

## CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND YOUTH IDENTITY CRISIS IN A GLOBALISED WORLD

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### **Abstract**

The world is a globalised village. The advent of technology has led to a proliferating identity crisis among young adults. This has brought about a disconnect between culture, traditions, local heritages and the prevalent global village culture. The paper therefore investigated children's theatre as an intervention model to address the issues of youth identity predicament, loss of cultural inclusiveness and a twist of sense of belonging and acceptance. Engaging the qualitative methodology of the performance theory and the developmental psychology, the research asserted that the children's theatre is a safe delivery room for identity exploration. It is a safe haven for youth to route through the hassle of globalisation without compromising their indigenous cultural and traditional values. Conclusively, the theatre arts can enhance compliance if they are integrated into the educational framework early. The introduction of a receptive children's theatre academy into the educational curricula is a model that can address identity issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Keywords:** Children's Theatre, Identity Crisis, Globalisation and Youth

### **Introduction**

The globalised world is driven by the interconnectedness of communication. This is characterised by the free flow of information and exchange of global ideas, thought, trade and shared system. Youth and children are vulnerable because of the fear of exploring this unfamiliar ground. Many of them find it difficult to reconcile their indigenous traditional values with the new ideologies they were exposed to through the use of technology. Hence, many youths are faced with the trauma to harmonise the new ideas, values, styles, and global traditions they have embedded with their traditional values and system. Thus, built psychological, social and traditional stress that has birthed confusion in the heart and mind of the youth and children. This, in return, has negatively affected the behavioural patterns of most youths in this technological age.

The theatre, as an art form that mirrored the society, corrects the wrongs by deriving its storyline from society, garnishes it by turning it into a genre- tragedy, comedy, farce ,etc., for the entertainment, education, and correction of the audience. Children's theatre is a captivating force for different levels of youth and children from kindergarten to university levels. It has the potential to serve as an intervention medium by providing a safe space for children to mirror themselves in the performance they watched or acted. Through these, children collaborate with their peers, directly and indirectly learn how to resolve most psychological, emotional and societal problems subtly without confrontation.

### **Theoretical Framework**

**Performance theory**, as expanded on (Boustany & Timmenga, 2024) is a multidisciplinary concept that sees human activities and actions as performance that are viewed in everyday activities such as behaviours, gestures, languages and social interactions. This concept emphasised that social life is copied from everyday involvement, things seen around or viewed repeatedly. These help to shape what is referred to as manners, behaviour, value systems, and form a mindset.

**Developmental psychology** is a methodological observation of how and why humans change. At inception, the focus was on changes among infants and children, but in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, it was expanded to the study of how adolescence and adult changes, including their ageing process. Children and youth at different stages were observed from conception, toddler, childhood, adolescence and adulthood; interrogating their bodily changes – brain, development, sensing capacities and motor skills. The mental process hinges on how they learn and their absorbing processes. It also has to do with emotions, self-tolerance, relationships, family and friends (Blake, 2015).

### **Children's Theatre; -**

(Backer, & Begum, 2024) described the children's theatre as a platform which helps to initiate children's imaginative ability and also lengthen their concentration span. Exposing children early to this practice will increase their knowledge, grow their creative interest, build their imaginative concept and technically set them in motion for theatrical acceptance. He further listed some plays that can appeal to children – fairy tales, musical plays to solve problems in schools, plays that address bullying, etc. children potentials are built around what they learn from infancy and childhood. He divided the children's audience into various groups according to their age limit. Their age also determines and affects their interests. Children between the ages of 5-6 years have short concentration spans, and they must be under adult supervision, while 7-9 years can assume roles or theatrical parts and can play with objects under not too strict control. Children aged 10- 13 years are physically conscious of themselves and are adventurous in nature. 14-18 assumes adulthood in productions and real-life events. So, they made a decision for themselves and most times instil self-discipline depending on upbringing.

