

CULTURAL PRESERVATION: MAPEH TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING FOLK DANCE TO STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the experiences of MAPEH teachers in teaching folk dance to students. This study employed a phenomenological research design which aims to determine the experiences and perceptions of the eight (8) participants. The emerging themes on the positive experiences of the MAPEH teachers encompassed cultural appreciation and physical fitness and well-being. Meanwhile, the emerging themes on the negative experiences were students limited prior knowledge, complex choreography, and significantly different dance skills of students. Regarding the coping ways of MAPEH teachers in addressing the challenges, the emerging themes included sharing cultural context and personal experiences, providing constructive feedback, modeling positive behavior to students, and using online resources. On the educational management insights gained from the experiences of MAPEH teachers, the emerging themes were student engagement and differentiation, developmentally appropriate instruction, and inclusivity and diversity. By embracing the themes, educational managers could design training programs, policy decisions, and professional development initiatives, ultimately enhancing the quality of folk dance instruction and supporting teachers in their challenges. Moreover, the results generated provided comprehensive data in conducting future research with similar scope. This study may be published in a reputable research journal.

Keywords: cultural preservation, folk dance, experiences, teaching, Davao City

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is the accumulated practices and beliefs of past generations, shaping our present existence and being transmitted to future generations. It includes various aspects, including dance, but knowledge on folk dances is disappearing, especially among the younger generation who are drawn to modern dance styles. Some folk dances have significantly declined or disappeared over time. Bartle (2007) reports that modern popular culture and globalization have led to the decline of traditional folk dances in the United States, including Appalachian clogging and square dancing. Appalachian clogging is an energetic percussive dance with fast footwork, while square dancing involves four couples dancing to a specific sequence. These dances were once prevalent in rural communities. In similar vein, Brazil's indigenous folk dances face challenges due to urbanization, migration, and cultural assimilation. The formal education system neglects cultural education, limiting exposure to traditional dance forms and limiting opportunities for young people to appreciate their cultural heritage according by Riberio (2015). This idea was also supported by Aoki (2011) who reported that the younger generation in Japan is losing interest in traditional dances, such as the "minyo," due to Western culture and modernization. This is due to the perception that traditional folk dances are outdated or less relevant to their contemporary lifestyles.

In the Philippines, the younger generation is losing interest in traditional folk dances due to the influence of Western culture and globalization. Western music, dance styles, and popular culture have become more prominent, leading to a shift in focus away from traditional dances. The fast-paced lifestyle of the younger generation prioritizes contemporary activities, resulting in decreased participation and interest (Amado, 2016). Further, in Buhangin A District, Division of Davao City, MAPEH teachers have observed a decline in students' interest in folk dances, which negatively impacts their academic performance in Physical Education. Arubio's (2020) study found a relationship between students' engagement in folk dance activities and their academic performance. Active participation in folk dance activities leads to improved motor skills and better academic performance. With this, the Division of Davao City conducted a training workshop for MAPEH teachers to incorporate folk dance into their Physical Education classes. The aim was to preserve cultural traditions and promote appreciation for traditional expressions. As a result, this study aimed to explore the challenges faced by MAPEH teachers in teaching folk dances, their role in preserving Filipino culture, and provide insights for educational management. The research was also guided the development and improvement of the MAPEH curriculum.

Folk Dance

Folk dance refers to traditional dances that are passed down through generations within a particular cultural or ethnic group (Rocha, 2009). It is often reflect the history, customs, rituals, and everyday life of the community, and they serve as a means of preserving and expressing cultural identity (Guimares, 2011). Further, it plays a significant role in

connecting individuals to their cultural roots, promoting social cohesion, and celebrating the traditions and values of a community (Valle, 2012).

