, it is something that needs the evaluation of many other elements. What can be asserted with certainty, however, is that theater in education lays the foundations for the creation of relationships between peers, because it cultivates in children the corresponding social skills.

Furthermore, in the research carried out, there is another element to which particular attention should be paid, the neutral attitude of the teachers in most of the questions (increased percentages of neutral answers, “neither” option). This finding, although it could overturn what was argued above, because it shows a reservation that could even be characterized as doubt, in fact, it is not so. The teachers who participated in the survey, both in the other parts of the survey and in the open question, claim that they cannot express confidence in their answers, because their contact with the children is either short or limited in time. The one hour a week that the lesson is taught in Primary Schools, on the one hand, and their frequent movement from school to school every 1-2 years, does not allow them to properly observe their students and draw appropriate conclusions. For this reason, while those with experience may perceive more about the children and the contribution of the drama education course, and therefore be more confident, inexperienced educators in theatre in education may not make the same

assessment. It is expected that their answers will be more neutral, since negative, based on logic, cannot be.

Therefore, since theater education can lead to the development of social relationships between students, while, at the same time, it cultivates the ability to empathize in children, it can indirectly become the vehicle for the development of trust between the parties involved. With this reasoning, then, theater education, as an extension of the theater, can be used to build trusting relationships between children, which in the future will constitute the beginning for the creation of similar relationships between people. However, if the present research proved its usefulness in the development of trust between people, it is useful to do many more research to find the ways in which this process can work. At the same time, it would be useful to carry out research both on children who were taught, but are no longer taught, the drama education course, as well as on older children to check both the duration of the trust created in the Primary years and its effect at older ages. That is, in simpler words, as much as the theater education and trust in young children can be taken for granted, a closer examination of the phenomenon is necessary to establish whether these foundations have strong roots or not.

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