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Conservación de las danzas tradicionales filipinas en la educación superior para fomentar la competencia cultural de los estudiantes a través de la participación en la danza

Conserving Philippine traditional dances in higher education to foster students' cultural competence through dance engagement

Conservação das danças tradicionais filipinas no ensino superior para promover a competência cultural dos alunos através do envolvimento com a dança

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RESUMEN

Este estudio investigó la conservación y preservación de las danzas tradicionales filipinas como patrimonio cultural inmaterial y su papel en el fomento de la competencia cultural de los estudiantes (conocimiento cultural, sensibilidad y conciencia) a través de la participación en la educación física dentro de la educación superior. Un total de 270 estudiantes universitarios de segundo año matriculados en cursos de Educación Física en una universidad estatal seleccionada en Filipinas participaron en el estudio. La competencia cultural se midió utilizando una Escala adaptada de Apreciación Cultural de las Artes Marciales, y la participación en la danza se evaluó utilizando una Escala adaptada de Participación Deportiva (vigor, dedicación y absorción). Utilizando un diseño correlacional-predictivo con análisis de regresión múltiple, el estudio encontró que la participación en danza tradicional mostró asociaciones significativas con los resultados de la competencia cultural de los estudiantes. Los modelos de regresión explicaron proporciones sustanciales de varianza y demostraron grandes tamaños de efecto: competencia ($R^2 = .535$, $f^2 = 1.15$), conocimiento ($R^2 = .440$, $f^2 = 0.79$), sensibilidad ($R^2 = .536$, $f^2 = 1.16$) y conciencia ($R^2 = .346$, $f^2 = 0.53$). A través de estos resultados, la dimensión de absorción de la participación en la danza emergió consistentemente como el correlato más fuerte, enfatizando la importancia de la participación profunda y experiencial. Estos hallazgos subrayan la necesidad de integrar la danza tradicional en los currículos de educación física no solo para preservar el patrimonio cultural sino también para mejorar la competencia cultural de los estudiantes y equiparlos para navegar en un mundo globalizado. Se alienta a las instituciones educativas a crear oportunidades de aprendizaje experiencial que promuevan la conciencia y sensibilidad cultural, fomentando la cohesión social y el respeto por la diversidad cultural.

Palabras clave: competencia cultural, conocimiento cultural, sensibilidad cultural, conciencia cultural, patrimonio cultural inmaterial, danzas tradicionales Filipinas.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the conservation and preservation of Philippine traditional dances as intangible cultural heritage and their role in fostering students' cultural competence (cultural knowledge, sensitivity and awareness) through engagement in physical education within higher education. A total of 270 second-year college students enrolled in Physical Education courses at a selected state university in the Philippines participated in the study. Cultural competence was measured using an adapted Cultural Appreciation of Martial Arts Scale, and dance engagement was assessed using an adapted Sports Engagement Scale (vigor, dedication and absorption). Using a correlational-predictive design with multiple regression analysis, the study found that participation in traditional dance showed significant associations with students' cultural competence outcomes. The regression models explained substantial proportions of variance and demonstrated large effect sizes: competence ($R^2 = .535$, $f^2 = 1.15$), knowledge ($R^2 = .440$, $f^2 = 0.79$), sensitivity ($R^2 = .536$, $f^2 = 1.16$) and awareness ($R^2 = .346$, $f^2 = 0.53$). Across these outcomes, the absorption dimension of dance engagement consistently emerged as the strongest correlate, emphasizing the importance of deep, experiential participation. These findings underscore the need to integrate traditional dance into physical education curricula not only to preserve cultural heritage but also to enhance students' cultural competence and equip them to navigate a globalized world. Educational institutions are encouraged to create experiential learning opportunities that promote cultural awareness and sensitivity, fostering social cohesion and respect for cultural diversity.

Keywords: Cultural competence, Cultural knowledge, cultural sensitivity, cultural awareness, Intangible Cultural Heritage, Philippine Traditional Dances.

RESUMO

Este estudo investigou a conservação e a preservação das danças tradicionais filipinas como patrimônio cultural imaterial e o seu papel no fomento da competência cultural dos estudantes (conhecimento, sensibilidade e consciência cultural) através do envolvimento em educação física no ensino superior. Participaram no estudo 270 estudantes universitários do segundo ano, inscritos em cursos de Educação Física numa universidade estadual selecionada nas Filipinas. A competência cultural foi medida através de uma Escala de Apreciação Cultural das Artes Marciais adaptada, e o envolvimento na dança foi avaliado através de uma Escala de Envolvimento Desportivo adaptada (vigor, dedicação e absorção). Utilizando um desenho correlacional-preditivo com análise de regressão múltipla, o estudo constatou que a participação em danças tradicionais apresentou associações significativas com os resultados de competência cultural dos alunos. Os modelos de regressão explicaram proporções substanciais de variância e demonstraram grandes tamanhos de efeito: competência ($R^2 = 0,535$, $f^2 = 1,15$), conhecimento ($R^2 = 0,440$, $f^2 = 0,79$), sensibilidade ($R^2 = 0,536$, $f^2 = 1,16$) e consciência ($R^2 = 0,346$, $f^2 = 0,53$). Entre estes resultados, a dimensão de absorção do envolvimento na dança emergiu consistentemente como o correlato mais forte, enfatizando a importância da participação profunda e experiential. Estas descobertas sublinham a necessidade de integrar a dança tradicional nos currículos de educação física não só para preservar a herança cultural, mas também para melhorar a competência cultural dos alunos e equipá-los para navegar num mundo globalizado. As instituições de ensino são incentivadas a criar oportunidades de aprendizagem experiential que promovam a consciência e a sensibilidade culturais, fomentando a coesão social e o respeito pela diversidade cultural.