Folk Dance in the Philippines

According to Flores & Montebal (2011), Philippine folk dances incorporate influences from immigrants and conquerors and at the same time maintaining distinctly Filipino roots. Philippine folk dancing is a true reflection of daily life in the past centuries while enchanting modern audiences at the same time. The dances were performed during festivals and remembrances of past military victories and are still performed during celebrations of birth and weddings in modern times. Many modern folk dance festivals still feature ancient dances performed in colorful costumes used during the tribal period of the Philippines. Hence, the country consists of 7,107 islands, broken down in three groups – Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Each of these areas has different dialects, history, religion, and traditions (Miranda, 2011).

Luzon. The northernmost region of the Philippines, it is rich in traditions and heritage, influenced by Hindu, Buddhist, and Spanish tribes. The Cordillerans, also known as Igorot, consist of various ethnic groups, including Ifugao, Kalinga, Bontoc, Apayao, Ibaloi, Kalangaya, and Kankanaey. Luzon's dances include Banga (Pot) dance, Idaw, Idudu, and Ragragsakan.

Visayas. It is the central Philippines' islands, are divided into Central, Eastern, and Western sections. The region is home to Austronesians, Negritos, and the Animist Tribal Group, and has become a melting pot for various tribes and cultural backgrounds. The region's dances are upbeat and exciting. The dances of Visayas are Maglalatik, Sayaw sa Bangko, Subli and Tinikling.

Mindanao. It is the southernmost region of The Philippines, is the second largest island group and home to diverse cultural groups including Muslim, Maranao, Tausug, Banguingui, and Lumad tribes, and is known for its dances. The dances of Mindanao are Asik, Kini Kini, Pangalay and Singkil.

Classification of Folk Dance

The Philippine folk dance has eight types of classification. It is discussed by Munerto (2012).

Occupational dances depict specific occupation actions, such as the Binatbatan dance in Paoay, Ilocos Norte, which involves beating cotton pods to separate seeds from fibers. Weavers in Paoay often participate in abel-making contests, with dancers maneuvering in parallel batbat sticks. Another example is the Mag-asik dance in Nuro, Cotabato, which means "to sow seeds" and consists of two parts called "komaligue" and "mag-asik".

Religious or ceremonial dances, such as the Dugso, originated in Bukidnon, Northeast Mindanao. They are performed for dieties during fiestas, initially thought to be performed during harvest or male heir birth. Women wear colorful feathered headdresses, plaid costumes, and anklets, making them feel comfortable during the event.

Comic dances, such as the Kinoton dance in Ilocos Sur and Makonggo in Sta. Maria, Bulacan, are entertaining performances featuring humorous movements like a person bitten by ants or a monkey's gestures and grimaces.

Game Dances, such as the Lubi-Lubi dance of Bicolano, combine folk and social steps, originating in Leyte and Samar. It's still performed like the Balitaw and is popular in Albay and Sorsogon.

Wedding dances, such as Pagkawin, are traditional folk dances performed during wedding feasts. The Pahanda, or presentation of dowry, is a crucial part of the festivity, where relatives of the groom present traditional dowries to the bride.

Courtship Dances, such as the Sua-Sua dance from Jolo, Sulu, depict the art of courtship. The dance, originally meaning "small orange plant," has been modified and modernized by older Moros. Dancers sing and repeat the dance as many times as they like.

Festival Dances, such as Pandanggo sa Ilaw, are folk dances suitable for special occasions in the Philippines. Originating from Mindoro, this dance of lights simulates fireflies at dusk and night. The phrase "sa ilaw" refers to the three oil lamps, tinghoy, that must be balanced in the dance.

War Dances, such as the Sagayan Dance, are Philippine folk dances that depict war, showcasing the heroic steps of Prince Bantugan, his battles, and his eventual victory, performed by the Maguindanao and Maranao.