(Yogman, et al 2018) started that children cultivate various kinds of skills that can help to boost their development early in life and cope with stress. The research described that performances that has parents and children as cast and crew has the capacity to stimulate the social-emotional, reasoning, language, and self-regulation skills that build the brain. He explains further that plays can enhance the formation of the relationships that the children need to thrive. Play is not for entertainment alone: it enhances brain structure and function and help in the practice of learning especially how to pursue goals and ignore distractions. When such safe relationship is lacking in a child's life development can be toxic and the environment unsafe. Furthermore, he emphasised that play/ playing is important in childhood development because it teaches a child how to reciprocate love, joy, communicate and exhibit harmonious interactions with peers. He analysed a clinical report which

showcased information from paediatricians on the benefits of play in the prescription to children's health. To create improvement in early childhood educational programme paediatricians can enhance a balanced academic curriculum that emphasised and advocate playful learning that helps to promote healthy child development. Thus, viewing the cognitive, affective and psychomotor spheres of the learning domain, it was concluded that children are prone to play through this process; their area of interest, talents and likes can be identified. In the act of playing, children's passions are exhibited explicitly, and they gain in-depth understanding of themselves that can advance them into rapid development that can eventually influence their adulthood.

### **Identity Crisis**

(Gunderman, 2022) define identity crisis as a period of inner struggle or a muddle up of motives, behaviours, values and purpose. It is an action that emanated as a result of inner confusion, conflict because of some changes and the inner thought to build self-confidence, self – image and create a niche for oneself. The age of moving from childhood to being an adolescent, job loss among young adults, unemployment process among young graduates, relationship shift and exposure to modern technology and behavioural patterns are all triggers to an identity crisis.

He explains that an identity crisis can occur to any person at any age as a result of any eventualities or because of a stressful time. This crisis causes anxiety and depression for the sufferer; furthermore, he explains that identity is the basis for judging personality disorders. It is possible to be identified as having identity problems or disorder through the behaviour and character of the person.

### **Globalisation**

According to Balme (Balme, 2023) globalisation existed long ago. It was a period where economic and cultural activities were gaining more ground. It has to do with interrelationships that cross boundaries, cultures and time zones. It is used as a concept to describe the connectivity and dependence on world cultures and economics. It describes how trade and technology has affected the world view and made it a universal village. Thus, the changes in one nation can spread across other nations, people, money, material, ideas, disease, devastation, etc. The inception of globalisation was traced to between 50B.C. E and 250 C.E. in Central Asia, the Mediterranean and trade all over China. It started as an exchange of goods and services, ideas, products and customs. These led to the building of roads and the transportation of goods and services from one area to another. (Yenika et al, 2014).

Talani traced the inception of globalisation and concluded that it was between the 1990s and 2000 that the concept of globalisation became popular. Even though it has been in existence as a word used to describe the free and common flow of the international economy. Despite the different terms that were used to explain the availability of resources and information to everyone at little or no cost. It brought about development, fundamental transformation of the world market and economy. This unprecedented development was evident in the

activities of the nation, state and their welfare scheme for their citizens. He further emphasised the different phases that the argument over globalisation has gone through. The first phase witnessed a lot of doubt; people demanded evidence of proof of existence. The second phase was confronted with a lot of debate, argument on the street and violence that was street-based. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase, the anti-globalists accepted the existence of the concept of globalisation, which led to a drastic change in the discussion on how to handle the term globalisation. There was a twist from the debate that stated with the existence of globalisation, the consequences of globalisation and finally, how to handle the concept of globalisation, all within the international political economy and the citizenry (Talani, 2018).

### **Youth**

(Adagbada et al, 2021) describe youths as the soul of the growth of a Nation. They mostly constituted the largest population of any country. So, they are essential because they are mostly agent of change. She queried the behaviour and the high percentage of unruly youths in Nigeria who demean the image of Nigeria within the country and in foreign countries. She gave some reasons why youths misbehave as a lack of parental attention, peer group pressure, excessive desire for the " get rich quickly syndrome, unemployment, poverty, lack of social & financial assistance. Furthermore, she specifically described and defined youths in Yoruba terminology. To the Yoruba's youth are unmarried males or females between the ages of 16-30 who are still responsible to their parents or their guardians. They backed their communities up sometimes as soldiers, warriors to protect the sovereignty of the locality. They serve as security men, sentries to watch over their communities. They also serve as environmental officer of their communities by clearing the bushes, expanding rivers, etc. enforce strict environmental laws. According to the African charter, youths are between the ages 8-35. She claimed that in most countries in these modern times, the population of youths are more than that of adults. So the population of the youths in a country can be used to ascertain the development of that country (Adagbada., 2022).