Palavras chave: competência cultural, conhecimento cultural, sensibilidade cultural, consciência cultural, patrimônio cultural imaterial, danças tradicionais Filipinas

INTRODUCTION

Cultural competence is a critical framework in research, emphasizing the understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural backgrounds and practices (Clinton et al., 2023), which is essential for conducting meaningful and inclusive studies (Eden et al., 2024). In the vibrant tapestry of the Philippines, where traditional dances serve as a

Dance Engagement and Cultural Competence

powerful medium of expression (Aquino, 1952; Santos, 2019), the significance of cultural competence becomes even more pronounced. These dances are not just performances; they are living stories that encapsulate various communities' heritage, values, and beliefs (J. Lobo, 2023). However, there needs to be more scholarly papers focused explicitly on cultural competence concerning Philippine traditional dances, creating a gap in the academic discourse. This lack of research limits the understanding of these art forms and hinders the exploration of their broader societal implications, including their role in fostering cultural identity and community cohesion. Additionally, studies examining dance engagement—how individuals connect with and participate in dance—and its influence on cultural competence are also notably limited. This deficiency in research underscores the urgent need to conduct a comprehensive study that explores the relationship between engagement in Philippine traditional dances and the development of cultural competence. Such research is essential for enhancing educational practices, promoting cultural preservation, and enriching the understanding of how traditional dance serves as a vehicle for cultural expression and intercultural dialogue.

Preserving Heritage through Movement: The Role of Philippine Traditional Dances in Higher Education

Teaching Philippine traditional dances in higher education through physical education plays a crucial role in preserving the country's cultural heritage (J. Lobo, 2023). By incorporating these dances into the curriculum (Tao et al., 2022), universities allow students to engage with their traditions. This connection deepens their understanding of the history and values of various Filipino communities. Physical education offers an active way for students to learn the movements and meaning behind these dances (Adolfo et al., 2023). This hands-on approach develops their physical skills and strengthens their cultural identity (Georgios, 2017). Lobo et al. (2024) emphasized that, as students practice these dances, they help keep cultural traditions alive, ensuring that these art forms are passed on to future generations.

In addition, teaching Philippine traditional dances within physical education contributes directly to the discipline's objectives, principles and content. Physical education is not only concerned with fitness but also with the holistic development of students (Guinto & Campoamor-Olegario, 2025). Traditional dances are rich, structured movement activities that develop fundamental motor skills, coordination, endurance, balance and flexibility, thereby fulfilling the subject's core physical and motor-learning goals (Rustad et al., 2025). At the same time, they cultivate discipline, teamwork and respect for diverse cultures (Bannon, 2010; Yetti et al., 2023), aligning with physical education's principle of fostering lifelong values and social responsibility. By embedding cultural heritage in a movement-based curriculum, physical education strengthens identity formation and intercultural competence while meeting mandated learning standards for rhythmic and expressive activities. This experience fosters a deeper appreciation for diversity within Filipino traditions and encourages students to embrace their heritage (Lobo, 2024), while also helping them understand the importance of preserving cultural practices in the modern world (Egorov et al., 2019). By combining rigorous physical activity with cultural learning, physical education ensures that students grow into well-rounded individuals who are both physically fit and culturally literate, keeping them connected to their roots and capable of engaging with a broader global culture.

In addition, teaching traditional dances through physical education provides more than just physical benefits. Students develop discipline, teamwork, and respect for different cultures (Bannon, 2010; Yetti et al., 2023). This experience fosters a deeper appreciation for diversity within Filipino traditions, encouraging students to embrace their heritage (J. Lobo, 2024). Moreover, it helps them understand the importance of preserving cultural practices in the modern world (Egorov et al., 2019). By combining physical activity with cultural learning, institutions help students grow into well-rounded individuals who are physically fit and culturally aware (Fairclough, 2004). This approach ensures that students stay connected to their roots and gain the ability to appreciate and engage with a broader global culture. This perspective is consistent with international experiences on choreographic heritage education, where creative and practice-based teaching ensures that dance traditions are both preserved and meaningfully re-created. For example, Giménez-Morte and Gómez-Linares (2020) describe higher education initiatives in contemporary dance that highlight how deliberate communication and structured transmission of choreographic traditions can strengthen the links between communities, education and cultural conservation.

Embodied Heritage: Fostering Cultural Competence Through Dance in Higher Education

Cultural competence in Philippine traditional dances involves a deep understanding of these dance forms' cultural, historical, and symbolic significance. In higher education, it means teaching the technical aspects of dances like *Tinikling*, *Singkil*, and *Pandanggo sa Ilaw* and ensuring students grasp their cultural context (Dacanay et al., 2019; Taib Bin Saearani et al., 2022). According to Mesana et al. (2024), these dances embody the heritage, beliefs, and way of life of various regions and indigenous groups in the Philippines. Thus, cultural competence requires educators to convey the meaning behind every movement, costume, and musical accompaniment, highlighting the unique cultural identities of each dance. This understanding helps prevent the commercialization or oversimplification of these art forms, ensuring that the dances are preserved and respected as passed down to future generations.

Incorporating cultural competence in studying Philippine traditional dances is essential for fostering a deeper connection between students and their cultural roots. Higher education institutions can play a crucial role in this by offering dance courses emphasizing cultural authenticity's importance (Olvera, 2008; Şuşu, 2018). According to Debota-Palermo (2024), beyond choreography, educators should explain these Philippine Folk dances' origins, values, and stories, which has also been supported by various scholars based on previously conducted studies (Dacanay et al., 2019; Tullao & Cruz, 2015; You, 2009). For students, this approach enhances their dance skills and builds their cultural awareness and pride (Culajara, 2021; Li, 2024; Reyes et al., 2020). As Afolaranmi and Afolaranmi (2024) have mentioned, it encourages them to see traditional dances as more than mere performances but as living expressions of the country's history and identity. By nurturing cultural competence, universities help students understand and respect the significance of each dance they perform, guarding against the risk of cultural dilution (Coleman et al., 2021; Lyu, 2024).

Furthermore, cultural competence, such as in traditional Philippine dances (Villa, 2023), helps students appreciate cultural diversity and become more globally minded (Basnet, 2024; Eden et al., 2024). According to Yue and Wei (2023), as the world becomes increasingly interconnected, understanding one's culture while respecting others is crucial. Furthermore, Al-Zadjali (2024) stated that traditional dances offer a medium through which students can engage in intercultural exchange, learning from and about other cultures while showcasing their own. Through this engagement, students build mutual respect and gain a deeper appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives. In this way, cultural competence in higher education extends beyond the classroom (Frawley et al., 2020), preparing students for diverse global environments where cultural sensitivity and awareness are crucial to success, as emphasized by Abdallah and Alkaabi (2023). By integrating cultural competence into the curriculum (Arviola Jr. & Dellomos, 2023), higher education institutions preserve the integrity of Philippine traditional dances (Laltoog, 2024) and contribute to the development of globally conscious individuals (Zalli, 2024). According to Malmo and Moiseichik, (2017), cultural competence is further divided into three domains: cultural *knowledge*, *sensitivity* and *awareness* (KSA).