Folk Dance in Philippine Physical Education Class

According DepEd (2016), the K to 12 PE curriculum aims to develop 21st-century skills among learners, including cognitive, social, and self-management skills. Fitness and movement education content is the core of the curriculum, focusing on health-related fitness (HRF) and optimizing health. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of physical activity in various settings, such as school, community, and society. Moreover, it focuses on habitual physical activity

participation, competence in movement and motor skills, and understanding various movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics. Physical literacy consists of movement, motor, and activity-specific skills, with learners learning the 'what', 'how', and 'why' of movement from early grades. It also allows for an inclusive approach, considering the diverse range of learners' needs, strengths, and abilities. This ensures that all learners have equal opportunities and choices in Physical Education.

Objectives of Integrating Folk Dance in Physical Education Class

Folk dance lessons in Physical Education classes in elementary schools in the Philippines aim to introduce students to their cultural heritage and promote an appreciation for traditional forms of expression. The objectives of including folk dance in the Physical Education curriculum are discussed by Cabera et al. (2016).

Cultural awareness. Armando (2017) noted that folk dance lessons inculcate cultural awareness by immersing students in the richness of their cultural heritage, promoting diversity, preservation, intercultural understanding, and personal identity formation.

Cultural appreciation. Claro (2019) revealed that teaching folk dance to the students enables them to foster cultural appreciation in several ways including immersion in cultural traditions, understanding cultural context, appreciation for diversity, preserving cultural heritage, cultural sensitivity and respect, bridging generations, and community engagement.

Physical fitness. Smith (2012) explained that folk dance offers numerous benefits for students' physical fitness. Incorporating folk dance into physical education programs provides an enjoyable and engaging way for students to improve their overall physical well-being.

Social interaction. Viernes (2009) agreed that folk dance provides a valuable platform for building teamwork among students. By engaging in folk dance as a team, students develop essential teamwork skills such as collaboration, communication, trust, responsibility, problem-solving, respect, and empathy. These skills extend beyond the dance floor, benefiting students in their personal relationships, academic pursuits, and future endeavors.

Artistic expression. Douglas (2011) expressed that by learning and practicing folk dance, students develop their artistic expression, embracing the fusion of movement, music, storytelling, and cultural traditions. This artistic exploration nurtures creativity, self-expression, and a deeper appreciation for the diverse forms of artistic expression found in folk dance.

Folk Dance and Students' Academic Performance In Physical Education

Cognitive development. For Hammond and Hans (2010) learning and practicing folk dance involves memorizing dance routines, steps, and sequences. This enhances students' cognitive abilities, such as memory, concentration, and attention to detail.

Motor skills and coordination. Suazo & Aben (2011) also noted that folk dance offers a holistic approach to developing motor skills and coordination in students. It combines physical movement, cognitive engagement, and artistic expression, fostering a range of skills that can benefit students both on and off the dance floor.

Confidence and self-esteem. Muller (2011) also stated that Teaching folk dance to students not only helps them develop physical skills but also nurtures their emotional well-being. It provides a platform for personal growth, self-expression, and the cultivation of confidence and self-esteem.

Social and emotional well-being. Hermann et al. (2012) supported the idea stating that folk dance provides a rich platform for students' social and emotional development. It promotes social interaction, teamwork, empathy, and emotional expression. By participating in folk dance, students can experience improved social connections, emotional well-being, and a greater sense of self.

Creativity and expressive skills. Frank & Lorenz (2014) discussed that folk dance offers students a creative outlet to express themselves artistically. Through movements, gestures, and facial expressions, students can convey emotions, stories, and cultural themes. They learn to interpret music and choreography, infusing their own style and personality into the dance. While the direct correlation between learning folk dance and academic performance may vary, the aforementioned benefits contribute to the holistic development of students. By promoting cognitive, motor, social, emotional, and creative skills, learning folk dance can create a positive and well-rounded educational experience, potentially enhancing students' academic performance.

MAPEH Teachers Skills in Teaching Folk Dance to Elementary Students

Teachers in the Philippines possess various skills when it comes to teaching folk dance to elementary students particularly in cultural knowledge, dance proficiency, pedagogical expertise, classroom management, adaptability and

creativity, communication and instructional skills, cultural sensitivity, collaboration and teamwork, and continuous professional development.

