Insights of High School Students in Learning Folk Dance during Physical Education Classes

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Abstract - The study focused on the interest of grade 7 students in learning folk dances in physical education classes in three (3) secondary public schools in Cebu, Philippines. This study was a qualitative research design using a thematic analysis. The fifteen (15) participants in the study were purposively selected using the data saturation method. The result of the study yielded six findings, these are: (1) Learned at school, (2) Contributes to a healthy lifestyle, (3) It shows culture and tradition, (4) It is an old dance, (5) Promotion and Involvement, and (6) Social Well-being. The study revealed that the majority of respondents agreed that they had learned how to dance from their physical education professors. They learn the fundamentals of the dance as well as its purpose. The school plays a major role in letting the students experience and appreciate Philippine folk dances. The study recommended that folk dances must be emphasized in physical education classes so that the upcoming generations will remember and appreciate how our ancestors celebrate life through dance.

Keywords: folk dance, interest, physical education, school, students

Introduction

A personal obligation is maintaining physical fitness. To maintain excellent health throughout your life, you must actively work at it. Everyone has the potential to get fitter. Some people develop their physical fitness through other hobbies like sports or dancing, which require a specific set of intrinsic skills. One of the physical activities you may undertake to improve your fitness level is folk dancing, which falls under the dance genre. To help pupils become fit, folk dance was introduced into the Department of Education’s physical education curriculum.

To open a new horizon in the mind of the learners and make the student more competent in terms of sociological, cognitive, affective, and metacognitive aspects, the learner should establish a connection between an individual and the subject of learning. Faced with the challenge of catering to the needs of extremely diverse 21st century learners, as well as the rise of modern dances widely loved and seen online. Concentration and attention during the learning session of folk-dance decreases because of the idea that the learners don’t have the curiosity or desire to learn. Folk dances were emphasized in the curriculum of the Department of Education and the importance of folk dance was emphasized in Physical Education classes, however in the educational processes appreciation of it was rarely seen.

In many studies, based both on practice and observation, there are many folk dances that have evolved and changed as they have been passed down from generation to generation. As we all know, dancing has always been part of the culture and tradition of Filipinos. Filipinos are musical individuals, and singing and dancing make up the...
majority of their leisure time, according to Tegero's (2018) study. Folk dances are a way for individuals to express themselves via rhythm.

Furthermore, according to Steiner (1996), the purpose of education is to bring the soul and spirit into harmony with the temporal body in a spiritual sense. When the infant is born into the physical world, they do not yet perfectly suit one another and must be brought into harmony. They must also be tuned to one another. The teacher's job is to bring these two elements into harmony with one another. Furthermore, a study conducted in Greece with a 13-year-old who was learning traditional dances for the first time found that it significantly improved the students' experiences with and perceptions of folk dance (Stivaktaki, Mountakis, and Bournelli, 2010).

In this regard, the majority of students nowadays lack a thorough understanding of the various folk dances and how they relate to their cultural history. There are 7,107 islands in the Philippines, and each island has a unique folk dance that reflects its beliefs, traditions, and culture. Folk dance is a means of conserving our cultural legacy, and schools play a significant role in the preservation of that heritage. For this reason, high school students need to be aware of folk dances (Javiña, 2020).

The folk-dance activities enable learners to use their creativity and allow them to recognize their individuality. As a result, the aim of this study is to know and understand the perceptions of public-school grade 7 students towards learning and appreciating folk dance in physical education classes. The study will serve as the basis for the improvement of teaching strategies upon knowing the various perspectives of grade 7 students towards the folk-dance course.

**Methods and Materials**

The study is a qualitative research design based on in-depth interviews with grade 7 students in secondary education. The study aims to learn about grade 7 students' cultural awareness and appreciation for learning folk dances in their physical education class. Furthermore, the informants for the study come from three different public schools in Cebu, Philippines. The first five (5) grade 7 students are from Talisay City National High School, followed by Quiot National High School and Carcar Central National High School. They were purposefully chosen using the data saturation method to determine the number of informants. The investigation will be rescinded if no new information emerges from the interview. Furthermore, all interviews were conducted at the informants' preferred locations.

**Ethical Consideration**

The study was conducted under the school rules and code, as the researchers gathered information from the respondents, who were all Grade 7 students from different public schools in Cebu. This study relied heavily on the cooperation of the school administrators and teachers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the researchers should be vaccinated entirely and adhere to the school's public safety guidelines to safeguard the participants' health. Ethical standards require that researchers should not put the informants in a situation where they might be at risk of harm result of their participation and ensure that the information gathered was discreet. All of the informants were have a piece of clear information about the aim of the study. Likewise, the informants can answer questions based on their preferences throughout the data collection. English and Bisaya were used as the language of choice for all interviews, as all informants were fluent speakers, accuracy and minimization of potential translation errors (Carson, 2001). The participants were given assurance that all information and results would be provided, and a written consent/agreement form was given and informed to the concerned body.
Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used and followed a six-step process. The first step is data familiarization, where the data gathered in interviews, audio files, and printed questionnaires are transcribed. During this process, the initial thoughts were noted down as it will be considered an essential stage in the analysis and read and re-read several times. The second is creating initial codes, in which the whole data set was given equal attention so that full consideration can be given to repeated patterns within the data and where ideas are formed. The third step is identifying potential themes and combining codes that may have been similar or considered the same aspect within the data. All initial codes relevant to the research question were incorporated into a theme. The fourth step is reviewing the themes. It checks that no data is missing from being sorted in some theme and that each theme should have a specific identity. The fifth step is naming and defining the themes by creating a thematic map showing each theme's relationship to another. The sixth step is making the report, consisting of a selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, a final analysis of selected extracts, relating the analysis to the research question, and producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Results and Discussion

The table below described the findings of the study, using thematic analysis the study yielded six findings, these are; (1) Learned at school, (2) Contributes to a healthy lifestyle, (3) It shows culture and tradition, (4) It is an old dance, (5) Promotion and Involvement, and (6) Social Well-being.