Cultural knowledge involves understanding and appreciating the beliefs, values, customs, practices, and social dynamics that define a specific cultural group (Grageda et al., 2017; Wall-Bassett et al., 2017). In the context of dance, it encompasses insights into the historical and contemporary influences that shape various dance forms and their cultural significance (Gargaro et al., 2018). This understanding allows individuals to recognize the rich tapestry of heritage expressed through movement and performance. By engaging with the unique perspectives and experiences embedded in different dance traditions, students can foster empathy and improve communication across cultural boundaries (Eichbaum et al., 2023; Prakash et al., 2024). In research and practice, cultural knowledge is essential for promoting inclusivity and sensitivity within the dance community across various age groups (Grindheim & Grindheim, 2021; Li, 2024; Zygmunt et al., 2023). It enables individuals to engage meaningfully with diverse cultures, ensuring that dance is a form of artistic expression and a respectful celebration of cultural diversity.

Meanwhile, *cultural sensitivity* encompasses the awareness, understanding, and respect of various cultural groups' differences and similarities (Fong et al., 2016). In dance, this sensitivity involves recognizing and appreciating the

Dance Engagement and Cultural Competence

unique perspectives and traditions that inform different dance forms (Li, 2024). Being culturally sensitive means steering clear of stereotypes and biases while engaging with dancers and their cultural practices (Li, 2024). This approach honors their beliefs and values and creates a more inclusive and supportive environment for all participants. In dance settings, whether in classrooms, performances, or community events, cultural sensitivity is essential for fostering empathy and enhancing communication among dancers from diverse backgrounds (Sinag, 2022; Wang, 2021). Ultimately, it cultivates stronger relationships and mutual respect, enriching the overall experience of dance as a powerful form of artistic expression and cultural exchange.

Lastly, *cultural awareness* involves recognizing and understanding the values, beliefs, practices, and nuances that define various cultural groups (Kafadar, 2021; Mortara et al., 2014). In traditional dances, this awareness means actively exploring one's cultural heritage while remaining open to learning about and appreciating the rich identities of other cultural dance forms (Poralan et al., 2014). It extends beyond surface-level knowledge, encouraging individuals to engage deeply with the histories and social dynamics that shape traditional dances. By fostering cultural awareness in traditional dance (Georgios, 2017), students can enhance their ability to communicate effectively and empathetically across cultural boundaries, reducing misunderstandings and promoting inclusivity (Albattat et al., 2016; Arciosa et al., 2023). This understanding is a foundation for building respectful and harmonious relationships within the diverse landscape of traditional dances, enriching the experience for individuals.

The three dimensions of cultural competence are essential in higher education, particularly in preserving intangible cultural heritages (Bonnet et al., 2018), through physical education. By integrating traditional dances into the higher education curriculum, educational institutions can enrich students' understanding of their cultural significance (Li, 2022; Zheng, 2014). This encourages students to have a deeper appreciation for the histories and stories they represent. This approach fosters respect for diverse cultural expressions and promotes empathy and collaboration among students from various backgrounds. Lobo (2023) has emphasized that, as students engage with their cultural identities and learn about others, they become stewards of their heritage. They recognize the importance of preserving these practices for future generations. Ultimately, embracing cultural competence in higher education empowers students to navigate an increasingly interconnected world while safeguarding the richness of their intangible cultural heritages.

Engagement (Re)defined: Adapting Concepts for Dance

Engaging in Philippine traditional dances allows individuals to connect deeply with the country's rich cultural heritage (Pastera, 2024). According to Talangchey (2023), each dance reflects the unique customs, beliefs, and history of various regions, making participation a meaningful way to explore the diversity of the Philippines. Through dance, participants experience the traditional music, movements, and rhythms passed down through generations (Mesana et al., 2024). Engaging in these dances helps keep cultural practices alive, fostering a sense of pride and belonging (Afolaranmi & Afolaranmi, 2024). Whether performed for cultural celebrations or educational purposes (Patterson et al., 2018), traditional dances offer an immersive experience that strengthens cultural identity (Kico et al., 2018), while showcasing the beauty and depth of Filipino traditions (J. Lobo, 2024).

Beyond cultural connection, engaging in traditional Philippine dances promotes physical and mental well-being (Adolfo et al., 2023; Douka et al., 2019; Jochum et al., 2024a). The movements improve coordination, balance, and stamina, offering a form of exercise that is both enjoyable and culturally enriching (Dos Santos et al., 2021). At the same time, Evadila et al. (2024) mentioned that learning and performing these dances cultivates discipline and teamwork, as many traditional dances require group coordination and harmony. This active participation enhances physical fitness and a sense of community among participants. By engaging in these traditional dances, college students gain a greater appreciation for their cultural roots while enjoying dance's physical and social benefits, as supported by various scholars (Buedron, 2017; Fantiro et al., 2023; Jochum et al., 2024b).

In this study's context, *engagement*, as adapted from Guillén and Martínez-Alvarado (2014), refers to a positive, fulfilling state of mind characterized by *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption* in dance activities. Vigor involves high

Lobo

levels of energy and mental resilience (Alrashidi et al., 2016) while participating in dance, indicating that students feel strong and motivated in their practice. This energy enhances their performance and promotes a positive atmosphere within group settings. Dedication reflects a sense of significance, enthusiasm, and commitment (J. T. Lobo, 2023; Salmela-Aro & Read, 2017) toward one's dance practice, where students feel passionate about their involvement and perceive it as meaningful. Absorption refers to being entirely concentrated and engrossed (Ketonen et al., 2019) in dance activities, where time seems to fly by, and students lose themselves in the experience, allowing them to connect deeply with their movements and the music.