Cultural knowledge. Gamboa & Akin (2013) stressed in their study that elementary MAPEH teachers in the Philippines are well-versed in the cultural background, traditions, and significance of different folk dances in the Philippines.

Dance proficiency. Kuhazo (2013) stated that the elementary MAPEH teachers in the Philippines can participate in workshops, training programs, and collaborations with professional dance educators to further develop their expertise in teaching folk dance.

Pedagogical expertise. Padilla (2020) claimed that elementary MAPEH teachers in the Philippines have a solid foundation in pedagogical principles and teaching strategies. They know how to structure lessons, create age-appropriate activities, and employ effective teaching methodologies to engage students and facilitate their learning of folk dance.

Classroom management. Cortez (2020) expressed that effective classroom management is crucial for creating a positive and conducive learning environment. MAPEH teachers should establish clear expectations, routines, and rules, ensuring that students are focused, engaged, and respectful during dance lessons. They should be skilled in managing student behavior, promoting inclusivity, and resolving conflicts when they arise.

Adaptability and creativity. Claro (2011) revealed in her study that elementary MAPEH teachers leveraged technology to enhance the teaching of folk dance. They used video tutorials, online resources, or dance applications to supplement instruction and provide students with additional learning opportunities. Additionally, technology is used for creative purposes, such as video editing or multimedia presentations, allowing students to showcase their dance skills and creativity.

Communication and instructional skills. In the study of Acuat (2021), it was revealed that elementary MAPEH teachers effectively demonstrated dance movements, steps and sequences. They were able to break down complex movements into smaller, manageable parts and model them for students. Visual demonstrations help students understand and imitate the correct technique and execution.

Cultural sensitivity. Rogar & Bugto (2017) expressed, cultural sensitivity is of utmost importance for elementary MAPEH teachers when teaching folk dance. It enables teachers to respect cultural traditions when teaching, embrace authenticity in choreography and costumes, prioritize cultural sensitivity in selecting music and cultural stereotypes.

Collaboration and teamwork. Salvadora (2013) found out in his study that elementary MAPEH teachers encourages collaboration among students during the learning process through letting students work in groups or pairs to practice dance routines, learn from one another, and provide peer feedback.

Challenges Encountered by Elementary MAPEH Teachers in Teaching Folk Dance

Elementary MAPEH teachers may encounter various challenges when teaching folk dance to students. These challenges can actually be beneficial to the teachers and are important for their learning and growth as professionals.

Complex Choreography. Sanchez (2021) noted that folk dances often involve intricate choreography, with a multitude of movements, formations, and patterns. Meanwhile, Ramos (2016) discussed that complex choreography of folk dance can be challenging to the teachers for it requires high level of memory and retention, coordination and timing, technique and body awareness, transition and flow, and stamina and endurance of the students.

Individual skill development.. Guazo et al. (2011) expressed that students in a MAPEH class may have varying abilities and prior experience in dance. Some students may be quick learners and have a natural inclination towards dance, while others may struggle to grasp the movements and teachers may find this challenging. Adapting instruction to accommodate different skill levels and providing individualized support can be a challenge for teachers.

Balancing cultural understanding and performance skills. Alfordo (2010) explained that teaching folk dance extends beyond teaching the physical movements; it involves educating elementary students about the historical, cultural, and social significance of the dance form. Moreover, according to Cutor (2016) by striking a balance between cultural understanding and performance skills, elementary students can develop a profound appreciation for the cultural heritage embedded within folk dance.

Assessing and giving feedback to students. Ying & Lim (2011) expressed that folk dance is a creative and expressive art form, which can make objective assessment challenging. In addition, Williams & Williams (2014) discussed that assessing students' cultural understanding within their folk dance performance can be challenging. Written reflections or class discussions can help students to articulate their understanding of the cultural context, symbolism, and historical significance of the dance.