### **Research Methodology**

This study employed the qualitative research method. Unstructured questionnaires were administered on one hundred and sixty (160) respondents, who were secondary students, University undergraduates, National diploma students, National certificate of Education students, artisans, theatre practitioners and adults. Youths between the ages of 8 and 40 years. Group discussion, observation, and an improvised drama performance were employed.

**The population of the study:** - The study focused on a total of 160 youths, children and adults, 20 primary /secondary school, 20 University undergraduates, 20 from the National Diploma programme, 20 from the National Certificate of Education (NCE) programme, 20 Artisan youths, 20, artisan adults 20 and 20 theatre practitioners. The respondents were between the ages of 08 40. These interactions brought about an improvised performance by the youths for others to watch.

**The Questionnaire:** - A total number of 160 questionnaires were distributed to 160 respondents in this order 20 each to the 8 different youths' and adult groups, and an improvised production that focused on identity crisis among young folks.

## **Data presentation**

### **Section a: socio-demographic data of respondents**

**Question 1: Age and gender of the respondents?** A total of 160 respondents were involved in the unstructured questionnaires, play production and group discussions. They were youth, children and adults between the ages of 08-40, males and females. This implies that both sexes were equally represented.

**Question 2: Educational qualification of respondents?** In this, respondents' qualifications were those with Primary Six certificates, Secondary school certificate, National diploma, NCE, Undergraduates and post-graduates.

The questions were built around 4 concerns – Cultural concern, the impact of psychological mindset on Identity crisis among youths. The influence of technology and globalisation on youths, the club approach and the children's theatre.

### **Cultural Concern**

**1. Do you understand what we mean by children's theatre? If yes, how often do you visit the theatre or watch productions on your technological gadgets?** All the respondents have a basic knowledge of what we mean by the word children's theatre. The majority of the respondents have not visited the theatre complex to watch a performance, but they have watched productions on their gadgets

**2. In your own view, do you think children's theatre performances of today reflect local cultural heritage or globalised (Westernised) themes?** Many of the respondents responded in a positive affirmation in support of the Westernised themes. This shows that we feed our youths with more performances that introduce them to foreign cultural practices.

**3. Can exposure to international stories, international characters, artefacts and symbols in theatre performances, films, dances and music help / hinder a child's sense of national belonging?** Respondents who were both females, male youths and adults affirmed that young people are moved and captivated by what they see and hear regularly. Because they are innovative and explorative in nature, they tend to practice new things and want to be like the pictures they see on these performance platforms. If they are involved in these acts without caution, advice, or warning, they become engrossed in it and develop ardent love and interest that makes them less responsive to their local cultural activities. Therefore, they gradually, indirectly become unreceptive and lose their sense of national acceptance.

**4. Do youths/children who emulate/follow global celebrities' lifestyle the same as those who follow their local community celebrities?** It was gathered from the respondents that most celebrities create a made-up lifestyle for themselves. They live a flamboyant lifestyle and explore the freedom of their society to achieve their purpose and attract an audience, especially children and youths. Most youths who follow global celebrities tend to dress, talk, behave, and do things like them, thereby the celebrity becomes their model of an ideal person whom they want to become. In this process, they imbibe foreign values, dressing code, salutation model and lose their identity by trying to be someone else. On the other hands those who follow celebrities within the society shared some common sense of values, respect for the elderly and

parents, some social norms, polite behaviour in society and can be called to order by professional bodies within their community or social structure.

**5. In modern times, how often do playwrights integrate traditional folklore into modern children's theatre and what is its impact on the audience?** Many of the respondents concurred that traditional folklores were used as a source of inspiration in the past, but presently it is rarely used in contemporary plays.

**6. Can cultural homogenisation of stories in globalised theatre be a barrier to youths distinguishing their unique cultural identity?** - Respondents agreed that the act of blending the local traditions and culture into a global one, pretending to make it uniform, is mostly disadvantageous to the indigenous people. It is also confusing to the young minds who find the stories captivating and cannot separate Western culture from their indigenous culture, so they become Western in an African soil. For instance, a male wearing earrings or (Buba and trousers with earrings) or a female with a male shirt and hair cut sagging. This also resulted in a change of language, customs, belief and the adoption of another culture in place of the indigenous culture, tradition and social life.

