

Regional choreographic schools in Ukraine: the socio-cultural and pedagogical aspects

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ABSTRACT

It is very important to preserve and develop folk choreographic culture in the modern socio-cultural space research of regional dance traditions. This is especially true for those territories, which are now only fragmentarily represented in Ukrainian art history. The aim of this study was to identify the main trends and establish the peculiarities of socio-cultural and pedagogical aspects of regional dance schools in Ukraine. This cross-sectional study was carried out on a sample of 264 scientific and pedagogical employees engaged in scientific and teaching activities in the field of choreography at higher education institutions in Ukraine, namely Kyiv University of Culture, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts (KNUCA), Volyn National University named after Lesya Ukrainka, and Kyiv Municipal Academy of Variety and Circus Arts. While writing this article, we also analyzed the works of international researchers. A questionnaire consisting of 4 questions was used for data collection and the analytical methods were descriptive statistics (percentage). According to the study results, the features of the formation of choreographic schools in different geographical and cultural regions of Ukraine highlight promising areas of their development from the perspective of scholars of choreography engaged in scientific and teaching activities in higher education institutions. In conclusion, Ukrainian regional choreography is a creative and multidimensional phenomenon. In each region of Ukraine, folk ethnography is characterized by its authentic features and way of performance due to geographical, historical, social, political, economic, and other factors.

KEYWORDS

Choreographic and Pedagogical Education; Choreographic School; Socio-Cultural Aspect; Choreographic Art.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, interest in the study of folk choreographic culture in Ukrainian art history has increased significantly, both in terms of theoretical understanding of the development of dance art and in the direction of practical steps to preserve and popularize folk dance. However, at the beginning of the XXI century, the dialectical intention of reproducing national identity and activating national motifs was the central socio-cultural idea, which is hampered by the whole globalization processes in the current socio-cultural conditions. The creation and multiplication of spiritual values is not possible without considering past centuries' experience and the proven traditions of cultural achievements accumulated throughout the history of world culture (Bakirova, Toigan, Nikolayeva & Saitova, 2021).

Features of historical, social, and economic development of ethnographic groups living in Ukraine, their natural and geographical conditions of life and activity, are an essential area of research for historians, ethnographers, and folklorists. The national style of Ukrainian choreography is much admired.

Folk choreographic art matures, establishing and developing in the depths of centuries, accumulating local lexical, structural, and compositional features, forming a peculiar manner of performance (Sheng, 2021). The polyethnicity of Ukrainian culture is very rich and creates great potential for scientific research (Myroniuk, 2021). The cultural and artistic traditions of Ukraine are still the subject of special attention from modern scientists. After all, one of the main components of the choreographers' professional training system is the principle of the interconnection of education and training of future professionals in terms of historical retrospectives (Sheng, 2019).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnographic zoning is the division of the territory into local cultural and household groups, which, based on the characteristics of the formation of the cultural environment and the historical development of each group, have standard features in the language, customs, character of the economy, as well as ethnocultural relations with neighboring peoples of the regions (Cook, 2018). According to the historical and ethnographic features of the development of the choreographic sphere in Ukraine, there are three central regions: the Central-Eastern, Northern, and Western. The first region includes Kyiv, Poltava, Chernihiv, Slobozhanshchyna and Sumy. The northern regions of the Donetsk region and Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Kirovograd and Odesa regions. The second region consists of the north areas: Kyiv, Sumy, Chernihiv, Zhytomyr, and Rivne. The third consists of the Hutsulshchyna, Transcarpathian, Rukhiv, Lviv, and Lemkivshchyna regions.

Within each ethnic group, “cells” that are similar in their lifestyle and culture can be seen. Therefore, the commonality and homogeneity of their local features became the basis for identifying separate ethnographic groups and regions (Pidlypskyi, 2020).

According to the regional features of folk dance, the territory of Ukraine is divided into the following regions: Central Ukraine, Slobozhanshchyna, Polissya, Podillya, Volyn, Hutsulschyna, Transcarpathia, Bukovyna, Northern Black Sea Region, Bessarabia. As a whole, they have a familiar territory, language, and structure, but at the same time, they create the diversity of the Ukrainian culture. The cultural development of each ethnos and the formation of its features are connected with the natural environment and the nature of the population's economic activity, climatic, biological, and geographical factors, proximity to other people whose elements crossed, intertwined and moved. Historical events that took place in Ukraine for a long time influenced the spiritual world, character, and temperament of people (Bakirova, Toigan, Nikolayeva & Saitova, 2021).

