

DANCE AS A KIND OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

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Key words:

- dance
- physical activity

Abstract:

In this study, physical activity in form of dance among children and adolescents performing dance in organized dance groups was characterized. Research material was divided into three level of education (primary school, lower secondary school, secondary school, higher education facility). The purpose of the research was an attempt to characterize the lifestyle of children and adolescents performing dance, an intention to obtain information concerning dance motivation, dance preferences, system of work in the given dance group and carrying out other forms of physical activities.

INTRODUCTION

Physical activity constitutes substantial condition for stimulation of proper physical, mental and social development of young persons. Participation in various forms of physical activity develops their health capabilities; it is a perfect way of shaping interpersonal relations as well as a significant element of social and cultural development of civilization. Systematic physical effort, adjusted to individual needs stimulates the development and adolescence processes during childhood and youth, as well as preservation of health and physical constitution in adult life. Shaping and development of people's physical activity is extremely important, since movement is an indispensable factor of all forms of existence. In his compilation of "basic needs" and "cultural reactions", B. Malinowski specifies movement as an activity [4]. In J. G. Frazer's works, dancing appears as a form of activity supporting satisfaction of human's biological needs, maintaining his life and health, but also as a factor ensuing from the man's inborn need of mental relaxation, a way to pull away from the hard realities of everyday life [1].

Dance has accompanied humans since the earliest times, changing its form and function over centuries, along with economic and social development [7]. It came into being as the primary need of movement with music in order to manifest human's feelings in form of gestures, motions and facial expressions [6]. The simplest definition of dance is rhythmical movement performed in time with music. Nowadays, dance is equally popular with people, since it concentrates around three spheres of human activity: religion, entertainment, and art. B. Graczykowska presents the following division of dance: dance as a form of ritual, a form of performance, stage dance and its forms, i.e. classical, modern, expressive, characteristic, historical dance; she also describes dance as entertainment, including into that category court, reception room, folk and social dances [2].

In our country, children and teenagers perform dancing as a kind of physical activity mainly in community centers, cultural centers, clubs and schools. There are, however, more and more both smaller and bigger private facilities, which promote and teach various kinds of dance. Dance is taken up first of all as a form of physical recreation aimed at relaxation after mental effort, joy and pleasure in spending spare time. The form of recreation often combines with the professional one, where dancers take part in different tournaments; in social dance,

they compete with each other in three groups: recreational, hobby and sports dance. Other forms of presentation and competition are contests, different dance meetings, where children and adolescents have opportunity to present their skills and win awards [7].

During recent years, the popularity of dance as a kind of physical activity significantly increased. It became also very popular with children and adolescents. Not only movement arouses interest, but also its specific combination with different kinds of music, and, in consequence, with different kinds of movement. There are many possibilities, so everyone can find the style and type of dance that suit them the best.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The research was conducted within the period from November 2012 to April 2013 in Rzeszów. The participants were dancers from selected groups and dance formations functioning at community centers, schools, universities and other higher education facilities in Rzeszów. The number of respondents included 334 persons; 275 of them were girls and women aged 10-24 years and 59 boys and men aged 10-24 years. The research material was divided into three levels of education. Level I included children from primary schools attending grades IV-VI (10-12 years old); level II consisted of teenagers from lower secondary schools and secondary schools (13-18 years old), whereas level III involved adult persons – university students aged 19-24 years.

The research method was a survey developed by the Didactic Team of Musical & Movement Exercises at the Chair of Sports and Camping of the Faculty of Physical Education in Rzeszów. The survey was designed parallel for the three levels of education and included 35 questions for level I, and 36 for levels II and III.

The aim of the research was an attempt to characterize the lifestyle of children and adolescents performing dancing, an intention to obtain information concerning dance motivation, dance preferences, the system of work in the given dance group and carrying out other forms of physical activity.

RESULTS

The research analysis revealed that modern dance was the most popular type of dancing among respondents aged 10-12 years (75%). Similar results were obtained with respondents from lower secondary schools and secondary schools (approx. 62%). Respondents aged 18-24 years declared in turn, that they preferred folk dance (approx. 54%). Apart from that, it turned out that the obtained results were statistically significant (Table 1). From the research it also follows, that regardless of the level of education, the idea to join the dance ensemble was the respondents' own decision. That phenomenon can be observed among approx. 60% of persons aged 10–12 years, almost half of respondents from the II level of education and approx. 54% of the oldest respondents. In the group of respondents aged 18 – 24, it can be also observed that approx. 1/3 of persons joined the ensemble at their parents' instigation. The obtained results also were statistically significant (Table 1). The analysis of dance classes attendance frequency revealed, that most persons attended those classes twice a week (level I – approx. 69%; level II – approx. 62%; level III – approx. 68%). It can be also noted that approx. 30% of respondents from the III level of education attended their dance group rehearsals at least 3 times a week. The same attendance frequency features the equally large group of respondents (approx. 38%) from lower secondary schools and secondary schools (Table1).