### **Impact of Identity Crisis**

**7. Can theatrical performance provide a safe space for youths to experiment and be rehabilitated from a personal identity crisis?** The respondents agreed that the theatre mirrors society, and it is a place where children can come together with or without adult major interference to enact written or improvised drama. Thus, bringing their thoughts, ideas, and experiences together for a performance. This can serve as a healing process, a rehabilitation process and a cleansing process.

**8. What are the ways through which children's theatre can address Identity crisis among youths?** Children's theatre, which can be theatre for children by children, or children's theatre performed for them by adult/ or a mixed performance of both children and adults as cast and crew. In whichever way, the playwright and director must be conscious of the target audience, which is youths and children. Thus, make the rehearsal/ drama, or creative writing workshop a safe and non-judgemental environment where children are free to air their views without intimidation and molestation. Another way mentioned is self-awareness and positive self-concept. These can be effectively achieved by allowing the children to improvise their play and tell their stories, thereby purging their emotions. Another way is to allow them to play the roles that suit them, which will help them to develop the ability to tolerate others and relate well, which will help to teach children that it is not every habit must be cultivated. Also, collaboration is a salient concept through which theatrical performance can address an identity crisis. Theatrical performance is a joint work where the cast and crew come together to achieve a singular objective. In achieving this, your identity is defined, and the cast is encouraged to assume that identity. Introducing narrative, traditional and cultural stories from diverse cultures can serve as a way of igniting the fire of acceptance of cultural identity among the young audience, cast and crew.

**9. How does multicultural cast production affect children's perception of their indigenous brand?** It was gathered that children form impressions and tailor their lifestyles towards what they see regularly. It was unanimously acknowledged that most multicultural productions employed more foreign cast and brand they rarely use local indigenous brands. Thus, with this, children who are used to these productions build their interest, love, and sensory stimuli around the information they have gotten from such productions. Hence, they pay a nonchalant attitude towards their indigenous culture and traditions. They tag them as barbaric, uncivilised and fetish therefore, they distance themselves from them.

**10. In your view, can theatre serve as a generational bridge builder and ameliorate identity crises among children?** It was agreed by most respondents that theatre as a tool for societal corrections, education, enlightenment, entertainment and alerting has the capacity to reach the nooks and crannies of all communities. Thus, children's theatre as a theatre specifically meant to entertain, educate, inform, correct and carter for children's social and psychological needs can function as a bridge builder through the kind of productions they perform for the young audience to watch.

### **The Effect of Globalisation and Technology on Children**

**11. In what ways have digital media and screen culture affected youth's engagement with live theatrical performances?** The research gathered that digital media and screen time has reduced the extent to which youth patronise the theatre for live performances. Digital media and screen time has given access to freedom of watching performances in the comfort of the youth anytime any day at their own expense. The freedom to digital media and screen time has allowed youths to be exposed to performances all over the world without restriction; with these, they are positively /negatively influenced. Even though globalisation and technology has play a major role in the advancement and exposure of mankind, it also have some disadvantages in the lives of the youths if there is no check and balance.

**12. Can multimedia usage (screens, VR, digital effects) in theatrical performance distract from the message?** Multimedia in performance can serve two purposes. It can perform the duty of a mirror to the audience or a wall between the audience and the performance. Multimedia in performance can enhance audience self-discovery because it explores the use of reminiscences, worries and different abstract concepts to communicate to the audience. Some respondents claimed that in some cases it can distract the message if it delves too deeply into revealing the character inner self. While some respondents claimed it enhances performances and makes performances real, interesting, beautiful and easy to understand create an aesthetic picture to the audience.

**13. What is the influence of global commercial brands (e.g., Disney, Pixar) on indigenous children's theatre productions?** Global commercial brands like **Disney** and **Pixar** have symmetrically influenced the themes, storylines and aesthetics of local children's theatre productions. In order to achieve acceptance and recognition that is beyond boundaries and that cut across the globe, most indigenous commercial children's theatre practitioners employed the

narrative techniques, visual aesthetics styles, and commercial approaches of these brand giants to attract and achieve audience expectations.

**14 What is the effect of the adoption of the English language as a global language for communication in many popular plays on the local children?** It was gathered that the common use of the English language as a performance language in most children's performances has inhibited the linguistic identity of most native speaking children. Some respondents claimed that it has affected most children, especially children with educated parents, because they were exposed to speaking English early at home, in school, in their performance, on medial. Thus. It has created a mental, social, and psychological shift from their native language to the acceptance of the English language as a superior language. Some respondents also said that it has worked against the preservation of local customs, heritages, and local traditions that were unwritten but can only be passed through unwritten code, which is embedded in mostly indigenous languages.