The formation of the scientific school of choreology and choreographic art, in general, has been and continues to be in Ukraine due to solid and long-standing traditions and modern innovative approaches to high standards of pedagogical and scientific, cultural, artistic, social needs of society and the state while ensuring the process of training highly qualified specialists. The development of national consciousness and identity is formed based on preserving Ukrainian culture and traditions (Gutnyk, 2021).

Folk choreographic culture of specific regions is characterized by the local originality of genre and style features, the corresponding regional coloring, and the originality of traditional dance in all its manifestations. It remains a living tradition in the modern socio-cultural environment, even if the transformation processes undermine it. Collecting materials and fixing dance culture update the existing choreographic material and become the basis for its more profound understanding (Pidlypskyi, 2020). Considering the creative heritage of choreographers in certain regions, it should be emphasised Western Podillya, where the active bearers of folk dance continue to be county and city amateur folk and folk-ethnographic groups and their leaders, as well as amateur children's and youth dance ensembles, which maintain folk dance, and whose participants preserve the cultural and artistic heritage of the region (Shchur, 2021).

Among other ethnographic groups, the Hutsuls stand out for their unique traditions in spiritual life, material culture, economy, applied arts, and folklore. They have deep roots in the cultural heritage of the ancient Russian people, creating a unique complex of cross-border multicultural interactions in further interaction with Polish, Hungarian, Moldavian, Romanian, and other cultures. The development of the Hutsul ethnos was in close connection with the dynamics of socio-economic

processes in Ukraine. However, deviating from the ethnocultural features characteristic of the East Slavic peoples, Hutsulschyna has a particular regional specificity of economic life and material and spiritual culture (Stratulenکو, 2020). Its choreographic culture is perhaps the brightest in the general layer of Ukrainian dance art, so it has always attracted the attention of historians, ethnographers, folklorists, and writers worldwide (Gutnyk, 2021).

Hutsulschyna better preserved authentic dances with the help of the Hutsul family school of Ukrainian patriotism, national unity, and education, a place where they teach the norms and skills of healthy living through respect for their native language, customs, and traditions, holidays, rituals, symbols. The peculiarity of the region are handicrafts and Hutsul folk art (arts and crafts, fine arts, playing national musical instruments, folk dancing, and singing). Choreographic Hutsul folklore is represented by ritual folk dances accompanied by singing and original folk instruments (trembitas, drums, whistles, floyars, cymbals). Its popularity and influence on the formation of Ukrainian national consciousness became the reason for persecution by the totalitarian authorities of talented choreographers and team leaders (Shchur, 2021).

The analysis of the activities of amateur and professional folk dance groups shows that numerous cultural heritages of ethnographic collectives living in Western Ukraine and especially in the Carpathians (Hutsuls, Lemky, Boyky, Pokayan, Opilyans, and others), despite the changes in the demands of time and political regimes, preserved their traditions, customs, everyday life, music, song and dance culture (Marusik, 2017).

According to the research results, the northern districts of the Rivne region (approximately to the north of Rivne) can be distinguished as Rivne Polissya. This region in the domestic scientific sphere is also known as the Rivne-Volynske Polissya because it includes the forest territories of the present Volyn region. Due to historical and natural-climatic circumstances, both Ukrainian and Belarusian populations in Rivne Polissya had very similar traditions of material and spiritual culture, especially in dance art (Stratulenکو, 2020). It should be noted that a distinctive feature of the ethnic processes in Rivne Polissya, which led to the formation of material and spiritual cultures and their partial preservation to this day, is that from ancient times (before the appearance of statehood, Kyivan Rus') these territories belonged exclusively to the ethnic unity of the Slavs. This is confirmed by both modern historical research and by the toponyms, especially the hydronyms of this area. (Gutnyk, 2021). As the analyses of the research show, Ukrainian folk dance is a source reflecting the life of a particular region, preferences, morals, ethics, traditions, labor activities and natural phenomena of certain territories.