Regardless of respondents' age, the unquestionable majority of persons under research think that dancing is an event available for everyone and that everybody can learn how to dance. The opposite opinion is expressed by approx. 8% of persons aged 10-12 years, almost 5% respondents from the II level of education and approx. 12% of the oldest respondents.

Table 1. Results

Question	Age [years]			Sum	p (chi square)
	10-12	13-18	19-24		
1. Period of dancing					
5 years	75 85,23%	80 47,62%	23 29,49%	178	0,0001*
6 - 10 years	13 14,77%	72 42,86%	25 32,05%	110	
over 10years	0 0,00%	16 9,52%	30 38,46%	46	
2.The most favorite dance					
Modern	66 75,00%	104 61,90%	16 20,51%	186	0,0001*
Ballet	3 3,41%	2 1,19%	2 2,56%	7	
Contemporary	8 9,09%	22 13,10%	9 11,54%	39	
Folk Dance	3 3,41%	18 10,71%	42 53,85%	63	
Ballroom Dancing	8 9,09%	22 13,10%	9 11,54%	39	
3.Idea to start dance classes					
Own	53 60,23%	82 48,81%	42 53,85%	177	0,372
Friends	13 14,77%	31 18,45%	19 24,36%	63	
Family	20 22,73%	51 30,36%	15 19,23%	86	
Another reason (ex. advertisement)	2 2,27%	4 2,38%	2 2,56%	8	
4.Number of classes per week					
One	2 2,27%	1 0,60%	4 5,13%	7	0,0895
Two	61 69,32%	104 61,90%	53 67,95%	218	
Tree and more	25 28,41%	63 37,50%	21 26,92%	109	
5. Is dancing available for everyone?					
No, it is only for people who have a talent	7 7,95%	8 4,76%	9 11,54%	24	0,152
Yes, anyone can learn to dance	64 72,73%	114 67,86%	46 58,97%	224	
It depends on the type of dance	17 19,32%	46 27,38%	23 29,49%	86	
6. The amount of money spent for classes per month					
To 50 zl	40 45,45%	99 58,93%	12 15,38%	151	0,0001*
50-100 zl	9 10,23%	18 10,71%	6 7,69%	33	
100 and more	17 19,32%	20 11,90%	7 8,97%	44	
For free	22 25,00%	31 18,45%	53 67,95%	106	

Table 2. Results

Question	Age [years]			Sum	p (chi square)
	10-12	13-18	19-24		
7. Do respondents practice other forms of physical activity?					
Yes	62 70,45%	88 52,38%	45 57,69%	195	0,019*
No	26 29,55%	80 47,62%	33 42,31%	139	
8. What is dance for respondents?					
Passion	62 18,56%	124 37,13%	56 16,77%		
Hobby	67 20,06%	116 34,73%	62 18,56%		
Favorite physical activity	58 17,37%	123 36,83%	67 20,06%		
Favorite way of spending free time	42 12,57%	101 30,24%	53 15,87%		
Form of socializing	26 7,78%	88 26,35%	50 14,97%		
Realization of unfulfilled of parent's dreams	8 2,40%	13 3,89%	1 0,30%		
Way of life	21 6,29%	55 16,47%	30 8,98%		
Możliwością uzyskania uprawnień zawodowych	20 5,99%	38 11,38%	28 8,38%		
9. Do respondents broaden their knowledge about dance?					
Yes (workshops, course, CD, TV, itp.)	73 21,86%	149 44,61%	70 20,96%		2,117
No	15 4,49%	19 5,69%	8 2,40%		
16. Is participation in the classes mobilizes to learn and other duties?					
Yes	46 13,77%	82 24,55%	34 10,18%		1,263
No	42 12,57%	86 25,75%	44 13,17%		
10. Is participation in the classes mobilizes to better organization of time?					
Yes	54 16,17%	115 34,43%	53 15,87%		1,387
No	34 10,18%	53 15,87%	25 7,49%		
11. Is participation in class tired and weary for the respondents?					
Yes	8 2,40%	9 2,69%	5 1,50%		1,250
No	80 23,95%	159 47,60%	73 21,86%		
12. Is participation in the classes takes too much time for respondents?					
Yes	5 1,50%	10 2,99%	6 1,80%		0,333
No	83 24,85%	158 47,31%	72 21,56%		
13. Is participation in classes is a pleasure, something needed and useful?					
Yes	77 23,05%	155 46,41%	68 20,36%		2,225
No	11 3,29%	13 3,89%	10 2,99%		