Students' limited prior knowledge. Jones (2011) noted that students' limited knowledge in folk dance can create obstacles in effective teaching and engaging students in this art form. Students' limited exposure to folk dance due to various factors, such as cultural background, geographic location, or limited access to cultural resources can result in a limited understanding and appreciation for folk dance.

Initial resistance or disinterest. According to Brown (2011), some elementary students may initially resist or show disinterest in learning folk dance due to personal preferences or preconceived notions. It is not uncommon nowadays for students to show more interest in modern dance compared to folk dance.

Coping Ways of Elementary MAPEH Teachers in Teaching Folk Dance

Coping ways are crucial for elementary MAPEH teachers as they face various challenges and stressors in teaching students' folk dances. By taking care of their own needs and building resilience, the teachers can continue to make a positive impact on the lives of their students and create a conducive learning environment.

Modeling positive behavior to students. Adu & Abrat (2014) emphasized that teachers should model positive behavior to the students. Teachers play a crucial role in modeling positive behavior and attitudes. Demonstrate enthusiasm, passion, and respect for the folk dance form.

Providing constructive feedback. Based on the statement of Philips (2020), constructive feedback provides valuable insights on areas of improvement and specific techniques that students can work on when learning folk dance. Further, Keach (2020) agreed to the idea by stating that constructive feedback is a valuable tool in the learning process of folk dance. It helps students develop their skills, build self-awareness, and grow in confidence.

Addressing concerns and questions. Niran & Wong (2007) affirmed that by addressing concerns, teachers can tailor their instruction to meet individual needs, prevent misunderstandings, and maintain a positive learning atmosphere. This proactive approach enhances students' learning experiences, encourages critical thinking, and strengthens the teacher-student relationship, ultimately leading to greater success in learning folk dance.

Sharing cultural context and personal experiences. Zhou (2009) expressed that sharing cultural context and personal experiences in teaching folk dance enriches students' learning experiences. It deepens their understanding, appreciation, and connection to the dance form, while fostering cultural sensitivity and unity. By infusing personal stories and cultural insights, teachers inspire students, enhance their engagement, and promote creativity and self-expression.

Using online resources. Saeueng (2007) stressed that the use of online resources in teaching folk dance provides access to diverse content, supports visual and self-paced learning, supplements in-class instruction, promotes global perspectives, enhances accessibility, integrates technology, and fosters continued learning and inspiration. By leveraging these online resources, teachers can enrich the learning experience of their students, expose them to a broader range of folk dance styles, and cultivate their appreciation for cultural diversity.

This study is founded in the Cultural Sustainability Theory of Barbara Ward (1970). The Theory focuses on the preservation and continuity of cultural practices over time. Folk dance plays a crucial role in sustaining cultural heritage by keeping it alive and relevant in contemporary contexts. Learning folk dance ensures that cultural traditions are not lost or forgotten but are instead preserved and adapted to changing circumstances. By actively engaging in the practice of folk dance, students contribute to the sustainability of their culture and its long-term viability.

The conceptual framework of the study is presented in figure 1. Based on the figure, there are three interconnected variables. These variables are the (1) challenges of MAPEH teachers in teaching folk dance, (2) MAPEH teachers coping with the challenges of teaching folk dance, (3) and educational management insights are gained from the experiences of the MAPEH teachers.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach to research specifically a phenomenological research design since it will focus on the challenges of MAPEH teachers in teaching folk dance. According to Creswell, (2012), phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focused on the commonality of lived experiences within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at a description of the nature of the phenomenon.

The participants of this study were 8 MAPEH teachers of Buhangin A District, Division of Davao City. The participants were chosen based on the following criteria: (1) must be in the present position for at least 5 years- regardless of their age, sex and marital status; (2) must be teaching MAPEH for at least 5 years- regardless of their age, sex and marital status; and (3) must have at least a very satisfactory rating in their IPCRF.

In gathering data, the researcher utilized an in-depth interview questionnaire. The researcher developed the interview questionnaire and will be answered by the participants orally. These researcher-made interview questionnaire developed upon consultation and validation by the experts and undergone several processes to accommodate their suggestions.