Research Gap

While there is a wealth of literature on cultural competence and the significance of intangible cultural heritage, there is a notable gap regarding the specific role of Philippine traditional dances in fostering cultural competence among students in higher education. Most existing studies address cultural education in general terms, overlooking the nuanced contributions of dance engagement to students' KSA. Additionally, the unique context of Philippine traditional dances and their preservation as cultural heritage has received limited attention concerning educational outcomes. This research gap underscores the necessity for targeted studies that investigate the interplay between dance engagement and cultural competence, particularly within the framework of physical education.

Objectives of the Study

This study explored the conservation and preservation efforts of Philippine traditional dances as forms of intangible cultural heritage and their role in fostering students' cultural competence in higher education. Specifically, the research assessed how dance engagement in physical education contributed to students' knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness (KSA) of these cultural practices. By focusing on students' active participation in traditional dances, the study sought to demonstrate how such engagement enhanced their understanding of these art forms' cultural significance and historical context. Ultimately, the research aimed to inform educational practices that integrated traditional dances into the curriculum, promoting cultural competence among students and ensuring the sustainability of these cultural expressions.

Hypotheses Formulation

Guided by Self-Determination Theory and principles of cultural learning and experiential education, the study posits that students who are more engaged in Philippine traditional dances will display stronger cultural competence. Dance engagement captures three motivational dimensions (vigor, dedication, and absorption) which align with intrinsic motivation and deep learning. These dimensions are expected to be positively associated with cultural knowledge, sensitivity and awareness because immersive, energetic participation provides authentic opportunities to internalize cultural meanings and practices. Based on the study objectives and identified research gap, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₁: Students' overall cultural competence in Philippine traditional dances will show significant relationships with their dance engagement in terms of:

H_{1a}: vigor;

H_{1b}: dedication;

H_{1c}: absorption

H₂: Students' cultural knowledge of Philippine traditional dances will show significant relationships with their dance engagement in terms of:

H_{2a}: vigor;

Dance Engagement and Cultural Competence

H_{2b} : dedication;

H_{2c} : absorption

H_3 : Students' cultural sensitivity toward Philippine traditional dances will show significant relationships with their dance engagement in terms of:

H_{3a} : vigor;

H_{3b} : dedication;

H_{3c} : absorption

H_4 : Students' cultural awareness of Philippine traditional dances will show significant relationships with their dance engagement in terms of:

H_{4a} : vigor;

H_{4b} : dedication;

H_{4c} : absorption

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a correlational and predictive research design to examine the relationship between students' engagement in Philippine traditional dances and their cultural competence in terms of knowledge, sensitivity and awareness (KSA). This design is appropriate for investigating associations and testing predictive relationships among variables without experimental manipulation (Black, 2002; van Witteloostuijn et al., 2022).

Participants

The respondents were second-year college students enrolled in Physical Education 3 (PATH-Fit 3) during the first semester of Academic Year 2024-2025 at a selected state university in the Philippines. Purposive sampling was used because Philippine Traditional Dances are formally taught in this specific course and year level, making these students the most appropriate population to address the research questions.

To determine the recommended minimum sample size, an *a priori power analysis* was conducted using G*Power 3.1 (Faul et al., 2007) for a linear multiple regression with three predictors. Assuming a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$), an alpha level of .05, and a desired power of .95, the analysis indicated that at least 119 participants were required. A total of 270 valid responses were obtained, exceeding the minimum requirement and thereby ensuring robust statistical power and precision of estimates. Statistical and practical significance were both considered in interpreting the results.

Furthermore, the distribution of the participants based on gender and years of experience in dancing Philippine Traditional dances are illustrated in Table 1. The study an even split between males (50.0%) and females (42.2%). A smaller portion identified as LGBTQIAP+ (5.9%), while 1.9% preferred not to disclose their gender. Meanwhile, the respondents' age ranges from 19 to 28, with the mean ($\bar{x}$) age of 20.95 years old. Also, most respondents (73.0%) had less than one year of experience in dancing Philippine traditional dances, while 14.8% had one to two years of experience. Only 4.4% had two to five years, and 7.8% had over five years of experience. This indicates that the majority are beginners, with fewer participants having long-term experience in traditional dances.

Table 1

Distribution of the participants

Profile (n=270)	Items	n(%)
Gender	Male	135(50.0%)
	Female	114(42.2%)
	LGBTQIAP+	16(5.9%)
	Prefer not to say	5(1.9%)
Years of experience in dancing Philippine Traditional Dances	< 1 year	197(73.0%)
	1-2 years	40(14.8%)
	2-5 years	12(4.4%)
	> 5 years	21(7.8%)

Instruments

Data were collected through an online survey administered via Google Forms and distributed through the university's Learning Management System (Google Classroom) between July and August 2024. The survey included three integrated sections covering demographic information, dance engagement and cultural competence. Demographic items asked about gender and years of experience in Philippine traditional dance. Psychological engagement in dance was measured using the Sports Engagement Scale (Guillén & Martínez-Alvarado, 2014). Wording was carefully modified to suit the dance context, such as replacing "sport activities" with "dance activities." The 15-item scale assesses vigor, dedication and absorption on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "hardly ever" to 7 = "almost always"). The original instrument reported high internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$ overall; vigor $\alpha = .75$; dedication $\alpha = .75$; absorption $\alpha = .74$). Students' cultural competence was assessed using an adapted Cultural Appreciation of Martial Arts Scale (Malmo & Moiseichik, 2017), with all references to "martial arts" changed to "Philippine traditional dances" and examples adjusted to fit heritage-dance practices. This 20-item measure evaluates cultural knowledge, sensitivity and awareness on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 7 = "strongly agree"). The original validation demonstrated excellent reliability (knowledge $\alpha = .96$; sensitivity $\alpha = .92$; awareness $\alpha = .87$).

Procedures

Following approval from the Local Research Ethics Committee of the Bulacan State University-College of Sports, Exercise and Recreation, data collection was conducted from July to August 2024. The survey was created in Google Forms and distributed through the university's Learning Management System (Google Classroom). The first page of the form explained the study's purpose, inclusion criteria, instruments, voluntary nature of participation, potential minimal risks and data privacy safeguards. Participants provided electronic informed consent before accessing the survey items. They then completed the demographic questions and the adapted instruments measuring dance engagement and cultural competence. Participation was voluntary and uncompensated. All responses were automatically stored in password-protected digital files accessible only to the principal investigator and scheduled for permanent deletion after a three-month retention period. After, all data were now subjected for data analysis.