#### **Children's Theatre Club as a Performance Model**

**15. Are you a member of any children's theatre club:** - Many of the children in the rural areas claimed they were once members of what they called the Children theatre Bible club? Though the clubs are Christian-based performance clubs. They perform religious plays for religious purposes and for the entertainment of the Christian community. Their performances were on special occasions such as the Christmas season, the Easter season, the harvest seasons, Independence Day, and Children's Day. The clubs accommodate both children and young adults who are interested in drama performances. Many of the young adults who gained admission into the higher institution left the club as they became undergraduates. While the youths in the urban cities claimed they never participated in any theatre clubs, even though sometimes they accompany their parents to the theatre to watch performances.

**16. In the Club, what other things do you participate in:** - The research gathered from the respondents that apart from dramatic performance, the youths also engaged in cultural display, costume parade, cultural recitation, and drumming performance. Every member is expected to participate in one or more of these displays.

**17. Which language is used in communication in the group:** - Respondents answered that the major language used is the local dialect and English. Everyone is encouraged to speak the local dialect while they are in the club premises. There were a lot of teaching on the uniqueness of gender and how to relate with the opposite sex.

**18. Do the groups engage in traditional drama:** - It was a unanimous response from the respondents that the groups do not engage in traditional drama, but they engage in traditional dance and also educate the children on some basic cultural values and traditional morals that are in accordance with the clubs' objectives and their belief system.

**19What should drama educators do to help youths navigate identity problems?** Drama educators occupy an important position in solving the identity problems. Many respondents

claimed that the theatre space should be made a safe space where youths and children can experiment by telling their story. Divulge their hidden thoughts, experiences and other information they find difficult to tell their parents and guardians at home; a kind of rehabilitation space without consequences. While other respondents explained that most youths are confused, therefore theatre educators should focus more on bringing out the creative ability in the youths through performance and provide emotional support for those who are already suffering identity problems.

**20. In your view, can interactive or forum theatre methods help youths to solve identity-related crises?** Respondents who were theatre practitioners identified that Interactive and Forum Theatre methods have unique tools to reach children and to help them solve identity problems. These methods give them the freedom to recount their ordeal in a safe environment with trusted people. It allows them to move psychologically from inactive spectators to someone who can eloquently articulate their feelings, thereby expelling inner struggle and building inner confidence and trust, thereby changing personal story/ experience to a drama or performance on stage.

**Discussion and findings:** - The study examined 20 questions, and a total of 160 respondents were interviewed. To determine how children's theatre can influence youths' identity in modern times.

**To determine if respondents have the basic knowledge of the word children's theatre:-**All the respondents agreed that they have a prior knowledge of what children's theatre means and what they do, they have one time or the other watch performances on their gadget, some have visited the theatre hall to watch performances, while others have one time or the other been a member of a children's theatre group.

**Asking if children's theatre performances of today reflect local cultural heritage or globalised (Westernised) themes:** - Majority of the respondents believed that most children and adult performances reflect more of foreign values and belief systems than the African values system. This indicated that these performances has underplay the African cultures, traditions and practices, whereas the children were indirectly initiated into accepting foreign films, performances, ideals and values as superior to the indigenous practices.

**Inquiring if early exposure to international stories, international characters, artefacts and symbols in theatre performances, films, dances and music can help/hinder a child's sense of national belonging?** It was gathered that because children watched these foreign performances regularly, their psychology is altered to show more love, cravings and commitment to them. So their sense of National belonging has already been tampered with, so they therefore have more graving for foreign things than the indigenous activities.

**To determine if youths/children who emulate/follow global celebrities' lifestyle are the same as those who follow their local community celebrities,** it was gathered that global celebrities exhibit a foreign worldview and mindset, which is mostly contrary to the African

indigenous creative and artistic practises. Most youths who emulate foreign celebrities tend to have an identity crisis because of their behavioural patterns. While most of the time, youths who follow indigenous celebrities are homely and are culturally acclimatised to their cultural and traditional environment.