Table 1. Perception of Students in Learning Folkdance in Physical Education Classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' Perception</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learned at School.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributes to a healthy lifestyle.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It shows culture and tradition.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is an old dance.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion and Involvement</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Well-being</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 explained the different perceptions of students in learning folk dance. First on the list is the perception of students that folk dances are learned in school. It was emphasized by Dacanay et al. (2021) the transmission of the prevailing cultural experiences, traditions, and practices from one generation to the next is what education is responsible for doing in order to maintain the continuity of culture. The majority of respondents agreed that they had learned how to dance from their physical education professors.

“My MAPEH teacher in elementary taught me how to dance folk dance and we are learning dance in P.E.” – Informant 2

“it is just this year that I learned dancing folk dance through my MAPEH teacher in grade 7” – Informant 5

They learn the fundamentals of the dance as well as its purpose. The school plays a major role in letting the students experience and appreciate Philippine folk dances.

Moreover, second, on the list is the perception of students that Folk dance contributes to a healthy lifestyle. It is supported by the study of Georgis et al (2018) that dancing traditional dance offers multiple benefits to
participants since it is an enjoyable physical activity contributing to the improvement of many “Quality of Life” (QoL) related factors.

“Involving in this activity has general exercise benefits which contribute to a healthy lifestyle” – Informant 11

“It provides an activity that is socially engaging, physically challenging, creative and mentally stimulating” – Informant 14

According to some informants, folk dancing can support an active lifestyle because it is a physically demanding activity. One's physical and mental health can be greatly enhanced by participating in dance activities, especially traditional dances.

In addition, another finding revealed that the students perceive it as a show of culture and tradition in our country. It gives a clear indication of how Filipino culture and tradition are learned and practiced, as well as how our ancestors’ way of life used to be.

“Philippine folk dance is a traditional dance that is passed by our ancestors and practiced today to be remembered” - Informant 3

“It is a dance that shows our tradition and culture, on how our ancestors lived before” - Informant 4

According to Lobo (2023), In this stage of modernization, it is of the utmost importance to give students the chance to participate in cultural activities and gain exposure to different cultures because they will be the next generation to continue the preservation of the exceptional, spectacular, and stunning dances that represent the lives and personalities of our Filipino ancestors. Likewise, Shay (2014) pointed out that folk dance fulfills the following purposes: self-education, self-control, self-organization, self-esteem, aesthetics, ethnocultural, and physical activity. The child's creative skills are subsequently developed, interest in the people's culture is sparked, and the child is given a chance to let off steam and fulfill their demand for a holiday, a spectacle, or a game.

Another finding of the study revealed that for students, folk dances are ancient dances that display people's culture, tradition, art, and temperaments. Movements in folk dances are handed down through the generations. It was occasionally linked to dances that preserved human history and had historical significance.

"It is an old dance to be remembered and practiced". - Informant 1

“Philippine folk dance is a traditional dance that is passed by our ancestors and practiced today to be remembered”. - Informant 3

Folk dance is an essential part of Filipino culture, it depicts our ancestors’ values and their way of life and reflects the influence of hundreds of years under foreign occupation. Nonetheless, as time progresses and modernization enters all aspects of life, the Filipino youth starts to lose their interest in folk dances. (Cruz &Tullao&, 2015).

Furthermore, the study also showed that students were involved in folk dancing and encouraged other students to take up the activity. According to the informants, participating in folk dance helps to maintain it. By participating in it, teaching their classmates how to do it, and sharing it with others.
“my simple way of promoting this is to teach my co-students the knowledge that I have and the basic steps of folk dancing” - Informant 1  
“by participating in culminating activities so that all students can see how good it is to learn and dance folk dance” - informant 5

According to Poralan, Babiera& Habla, (2012), The cornerstone of intercultural communication is cultural awareness. Being able to step back from one's current situation and have a better understanding of cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions is a requirement. It can be very difficult to strengthen and maintain these traditions, values, and beliefs, especially in today's world where globalization has made culture more susceptible.

Finally, the study also revealed that learning folk dance promotes social well-being. All of the informants believed that learning folk dance helped them become more socially comfortable. They made pals and made new acquaintances. Additionally, it made them happier, more self-assured, and more knowledgeable.

“it gives me so much joy as I dance together with my classmates during our P.E. class. I got to socialize with them even if I am shy” - Informant 2

“It gives me confidence that I can dance this kind of dance even if it is not much known by my friends. I got to be able to share to them my experience” – Informant 3

The study by Kiddy (2015) discovered that convivial folk dance promoted community, boosted participants' feelings of self-worth, and promoted creativity and well-being.

Conclusion

The school had a significant impact on the students' personal awareness and interest in traditional dances. Students were exposed to various folk performances at school, which enhanced their understanding of their nature and purpose. Through participation in performances, they were able to recognize the significance of folk dancing to the preservation of culture. As a significant opportunity exists within the educational setting, traditional dances provide numerous health benefits. It helps them move their bodies, alleviate tension, and decrease anxiety, which has a significant impact on their overall mental health. Folk dance entails performing in small or large groups, which is an excellent method to socialize and interact with others. It can facilitate friendship formation and foster a sense of community among students. Folk dance is a means of honoring culture, health, tradition, and other facets of life. In addition, the study suggested that folk dances be emphasized in physical education courses so that future generations will remember and value how our ancestors celebrated life through dance. Similarly, instructors must devote more time and energy to monitoring the student's development in the school and community.

References