Dance Engagement and Cultural Competence

Data Analysis

First, a normality assessment, bivariate correlation, and reliability test were performed. A normality assessment was conducted to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution, which helped select the appropriate statistical tests for analysis. Following this, a bivariate correlation was performed to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two continuous variables, providing insights into how one variable may influence the other. Lastly, a reliability test was carried out to assess the internal consistency of the measurement tool, ensuring that it consistently produces reliable and stable results across different applications. As can be seen in Table 2, the constructs show strong internal consistency, as indicated by high-reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha (α) values ranging from .85 to .92). Skewness and kurtosis values suggest the data are normally distributed. Additionally, the bivariate correlations between constructs are significant and robust ($p < .01$), with correlation coefficients ranging from .53 to .95, indicating robust relationships between the variables.

Table 2

Normality estimates, bivariate correlation and reliability tests.

Constructs	M $\pm$ SD	Skew	Kurt	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
VI	3.88 $\pm$ 1.30	-.016	-.129	(.85)						
DED	3.94 $\pm$ 1.36	-.228	-.422	.86**	(.87)					
AB	3.82 $\pm$ 1.40	-.109	-.689	.81**	.88**	(.91)				
CC	4.11 $\pm$ 1.29	-.204	-.134	.66**	.69**	.71**	(.92)			
CK	3.89 $\pm$ 1.29	-.065	-.114	.60**	.63**	.65**	.95**	(.91)		
CS	4.21 $\pm$ 1.48	-.168	-.452	.67**	.67**	.72**	.94**	.82**	(.90)	
CA	4.75 $\pm$ 1.67	-.379	-.620	.53**	.56**	.58**	.78**	.60**	.73**	(.88)

Note: Significance is at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Mean and Standard Deviation are illustrated through M $\pm$ SD.

Legend: VI- Vigor, DED- Dedication, AB- Absorption, CC- Cultural competence, CK- Cultural knowledge, CS- Cultural sensitivity, CA- Cultural awareness.

Lastly, to determine the association of dance engagement on cultural competence, a predictive analysis was performed using multiple regression. Multiple regression is a statistical method that helps understand how multiple factors (independent variables) influence or predict a specific outcome (dependent variable) (Sinharay, 2010). However, it is essential to note that multiple regression only shows relationships between these factors and the outcome—it does not prove or establish causation (Sinharay, 2010).

Ethical Statement

This independent, self-funded study was approved as an exempted protocol by the Local Research Ethics Committee of the College of Sports, Exercise and Recreation, Bulacan State University (CSER-CRDU-2024-032). It adhered to the Declaration of Helsinki (WMA, 2013) and followed the Standards of Ethics in Research in Sport and Exercise Sciences (Harriss et al., 2019). Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly maintained in compliance with the Philippine Data Privacy Act of 2012 (Republic Act 10173) and Spain's Organic Law 3/2018 on the Protection of Personal Data and Guarantee of Digital Rights. All participants provided electronic informed consent prior to participation.

RESULTADOS

Table 3 typifies the findings on the direct influence of dance engagement on cultural competence and its three dimensions. First, it was observed that dance engagement predicts cultural competence, suggesting that DE directly influences CC [$F(3, 266) = 102.040, p < .001$]. Furthermore, the $R^2 = .535$ explains that the model accounts for 53.5% of the variance in cultural competence, with a large effect size ($f^2 = 1.15$). Therefore, the finding suggests that participants who are more engaged in dance activities are likely to exhibit higher levels of cultural competence. Given that most participants are relatively new to dancing, this engagement might be driven by their enthusiasm and desire to learn about their cultural heritage through dance. Furthermore, each coefficient was examined to determine each component's predictive power on cultural competence. Interestingly, of the three components of dance engagement, absorption has the highest predictive power, postulating that AB positively influences CC ($\beta = .407, t_{\text{value}} = 4.905, p < .001$). The finding emphasizes the importance of immersive experiences in fostering cultural competence, indicating that students deeply absorbed in their dance practices are more likely to develop a robust understanding and appreciation of their cultural heritage. Moreover, while absorption is critical, its effectiveness may vary depending on the depth of experience. Newer dancers might find it challenging to achieve the same level of absorption as those with more years of experience who have developed a richer understanding of the cultural narratives behind the dances. Thus, creating opportunities for more immersive experiences in the early stages of learning could enhance absorption and, in turn, cultural competence. Additionally, it was unraveled that vigor predicts cultural competence, indicating that VI positively influences CC ($\beta = .194, t_{\text{value}} = 2.358, p = .019$). This suggests that students who exhibit higher levels of vigor in their dance participation are likelier to demonstrate increased cultural competence, highlighting that energetic engagement fosters a deeper connection to cultural contexts. For many beginners, the initial excitement and energy associated with learning a new skill could enhance their cultural competence as they immerse themselves in the art form. Since a large portion of the sample comprises individuals with less than one year of experience, their vigor may be particularly associated in fostering cultural understanding and appreciation. However, DED was not statistically related to CC ($\beta = .124, t_{\text{value}} = 1.268, p = .206$). This finding postulate that dedication is a positive trait but is not significantly associated with their cultural competence in this context. Also, this could indicate the participants' relatively low commitment levels, given that most are still in the early stages of their dance journey. Their dedication may increase as they continue to engage in dance, potentially leading to a more predictive association with cultural competence.

Moreover, it was observed that dance engagement predicts cultural knowledge, indicating that DE directly influences CK [$F(3, 266) = 69.699, p < .001$]. Additionally, the $R^2 = .440$ suggests that the model accounts for 44.0% of the variance in cultural knowledge, with a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.79$). This suggests that greater engagement in dance activities is significantly associated to participants' cultural knowledge. Furthermore, among all the components of DE, it was found that absorption is the only powerful predictor that is associated with CK ($\beta = .338, t_{\text{value}} = 3.707, p < .001$). This suggests that participants who immerse themselves deeply in dance experiences will likely better understand cultural nuances and practices associated with Philippine traditional dances. Meanwhile, both VI ($\beta = .162, t_{\text{value}} = 1.789, p = .075$) and DED ($\beta = .160, t_{\text{value}} = 1.482, p = .140$) had no statistically significant relationship to CK. Given that a substantial majority of participants have less than one year of experience, their relatively high levels of absorption may reflect the intensity of their learning process and eagerness to grasp cultural knowledge. Although vigor and dedication did not yield significant results, the engagement of these newer dancers through immersive experiences appears to be associated with their cultural understanding effectively.