**Investigating if modern playwright has been able to integrate traditional folklore into modern children's theatre and the impact on the audience:** - In the bid to determining the impact of identity crisis it was gathered that the theatrical space either as a stage performance or technological space serves as an open access for youth to embellish their thought, ideas, stories, narratives with intricate details that will make it dramatic and universally acceptable. Theatre can also serve as a healing school where youths are expected to voice their fears, express their traumas and unburden without molestation, abuse or vindication of any kind.

**In order to determine if cultural homogenisation of stories in globalised theatre can be a barrier to youths identifying with African unique cultural identity:-**It was also gathered that there were many ways through which the children's theatre performance can deliberately address the identity crisis among youths, such as creative writing, where freedom of expression is given priority. Self-awareness, positive self-concept, improvisation, advocating tolerance and communion, collaborative work and relationship. Infusing traditional & cultural tales into cultural values, virtues and for the benefit of the performance's thereby appealing to their sense of cultural identity.

### **The Effect of Globalisation and Technology on Children**

**Inquiring into ways digital media and screen culture has affected youth's engagement with live theatrical performances:** - Looking at the effect of globalisation and technology on children. The research delved into ways in which digital media and screen culture affected youth's engagement with life performance. Responders claimed that digital media has influenced the extent to which youths participate and accept traditional live performances. The freedom of watching a performance, no restriction, and a lack of time constraint. Exposure to performances beyond boundaries was all the attraction that lured youth to screen time. Other responses collected indicated that youths who are addicted to digital media and screen time has minimal interest in live performances. They see attending live performances as a time wasted, because of the freedom of watching performances in the comfort of their homes, and in their spaces and at any time. The introduction of Netflix, a streaming platform, has also negatively affected the youth's disposition to life performances.

**Responses from can multimedia usage (screens, VR, digital effects) in theatrical performance distract the message:** It was gathered that the use of multimedia in performance can serve both positive and negative postures. Positive by employing abstract concepts to communicate to the audience, while negative when it deeply reveal character's inner self, therefore distracting and misinterpreting the message. Despite these, it was unanimously agreed that multimedia usage enhances performances and makes performances genuine, fascinating,

attractive, and easy to comprehend, creating an aesthetic picture of the message and performance to the audience.

**Considering the influence of global commercial brands (e.g., Disney, Pixar, Nickelodeon) on indigenous children's theatre productions:** - global commercial brands like Disney, Pixar and Nickelodeon produce performances in cartoons for children, films and movies for teenagers, youths and families. The themes and storylines advocate foreign values, culture and practices without any references to the indigenous belief system. Most children who consume these productions from childhood suffer from either an open or a secret identity problem. To become famous and gain acceptance, most indigenous commercial children's theatre practitioners emulate these global brands by creating foreign themes, narrative techniques, and storylines to get access to the global market. Instead of creating an indigenous traditional brand that will grow to become a universal giant and have a positive influence on the children, they succumb to quick patronage at the expense of creating a niche for their indigenous children's performances.

**Considering the effect of the adoption of the English language as a global language for communication in many popular plays on the local children:** - Many of the respondents claimed that the use of the English language for performance in children's productions has negatively influenced the linguistic identity of most native speaking children. While others expatriated that children, especially those from educated homes, are most affected because they were exposed to speaking English early in life – at home, in school and in the media space. Thus, fashioned their mental, social, and psychological attitudes to the acceptance of the English language as superior and more fashionable than their native language. These have brought about distortion and misrepresentation of the unwritten local customs, heritages, and local traditional practices that were coded in most indigenous languages.

### **Children's Theatre Club as a Performance Model**

**Identify members of children's theatre club:** - The majority of the children who were rural dwellers claimed they were members of what they called "Children Theatre Bible clubs" these were faith-based clubs, with religious plays for the entertainment of the Christian community. Most of such communities do not have recreational facilities. So these clubs serve both religious and recreational purposes. Therefore, They presented theatrical performances both on special occasions such as Christmas seasons, Easter seasons, harvest seasons, Independence Day, children's day and other days as deem fit by the director. The clubs encourages both males and females, children and young adults who are interested in drama, dance, recitation and cultural dance performances. Many young undergraduate adults opt out of the club the moment they are admitted into the higher institutions. The admission was open to children of all faith bodies as long as the child could adapt to the rules guiding the organisation. The performances were free, venues were church halls. Members of the clubs were compelled to communicate in the indigenous dialect, no matter their status and background. The children were taught some basic etiquette, morality, encouraged to be bold, self-confident, and some basic cultural values, societal values and family values that enhance coexistence. Through this involvement, the

children became vast not only in religious matters but also in cultural values, virtues, and belief systems as it projects the positive features of the indigenous language. On the other hand, youths residing in the urban cities claimed they have never been member of any theatre clubs, even though on some special occasions they sometimes accompany their parents to the theatre to watch performances.