3. METHODS

The present study was aimed to establish trends in the development of choreographic schools in different geographical and cultural regions of Ukraine, namely to determine the prevailing socio-cultural role of dance in choreographic schools in different areas, to identify the most characteristic genres of dance that characterize choreographic schools and pedagogical prerequisites for improving the quality of choreographic art in other areas. This cross-sectional study was carried out on a sample of 264 scientific and pedagogical employees engaged in scientific and teaching activities in the field of choreography at higher education institutions in Ukraine, namely Kyiv University of Culture, Kyiv National University of Culture and Arts (KNUCA), Volyn National University named after Lesya Ukrainka, and Kyiv Municipal Academy of Variety and Circus Arts. The study was conducted through a questionnaire. First, the survey participants were asked to provide answers to 4 questions, evaluating each of the answer options as a percentage. Then, we counted the average value of the responses of all survey participants per one respondent. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software (SPSS) was used for data analysis. The analytical methods used in the study were descriptive statistics (percentage).

4. RESULTS

Exploring the social and cultural roles of dance that prevail in choreographic schools in different regions of Ukraine, respondents were asked to express their opinions on the subjective assessment of the predominant importance of each of the proposed roles for the five areas Figure 1.

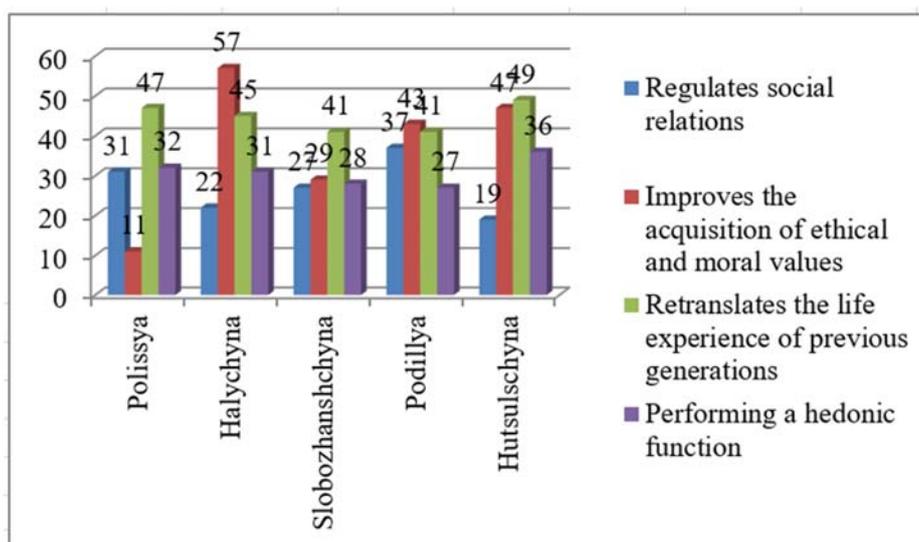


Figure 1. The prevailing socio-cultural role of dance in choreography schools in Ukraine regions (%)

As shown in Figure 1, in the context of ritual or household acts, folk dance played a crucial socio-cultural role. It reflected the attitudes in society most strongly in the Podillya region, enhanced the assimilation of ethical and moral values in Halychyna and in the territory where the most common is the assimilation of moral and ethical values, in Halychyna, and in the part where Hutsul songs are most common, passed on the life experience of previous generations, and performed a hedonistic function in Polissya and Hutsulschyna.

When assessing the most relevant strategic directions for the development of choreographic schools in different regions of Ukraine, respondents were asked to evaluate the degree of importance of one or another guide for each proposed area Figure 2.

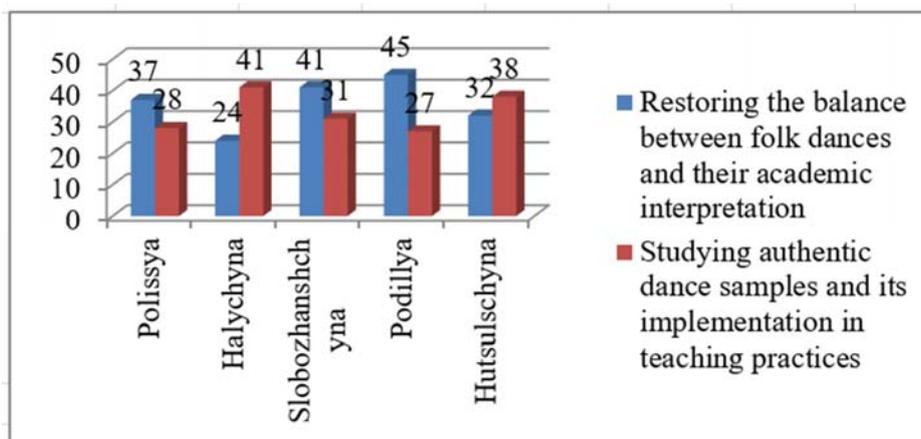


Figure 2. The most relevant issues for the further development of choreography schools in different regions of Ukraine (%)