Additionally, it was uncovered that dance engagement is associated with cultural sensitivity, positing that DE has a significant relationship with CS [$F(3, 266) = 102.252, p < .001$]. Also, the $R^2 = .536$ indicates that the model accounts for 53.5% of the variance in cultural sensitivity, with a large effect size ($f^2 = 1.16$). This highlights the significance of active participation in dance is associated to one's sensitivity to cultural nuances and practices. Also, across the components of DE, AB is a powerful predictor that is associated with CS ($\beta = .522, t_{\text{value}} = 5.483, p < .001$). This implies that participants who immerse themselves fully in their dance experiences are better equipped to recognize and appreciate cultural differences. This suggests that immersive learning through dance may foster

Dance Engagement and Cultural Competence

heightened sensitivity to cultural contexts and practices, further enriching their overall experience. Fascinatingly, VI was also a predictor of CS ($\beta = .279$, $t_{\text{value}} = 2.948$, $p = .003$). This suggests that participants with higher vigor levels in dance activities will likely demonstrate greater cultural sensitivity. The enthusiasm and energy associated with vigor may facilitate a deeper connection to the cultural elements in Philippine traditional dances, making it a vital factor in cultivating sensitivity. However, DED was not observed to be a direct predictor of CS ($\beta = .032$, $t_{\text{value}} = .284$, $p = .776$). This outcome suggests that mere commitment to dance without active engagement may not significantly impact cultural sensitivity. Based on the findings, it becomes evident that the majority of relatively inexperienced participants may benefit significantly from active and immersive engagement in dance. Their vigor and absorption in dance practices will likely enhance their cultural sensitivity, allowing them to navigate better and appreciate the complexities of cultural expressions inherent in Philippine traditional dances. On the other hand, mere commitment to dance without active engagement is not significantly with cultural sensitivity. This is particularly relevant for most participants with less than one year of experience, indicating that a more profound commitment alone may not be associated with their cultural understanding.

Table 3

Hypotheses testing and multiple linear regression analysis

Hypothesis	Regression weights	Beta Coefficient	R^2	F	t -value	p -value	Decision
H_1	DE $\rightarrow$ CC	—	.535	102.040	—	<.001	Accepted
H_{1a}	VI $\rightarrow$ CC	.194	—	—	2.358	.019	Accepted
H_{1b}	DED $\rightarrow$ CC	.124	—	—	1.268	.206	Rejected
H_{1c}	AB $\rightarrow$ CC	.407	—	—	4.905	<.001	Accepted
H_2	DE $\rightarrow$ CK	—	.440	69.699	—	<.001	Accepted
H_{2a}	VI $\rightarrow$ CK	.162	—	—	1.789	.075	Rejected
H_{2b}	DED $\rightarrow$ CK	.160	—	—	1.482	.140	Rejected
H_{2c}	AB $\rightarrow$ CK	.338	—	—	3.707	<.001	Accepted
H_3	DE $\rightarrow$ CS	—	.536	102.252	—	<.001	Accepted
H_{3a}	VI $\rightarrow$ CS	.279	—	—	2.948	.003	Accepted
H_{3b}	DED $\rightarrow$ CS	.032	—	—	.284	.776	Rejected
H_{3c}	AB $\rightarrow$ CS	.522	—	—	5.483	<.001	Accepted
H_4	DE $\rightarrow$ CA	—	.346	46.994	—	<.001	Accepted
H_{4a}	VI $\rightarrow$ CA	.143	—	—	1.133	.258	Rejected
H_{4b}	DED $\rightarrow$ CA	.179	—	—	1.188	.236	Rejected
H_{4c}	AB $\rightarrow$ CA	.428	—	—	3.363	<.001	Accepted

Note: Significance $p < .05$.

Legend: DE- Dance Engagement, CC- Cultural competence, VI- Vigor, DED- Dedication, AB- Absorption, CK- Cultural knowledge, CS- Cultural sensitivity, CA- Cultural awareness.

Finally, it was forecasted that dance engagement predicts cultural awareness, suggesting that DE has a direct influence on CA [$F(3, 266) = 102.252$, $p < .001$]. The $R^2 = .346$ indicates that the model accounts for 34.6% of the variance in CA, with a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.53$). This suggests that higher levels of engagement in dance practices contribute to an increased awareness of cultural contexts, particularly among participants involved in Philippine traditional dances. Intriguingly, out of the three components of DE, AB was only found to predict CA ($\beta = .428$, $t_{\text{value}} = 3.363$, $p < .001$). This suggests that participants who fully immerse themselves in their dance experiences are likelier to develop a keen awareness of the cultural elements and contexts of Philippine traditional dances. The strong correlation emphasizes the importance of experiential learning and deep engagement in fostering cultural awareness. On the one hand, VI ($\beta = .143$, $t_{\text{value}} = 1.133$, $p = .258$) and DED ($\beta = .179$, $t_{\text{value}} =$

Lobo

1.188, $p = .236$) were not directly predictors of CA. The findings suggest that while vigor may play a role in dance engagement, it is not substantially associated with their cultural awareness. Furthermore, mere dedication to dance practices, without the accompanying immersive engagement, may not be significantly associated with their cultural awareness. Therefore, it is evident that immersion in dance through absorption is crucial for cultivating cultural awareness, where a majority have less than one year of experience. For novice dancers, actively engaging and absorbing the cultural elements of dance is likely to significantly enhance their understanding and appreciation of the cultural heritage associated with these practices.