**Other activities within the club:** - It was gathered that, as part of the operational rules guiding the organisation, every child must belong to at least one subgroup. Apart from the major group, which is the dramatic performance group that is compulsory for all members. To be a production cast or crew of any performance is a product of the child's creative skills and ability which is determined during the auditioning. The subgroups were cultural display, costume parade, cultural recitation, and drumming performance, of which everyone is expected to be a member of at least one it can be more but not more than two, depending on the child's ability.

**Communication language in the group:** - Respondents answered that the major language is the local dialect, while English is the secondary language, seldom used for communication when necessary. Everyone is encouraged to speak the local dialect while they are in the club premises. There was a lot of teaching on the uniqueness of gender and how to relate to the opposite sex. With this effort, many of the privileged children who do not have the freedom to speak the dialect at home now speak the local language fluently and also acquire some basic traditional and cultural knowledge.

**Club engagement in traditional drama:** - It was a unanimous response from the respondents that the groups do not engage in traditional drama, but they engage in traditional dance and poetry. They also acquire some basic education in cultural values and traditional morals that are in harmony with the clubs' objectives, fostering togetherness and collectivism.

**How drama educators can help youths navigate identity problems:** - drama educators can serve as a bridge builder between the victims and the problem, thereby propound solution to the problem. Firstly, the educator must build confidence and trust that will enable victims see the theatre space as a safe place where they can tell their stories without molestation. Disclose the hidden thoughts, experiences and information they cannot tell their parents and guardians at home, because of fear and intimidation. While other respondents explained that most youths are in a confused state, they needed a shoulder to rest their heads. So theatre educators should present themselves as friends who can keep a secret, harness the creative abilities in these young people, thereby keeping them busy; also provide emotional support for those who were critical sufferers.

**How can interactive or forum theatre methods help youths solve identity-related crises:** - theatre practitioners identified Interactive and Forum Theatre as methods through which youths of different ages can be reached. These methods give the youths the freedom they deserve. Allow them to dwell in a safe environment with trusted people. Therefore, they are psychologically stable, move from being inactive spectators to eloquently articulator of their feelings, expel inner struggle, build inner confidence and trust, and thereby change their personal story/ experience to a drama or performance on stage.

## **Conclusion**

Conclusively, the performance theory observed and agreed that everyday activities are a form of performance. It is derived from our everyday life, and it has helped to form and shape human behaviours, manners and value systems. Thus, it can be inferred that youths develop an identity crisis because of their daily activities and involvement- what they do, what they see and what they are involved in. While developmental psychology emphasised that humans go through life changes and are not static. Therefore, if children are introduced to children's theatre early in life or allowed to be a member of a theatre club that produces educative, cultural, traditional and creative dramas; if they have developed identity problems gradually positive changes will take place and if they have not develop such crisis the continuous exposure to positive performances will appeal to their senses of logical reasoning and enhance a positive character, value system.

The research identified that identity crisis is a global phenomenon among young people. It has brought about loss of cultural, traditional values, appreciation and cultural orientation among the youths. This trending occurrence was brought about due to the influence of digitalisation, globalisation and modernisation. It therefore concludes that the children's theatre as a medium that fosters collaborative arts, teaches resilience, allows for vocal, frank and candid expressions and mirrors the society can correct this anomaly. Thus, if the children's theatre is incorporated into the school curriculum, into the community setting as a club- drama club /cultural club for children, or in the urban areas as a drama/cultural academy where drama is not only taught but cultural and traditional issues are practiced by children. Hence, the children are exposed to cultural issues early in life, it will serve as a place where children are taught cultural issues to complement the family efforts. It will reduce or eradicate the issues of self-loss among young people and build in them self-confidence in their culture. Therefore, reinforce the existence of our cultural beliefs and practices and make sure they don't go into extinction. The research therefore suggested that both the private and the public should invest in the academy project to save the young people from the confusion of globalisation and project our cultural heritages to the global market and save our culture from going into extinction.

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