From the analysis of amounts of money spent on dance classes it follows, that most persons from the age group 18-24 years attended those classes free of charge (approx. 68%). Similar situation relates to $\frac{1}{4}$ of respondents from the I level of education. The least amount, i.e. up to 50 PLN was spent on dance classes by approx. 45% of the youngest respondents, almost 59% respondents from lower secondary school and secondary school as well as approx. 15% respondents from the III level of education.

From the conducted research it also follows, that apart from dance classes in an ensemble, most respondents (regardless of the level of education) perform other forms of physical activity (approx. 70% - age 10–12 years; approx. 53% - age 13–18 years; approx. 58% - age 19–24 years). In addition to that, the results obtained turned out to be statistically significant.

The question: “*What is dance for you?*” was answered by over $\frac{1}{3}$ of respondents that it was a passion. The same answer was given by approx. 19% of persons from primary school and 17% of students aged 19-24 years. For a large group of respondents dancing is also a hobby and the favorite way to spend spare time. Distressing is the fact, that about 4% of respondents attending junior secondary school and secondary school perform dancing due to the unfulfilled dreams of their parents. Apart from dance classes, almost half of persons from the II level of education broaden their knowledge in the field of dance by attending courses, workshops, etc. Such means are also used by about $\frac{1}{4}$ of respondents from other level of educations.

The analysis of research results reveals that for approx. $\frac{1}{4}$ of respondents from the I level of education, about 47% of persons from junior secondary school and secondary school and for about 22% of students aged 19-24 years, dancing is not a tiring activity involving a lot of physical effort. Also for the vast majority of respondents, regardless of their level of education, it does not take a lot of free time. For about 25% of respondents from junior secondary school and secondary school, dancing is a factor that mobilizes them for learning and other duties. The contrary opinion is expressed by about 13% of children aged 10-12 years, about 16% of respondents from the II level of education and for about 7% of oldest respondents. Over $\frac{1}{3}$ of respondents aged 13-18 years can better organize their time thanks to participation in dance classes. The same opinion was expressed by about 16% of respondents from other levels of educations. The conducted analysis showed also that only a small group of respondents think that dance is not an useful and necessary activity. The vast majority of respondents attends dance classes with pleasure and thinks that dance is a necessary activity that brings numerous benefits (approx. 23% - I level; 46% - II level; approx. 20% - III level).

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Physical activity in form of dance became nowadays a very popular type of recreation. It happened first of all due to various promotion campaigns in mass media. Apart from participation in occasional dance meeting (discos, dance events, etc.), dance classes organized by various educational institutions and conducted by qualified personnel became more and more popular with teenagers.

In this study, physical activity of children and adolescents performing dance in organized dance groups was characterized. From the conducted research it follows that modern dance is the most popular type of dancing among respondents from every level of education. The positive factor of dancing is the fact, that the majority of respondents attend their classes free of charge and if the classes are charged, the amount paid does in most cases not exceed 50 PLN a month. The conducted analysis showed also that regardless of the level of education, dance is for respondents their passion and hobby. At the same time, a significant number of respondents use additional educational forms, attending various courses, workshops, etc.

Due to physical activity, dance is closely associated with sports. In both cases we deal with workout, achievement or recreation. Dance and sports are commonly associated with the notion “physical culture” that is defined by the “*Small Encyclopedia*” as “an integral part of nation’s culture, including all values and activities related to health care, composition and posture of body, physical development of the man, shaping and improving their motor abilities, fitness and physical efficiency, a system of behaviors, individual and social needs, views, attitudes, theories and organization in that field” [5]. Thanks to the fact, that people, especially the young ones, dance and do sports, they become physically more efficient and mentally healthier, which is an indispensable value in the age of today’s civilization [3]. Therefore, it is important to take up dancing as a physical activity, in its basic form or in combination with other types of physical activity.

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