The study's findings indicate that dance engagement, mainly through vigor and absorption, is crucial in enhancing students' cultural competence regarding knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness. While dedication does not significantly impact these outcomes, dance engagement's energetic and immersive aspects are critical to developing students' understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. These results highlight the importance of incorporating Philippine traditional dances into physical education curricula, as they serve to preserve intangible cultural heritage and as a vital tool for fostering cultural competence among students in higher education.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide essential insights into the complex relationship between dance engagement and cultural competence among higher education students. With most participants having less than a year of experience performing Philippine traditional dances, the data reflect a critical gap in exposure to cultural practices, suggesting that greater emphasis is needed in academic curricula. The limited exposure underscores the urgency for educational institutions to integrate cultural content into physical education courses more consistently to ensure that students are physically active and culturally informed, as supported by various studies (J. Lobo et al., 2022; Pacadaljen, 2024). Even though students' dance experience was relatively brief, the engagement dimensions demonstrated a notable association on their cultural competence, indicating that even minimal exposure, when supported by enthusiastic and immersive participation, can yield meaningful development of cultural understanding, particularly in terms of knowledge, sensitivity and awareness of intangible cultural heritage.

Furthermore, vigor, which reflects the energy and enthusiasm that students bring to their dance participation (Pulido-Martos et al., 2020), showed a substantial association with the development of cultural competence. Students who demonstrated higher vigor were more likely to develop a stronger connection to cultural practices. This emphasizes the need for educational programs to create lively, engaging and energetic environments supporting such active participation, as mentioned by various scholars (Bautista et al., 2023; Boonekamp et al., 2021; Filippou et al., 2021; Krkovic et al., 2018; Sierra-Díaz et al., 2019). Vigor in dance enhances physical engagement and serves as a gateway for students to explore and internalize cultural narratives, rituals and histories embodied in traditional dances (J. Lobo, 2023). This finding stresses the significance of dynamic instruction. In this, educators teach the movements and instill an enthusiasm for cultural exploration (Altugan, 2015), ensuring that students' participation is more than mechanical—it becomes a deeply felt cultural experience (Macapugay & Nakamura, 2024). Notably, the role of vigor in the context of cultural competence within dance education is an area that remains underexplored in the literature, highlighting a gap that future research could address.

Although often regarded as a hallmark of successful education and skill development (Amerstorfer & Frein Von Münster-Kistner, 2021; Bowden et al., 2021), dedication showed a more nuanced influence in this study. While dedication to traditional dance practices was associated with positive engagement, it did not significantly contribute to cultural competence compared to other dimensions of engagement. Additionally, while dedication is necessary for mastering the physical aspects of dance, might not be sufficient to foster a more profound cultural connection or understanding. For dedication to effectively promote cultural competence, it must be coupled with a teaching approach that prioritizes physical discipline and emotional and cognitive engagement with cultural meaning (Melchior, 2011; Pedro et al., 2018; Robinson et al., 2024). Educators should consider pairing dedication with immersive learning experiences (Robinson et al., 2024), where students persist in practice and reflect on the cultural significance of their actions, bridging the gap between performance and cultural comprehension (Mortimer,

Dance Engagement and Cultural Competence

2021; Tembrioti & Tsangaridou, 2014). It is important to note that the specific influence of dedication in fostering cultural competence has not been extensively studied, indicating a gap in the literature that future research could address.

Absorption, or the degree to which students are fully immersed (Tanggaard, 2019) in their dance practices, emerged as the strongest predictor of cultural competence. This underscores the critical role of deep engagement in the learning process, as mentioned by various scholars from other fields (Boekaerts, 2016; Crick, 2012; Fredricks et al., 2004). Students who were more absorbed in their dance activities displayed heightened levels of cultural knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness (Javiña, 2021). This indicates that when fully immersed, they were more likely to develop a profound connection to the cultural dimensions of dance. This finding supports the notion that educational spaces must foster environments conducive to immersion (Beckers et al., 2016; Breti, 2024; Papaioannou et al., 2023)—spaces where students can lose themselves in the experience and connect emotionally and intellectually to the cultural heritage they are embodying (Onosu, 2021; R. A. Pedro et al., 2017; Robinson et al., 2024). In such settings, traditional dance becomes more than a series of movements (Ness, 2004); it becomes a lived experience (Kämpfe, 2023), allowing students to internalize and transmit cultural knowledge in ways that transcend the superficial (Jackson, 2010).

Furthermore, the broader implications of these findings point to the necessity of embedding traditional folk dance education within higher education and across all levels of schooling (Adolfo et al., 2023; Anongos, 2021). In both primary and secondary education, introducing students to Philippine traditional dances from an early age would provide them with the foundational cultural competence necessary to appreciate and engage with these practices meaningfully as they mature (Poralan et al., 2014; Rea, 2024; Simon, Pinlac, et al., 2024). Early exposure ensures that by the time students reach higher education, they are not starting from a place of unfamiliarity but building on years of engagement with their cultural heritage (Achille & Fiorillo, 2022; Pérez-Guilarte et al., 2023). As Lobo (2024) has mentioned, offering a wide range of varied and substantial activities for students is imperative, commencing from early education through to their tertiary education years, to enhance enthusiasm and involvement in safeguarding these intangible cultural heritages. These findings suggest that cultural competence, particularly in the context of Philippine traditional dances (J. Lobo, 2023, 2024). It is not a static trait but one that can be cultivated and enhanced through active, immersive, and sustained engagement in dance activities, synonymous from what other scholars have stated (Ashley, 2014; Mabingo, 2015a). For educators, this means creating a curriculum that balances physical and cultural instruction (Mattsson & Lundvall, 2015; Melchior, 2011; Yetti et al., 2023), with a focus on fostering student vigor, dedication, and absorption. By doing so, physical education programs can play a critical role in preserving intangible cultural heritage (Adolfo et al., 2023; Mihaela et al., 2015; Uğurlu & Gülgen, 2022), while promoting students' cultural awareness, sensitivity, and knowledge. The continuous integration of folk dance education throughout all levels of education ensures that cultural competence is developed gradually and meaningfully (J. Lobo, 2024). This empowers students to become active participants in preserving and transmitting their cultural legacy. Importantly, it is worth noting that this study remains undocumented within the existing literature, indicating a significant gap in research. Performing a similar study is highly suggested to further explore the impact of traditional dance education on cultural competence, which could provide valuable insights for educators and policymakers alike.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the vital role of dance engagement in conserving and preserving Philippine traditional dances as intangible cultural heritage, ultimately fostering students' cultural competence in KSA. The findings reveal that active participation in dance enhances students' understanding of cultural nuances and cultivates an appreciation for their cultural heritage. With a significant portion of participants possessing less than one year of experience in dance, their enthusiasm and immersive engagement emerge as crucial factors in developing cultural competence. The research highlights the importance of integrating traditional dances into the higher education curriculum, as this approach serves as an effective strategy for cultural preservation and educational enrichment.