As can be seen in Figure 2, the survey participants determined that the greatest balance between folk dances and their literary interpretation requires the choreographic schools of Polissya, Slobozhanshchyna, and Podillya. In contrast, for the Hutsulschyna and Halychyna schools, the study of authentic dance patterns is more important. We also asked the participants to identify the most common dance genres for each region examined in the study Figure 3.

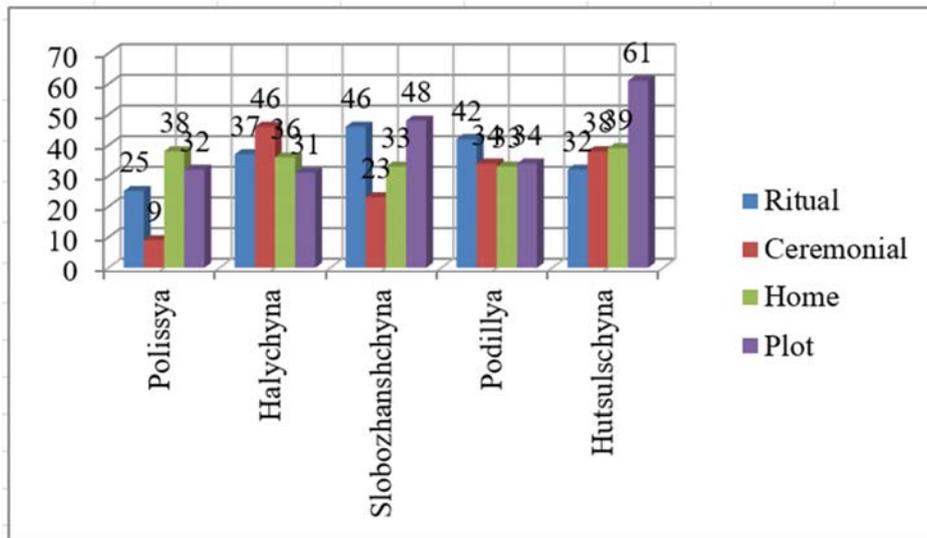


Figure 3. The most popular and typical dance genres, unique choreographic schools describing different regions of Ukraine (%)

As the respondents noted, plot dances are most typical for Hutsulschyna, Slobozhanshchyna and Podillya regions, ritual dances for Slobozhanshchyna and Podillya, home dances for Hutsulschyna and Polissya and ceremonial dances for Hutsulschyna and Halychyna regions. Responding about the most desirable prerequisites for further development of choreographic art in different regions of Ukraine, the survey participants identified the most typical of them (Figure 4).