In this study, thematic analysis was utilized to analyze the gathered data. The researcher analyzed the answers of the participants from the conducted interviews with the use of Creswell's Model specifically the identifying of themes approach. According to Creswell (2012) themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database.

3. RESULTS

The study explores the experiences of MAPEH Teachers teaching folk dance, revealing both positive and negative aspects. Positive experiences include cultural appreciation and physical fitness, while negative experiences include students' limited knowledge, complex choreography, and different dance skills. Despite these challenges, these experiences offer opportunities for growth and learning, helping students fully benefit from the positive aspects of folk dance.

Meanwhile, the emerging themes on the coping strategies of MAPEH teachers in teaching folk dance highlight the sharing cultural context, providing constructive feedback, modeling positive behavior, and using online resources. These strategies not only foster passion for dance but also empower both teachers and students to overcome learning obstacles.

Furthermore, the educational management insights of MAPEH teachers focus on student engagement, differentiation, developmentally appropriate instruction, inclusivity and diversity. It suggests that teachers can enhance engagement, promote skill development, and create a culturally enriching learning environment, fostering appreciation for cultural diversity and movement.

4. DISCUSSIONS

MAPEH teachers have a positive experience teaching folk dance, as it promotes cultural appreciation, physical fitness, and well-being. On the other hand students with limited prior knowledge in folk dance may feel overwhelmed or disinterested, requiring creative engagement methods. Complex choreography can also pose challenges, leading to frustration and feelings of inadequacy. Teachers must balance providing a challenging learning experience with ensuring the difficulty level is attainable for all students. Teaching folk dance to students with significantly different dance skills also presents challenges, as they must balance the needs of advanced students while providing support and challenge to those with less experience. Overall, MAPEH teachers face challenges in ensuring all students feel engaged and appropriately challenged in the art form.

On the other note, on regard to the emerging themes on the coping ways of MAPEH teachers in the challenges of teaching folk dance, the key themes include sharing cultural context and personal experiences, providing constructive feedback, modeling positive behavior to students, and using online resources. Teachers impart knowledge about the dance's historical significance and share personal experiences related to different dance styles. They provide constructive feedback, empowering students to enhance their skills and foster a positive learning experience. Teachers also model positive behavior, inspiring students to approach the art form with dedication. Lastly, using online resources allows students to explore and connect with the cultural heritage of folk dance, making the learning journey more accessible and rewarding.

In connection, the educational management insights from MAPEH teachers reveal three key themes: student engagement and differentiation, developmentally appropriate instruction, and inclusivity and diversity. Student engagement and differentiation are crucial in teaching folk dance, as they create a dynamic, inclusive environment. Developmentally appropriate instruction respects students' unique abilities, promoting physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. Inclusivity and diversity are essential, as they create a welcoming, equitable learning environment that celebrates cultural diversity and fosters a sense of belonging among all students.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the emerging themes on the experiences of the MAPEH teachers suggested that they encountered challenges in teaching folk dance to students, while at the same time they were successful in enriching students' cultural appreciation, physical fitness, and well-being. Addressing the challenges allowed MAPEH teachers to overcome obstacles in teaching folk dance and make students fully embrace the positive aspects of engaging in the art form. In addition, the coping ways of MAPEH teachers in the challenges of teaching folk dance implied that implementing these approaches enabled MAPEH teachers to skillfully manage the difficulties of teaching folk dance to students.

These coping strategies not only cultivate students' enthusiasm for folk dance but also empowered both teachers and students to conquer hurdles in the learning journey. Similarly, the educational management insights gained from the experiences of MAPEH teachers implied that customizing instruction to cater to students' varying needs, interests, and abilities enabled MAPEH teachers to increase engagement, foster skill development, and establish an inclusive and culturally enriching learning atmosphere. These components collaborated to empower students to embrace folk dance with eagerness, cultivating a profound appreciation for cultural diversity and the joy of movement.

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