Lobo

By promoting cultural competence through dance engagement, educators can equip students with the necessary skills to navigate and appreciate the complexities of cultural diversity, fostering a deeper connection to their heritage. This study advocates for further exploration of structured programs that enhance immersive learning experiences, ultimately contributing to the sustainable preservation of Philippine traditional dances within the educational landscape.

Limitations of the Present Study

On an important note, the study presents several limitations that must be acknowledged to contextualize its findings. First, the participants were exclusively drawn from a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the results to a broader population of students engaging in Philippine traditional dances. This homogeneity in the sample could result in biases and restrict the applicability of the findings to other educational settings or cultural contexts. Additionally, the study utilized self-report measurements to assess dance engagement and cultural competence. While self-reports provide valuable insights into participants' experiences and perceptions, they are inherently subjective and susceptible to response biases, such as social desirability or lack of accurate self-assessment. Moreover, the present study focused on naturally occurring dance engagement and did not include a formal pedagogical intervention. Future work could therefore incorporate quasi-experimental or longitudinal designs to directly examine instructional strategies that strengthen cultural competence.

Charting New Territories: Expanding Research Horizons in Dance and Cultural Education in the Higher Education

The research primarily employed quantitative methods, specifically regression analysis, to explore the relationships between dance engagement and cultural competence. Although regression can identify correlations between variables, it does not establish causation; thus, the findings should be interpreted cautiously, as other unexamined factors may influence the observed relationships. Future research could benefit from a mixed-methods approach to capture the complexity of how traditional dance engagement fosters cultural competence across diverse educational contexts. Additionally, longitudinal studies provide insight into how cultural competence develops with sustained engagement in dance practices, revealing the dynamic nature of cultural learning. Expanding the participant pool to include multiple universities could enhance the generalizability of findings and enable comparative analyses across different educational environments. Collaborating with dance education and cultural studies practitioners may yield practical recommendations for integrating these elements into curriculum development. Finally, exploring students' and educators' perspectives through qualitative interviews or focus groups could offer deeper insights into the lived experiences surrounding dance engagement and its effects on cultural competence. Beyond research, these directions can inform the development of national teacher-training programs, community outreach workshops and curriculum guidelines that formally integrate Philippine traditional dances into higher-education physical education, thereby safeguarding intangible heritage while promoting active lifestyles. This multifaceted approach will contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how traditional dances can foster cultural awareness and sensitivity in higher education settings.

Cultural Competence through Movement: Integrating Dance into Higher Education and its Implications

The findings of this study carry significant implications for integrating Philippine traditional dances into higher education curricula, particularly within physical education programs. By demonstrating that dance engagement enhances students' cultural competence—specifically their knowledge, sensitivity and awareness of cultural contexts—educators can leverage these practices to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage among students. This aligns with the growing recognition of the role of experiential learning in developing cultural competence, as outlined by scholars such as Deardorff (2006) and Huber et al. (2014).

Dance Engagement and Cultural Competence

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the need for active, immersive experiences in the learning process. Moule and Diller (2012) suggests that educational institutions should prioritize hands-on engagement with cultural practices to cultivate sensitivity toward cultural diversity. Additionally, integrating technology into teaching traditional dances can enhance students' learning experiences, as supported by previously conducted studies (Mabingo, 2015b; Zhao, 2022). This can be through providing access to online resources, instructional videos, and virtual workshops that showcase various dance forms and their cultural significance. Digital storytelling and multimedia presentations can further enrich our understanding of the narratives and historical contexts surrounding these dances, as strongly supported by various scholars (Tratnjek & Kovačič, 2023; Xie et al., 2024).

Consequently, incorporating Philippine traditional dances preserves intangible cultural heritage and equips students with the skills to navigate an increasingly globalized world. Loader and Hughes (2017) highlighted the importance of cultural education in fostering social cohesion and mutual respect. Moreover, according to Shadiev et al. (2023), technology can bridge gaps between traditional practices and modern learning environments. This makes cultural education more accessible and engaging for diverse student populations. It has been tested and proven by previously conducted local studies in the Philippines and outside the country through the use of different approaches in the use of technology (Kico & Liarokapis, 2022; J. Lobo et al., 2024; Lucero, 2021; Simon, Galvez, et al., 2024). In this regard, these insights underscore the necessity for curriculum developers and educators to create inclusive and culturally rich learning environments that promote the safeguarding of local traditions while preparing students for an interconnected future.

In addition, although the present study did not implement a formal experimental pedagogical intervention, it capitalized on the naturally occurring dance-engagement activities within the regular PE classes as the primary instructional context. Building on this foundation, future programs could design quasi-experimental or longitudinal interventions that test specific teaching strategies to systematically enhance students' cultural competence. At a practical level, these findings can inform curriculum developers, PE teachers, and cultural-arts coordinators in designing rhythmic-movement modules and teacher-training initiatives that integrate Philippine traditional dances. Such initiatives not only meet national learning standards for rhythmic and expressive activities but also advance the UNESCO 2003 Convention's call for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage. Incorporating these strategies across universities and community outreach programs can create sustainable, culturally rich learning environments, ensuring that future generations remain physically active while deeply connected to their Filipino heritage.

Rhythms of Awareness: The Role of Philippine Traditional Dances in Shaping Student Identity – Positioning Philippine Studies in the Global Body of Literature

Positioning Philippine Studies within the global body of literature through the lens of Physical Education emphasizes embodied practices, such as traditional dances, in cultural preservation and education. This approach highlights how physical education serves as a medium for transmitting cultural knowledge and fostering identity among students. By integrating Philippine traditional dances into the physical education curriculum, educators promote physical fitness and instill a sense of cultural pride and awareness. Such initiatives contribute to a broader understanding of how cultural practices can be preserved in educational settings, enriching the global discourse on cultural heritage and identity formation. This positioning fosters intercultural dialogue, encourages the appreciation of diverse cultural expressions, and underscores the importance of embodied learning in shaping cultural competence on a global scale.

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