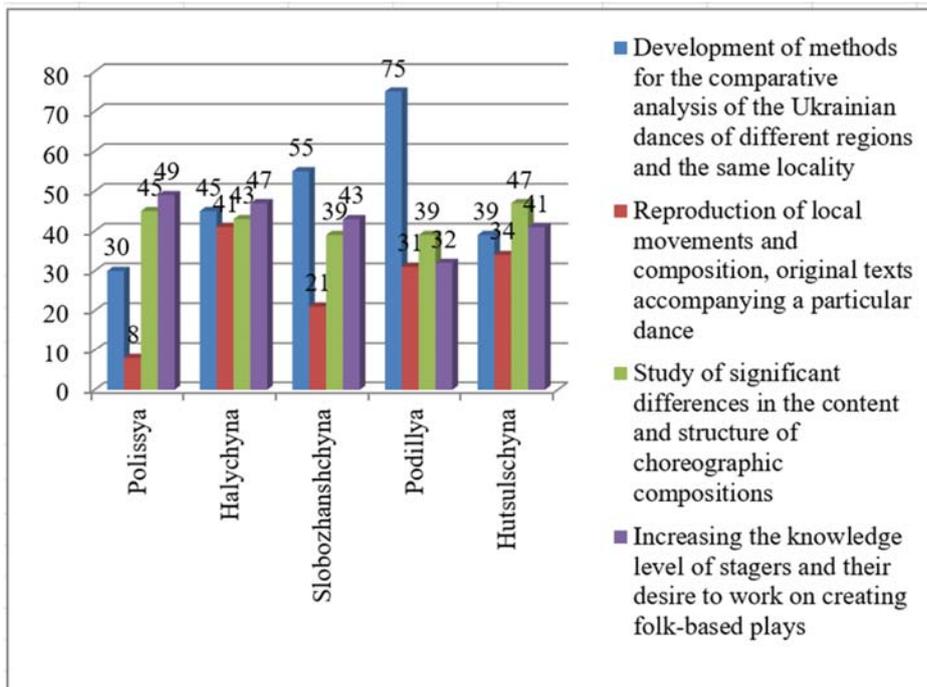


Figure 4. Pedagogical background to improve the choreographic art development quality in different Ukrainian regions, which requires considering the regional folk dance specifics (%)

The respondents noted that the development of the methodology of comparative characteristics of dances from different regions of Ukraine and the same locality is most relevant for Podillya region, as well as for Slobozhanshchyna and Halychyna. According to the respondents, the reproduction of local movements and the composition of a particular dance is most important for Hutsulshchyna and Halychyna, as well as for Podillya region. The study of significant differences in the content and compositional structure of choreographic compositions is most relevant for Polissya, Halychyna and Slobozhanshchyna.

5. DISCUSSION

The analysis of the development of choreographic and pedagogical education in Ukraine allows to identify the best achievements and outline the prospects for the development of choreographic education, summarize the experience and introduce innovations in the training of future choreography teachers from the regional aspect (Korotkevych, 2021).

The features of the formation of choreographic schools in different geographical and cultural regions of Ukraine highlight promising areas of their development from the perspective of scholars of choreography engaged in scientific and teaching activities in higher education institutions. The study showed that choreographic art has come a long way from the most ancient rituals to the highest modern art forms. However, the emergence of many dance subcultures characterizes its functioning, and in modern professional and amateur troupes there is often a significant deviation from authenticity and a loss of connections to the primary sources of its creation. Different scholars study the choreography of certain regions of Ukraine, highlighting individual features in the art of dance of various territorial centers, revealing their uniqueness.

Based on our study results, as for the predominant socio-cultural role of dance in the choreographic schools, folk dance played a crucial socio-cultural role in the context of ritual or domestic acts. It reflected the attitudes in society most strongly in the Podillya region, enhanced the assimilation of ethical and moral values in Halychyna, it passed on the life experience of previous generations, and performed a hedonistic function in Polissya and Hutsulshchyna. Regarding the most characteristic dance genres characterizing the choreographic schools, the plot dances were more typical for Huzulshyna, Slobozhanshchyna and Podillya regions, the ritual dances for Slobozhanshchyna and Podillya, the home dances for Hutsulshchyna and Polissya, and the ceremonial dances for Hutsulshchyna and Halychyn. The development of the methodology of comparative characteristics of dances, reproduction of local movements and composition of a particular dance, as well as the study of significant differences in the content and compositional structure of

choreographic compositions were considered pedagogical prerequisites for improving the quality of choreographic art.

The dance culture of the Carpathian region, an original artistic phenomenon in the context of the development of the national culture of our people, has long attracted the attention of folklorists and researchers of folk choreography. The choreographic achievement of Prykarpattia, presents the cultural and artistic traditions of many ethnic groups: Hutsuls, Pokutyans, Boyks, Opilyans, and Lemkys. The style of Carpathian dances was also significantly influenced by the culture of national minorities living in the territory (Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians from Transcarpathia, Romanians, and Moldovans from Bukovina, Serbs, etc. (Korotkevych, 2021).

Due to a long connection with rites, beliefs, demonology and mythology, the performance of some dances, almost unchanged in their original form, rich in archaisms and dedicated to specific dates of the Christian calendar, have retained their original ritual significance (Bigus, Bilash, Vyshotravka & Hres, 2021). Indeed, in such dances, movement acts as a magical means of communication with the forces of nature. In particular, folk ritual spring songs and dances sing the awakening of nature, love, and hope for the harvest (Gordeev, 2019).

The cultural influences of other ethnic groups that lived in the region and the global population of neighboring areas had a significant impact on the formation of the modern stylistic style of dance in the region. The region's art is rich in reciprocal borrowings of the national elements of folk dance. The synthesis of qualitatively new choreographic elements occurs through the imposition of Hutsul, Lemky and Boyky dance stereotypes and is typical for Bukovyna performing movements. The Transcarpathian dances are characterized by the artistic and aesthetic integration of Hungarian, Romanian, Moldavian, and Slovak folklore elements and the dancing lexicon of the Volyn and Lviv regions population has long interacted with the features of Polish culture (Koval, Zabredovskyy & Pidlypska, 2021).

Understanding the Hutsul choreographic culture as a unique phenomenon in Western Ukraine, shows its essential position and prospects for development in the context of folkloric, ethnographic, choreographic, and ethno-choreographic studies. Furthermore, it provides a basis for structuring evolutionary processes and forms the main trends of formation, development, and functioning in professional education and concert practice of the regions of Ukraine, creating significant specific phenomena in theater, film, ballet, art, sports, implementation many areas of reconstructive-authentic, folklore, modern and experimental dance (Marusik, 2017).

Studying the choreography of Rivne Polissya, scientists note that in this region, specific regional choreographic genres and general Ukrainian (ritual and extra-ceremonial) genres were

formed. In particular, the researchers add two wedding ceremonial dances - a march and a dance of the bride's father and mother (Pidlypskyi, 2021) to the current ceremonial dance repertoire of Polissya in the northern Rivne and Volyn districts.

The pedagogical, scientific-methodological, creative, and pedagogical activities of scholars in Poltava laid the foundation for the emergence and development of choreographic education in Ukraine. Among the main stages of the formation of choreographic pedagogical education in the Poltava region, scientists distinguish between preparation, training, and modernization (Savchyn & Samohvalova, 2020).

An important place in the history of choreographic art is the research on the cultural heritage of Slobozhanshchyna. Domestic and foreign scientific works contain many essential facts about the settlement of the Slobozhanshchyna region, document historical events that accompanied the resettlement of refugees to these lands, and influenced the formation of a specific local population in the area. The researchers describe a unique system of administration, a variety of crafts, everyday life, traditions, and customs. All this information directly influenced the formation of folklore peculiarities, relationships, and behavior of people in society and therefore provided a basis for further study of the traditional features of Slobozhanshchyna. A vital aspect of the historical sources is the periodization of socio-cultural events that accompanied the development of the Slobidska part of Ukraine. This period allowed us to synchronize different historical, social, and cultural life phases and make more thorough conclusions about the origin of certain phenomena. In addition, they also contain data on the dances' existence that were borrowed during the resettlement and imported into these countries but changed under the influence of the interaction of several independent ethnic cultures (Mostova, 2019).

The original song and dance material of Transcarpathia and Halychyna were analyzed using the comparative-typological research method. In these regions prevailed favorable conditions for the preservation and transmission of folklore forms, which allowed in time to catch authentic examples of the art of singing and dancing. The same processes marked the state of preservation of folk art in Podniprovia, Polissya, and Podillya (Stratulenکو, 2020). The study of dance folklore in Southern Ukraine, especially the art of Crimean Tatars, was directly connected with the assimilation of song material. Thanks to the detailed analysis of song forms, the ritual actions accompanying many folk festivals have been reproduced, and the features of folk dance in the ritual acts of the Crimean Tatars have been revealed (Pidlypskyi, 2021).

Thus, the study of scientific works that study the choreographic heritage of different regions of Ukraine proves the feasibility of disclosing the features of folk dances of different regional choreographic schools by analyzing the typical musical forms and genres of choreographic art.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, Ukrainian regional choreography is a creative and multidimensional phenomenon. The artistic expressiveness of choreography as a special kind of art is based on the plasticity of poses, the uniqueness of dance movements, their rhythmic and dynamic pattern, gestures, and facial expressions of the performer. In each region of Ukraine, folk ethnography is characterized by its authentic features and way of performance due to geographical, historical, social, political, economic, and other factors. The problem of the origin and development of stage choreographic culture in Ukraine is a promising and significant direction of modern art research to study the cultural heritage of unique places.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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