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Correspondence Address:

Study Programme: Art Education,
Drama, Dance, and Music Faculty of
Language and Art, State University of
Surabaya
Gedung T11 Kampus Lidah, Jalan
Kampus Lidah Unesa, Surabaya 60213
Telepon : +6231-7522876, Faksimil :
+6231- 7522876
webs :
<http://sendratasik.fbs.unesa.ac.id>
e-mail :
pendidikansendratasik@unesa.ac.id

The Application of Physical Exercise in Improving the Quality of Dance Movements at the Junior High School Level

Nabila Ravita Maharani, Welly Suryandoko

Universtas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

Email: nabilaravita.21042@mhs.unesa.ac.id
wellysuryandoko@unesa.ac.id

Abstract: this study aims to describe the process of physical training in traditional dance extracurricular activities in schools and its positive benefits in the success of students' movements. The method used is qualitative with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that physical exercise training which includes stretching, balance, breathing, and coordination of head, hand, and foot movements makes a real contribution to improving students' flexibility, balance, technique, and movement expression. These findings reinforce the importance of integrating physical training in dance coaching in the school environment, especially to improve the quality of movement performance in traditional dance.

Keywords: exercise, dance, movement success, extracurricular, dance training

1. INTRODUCTION

Dance is one of the branches of art that plays an important role in shaping the aesthetic sensitivity, motor skills, and emotional expression of students. In the context of dance education, it is not only a means of developing creativity, but also part of character education. Through structured and meaningful movements, students can learn the values of discipline, cooperation, perseverance, and confidence. One of the forums for developing students' dance potential is extracurricular activities in dance extracurricular activities at school. This activity provides a wider space to explore interests and talents outside of formal lesson hours. In the practice of implementing extracurricular traditional dance in schools, various obstacles are still found that affect the quality of students' dance movements. Some students look stiff, lack balance, and have difficulty expressing the meaning of movements correctly. This shows the need for a more targeted and comprehensive training approach.

Mastering dance techniques alone is not enough if the body is not physically or psychologically ready. Therefore, physical training is an important strategy to form the readiness of the dancer's body before entering the learning of dance movements in its entirety. Physical exercise in the context of dance training refers to a series of exercises that aim to improve body awareness, muscle flexibility, balance, physical endurance, and motion coordination skills. This training includes activities such as stretching, breathing, flexibility exercises, muscle strengthening, and repetitive and directed movement pattern recognition. Through body exercise, students are accustomed



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to knowing the potential and limitations of their bodies, so that they are able to control each dance movement more precisely and expressively. This approach also supports the achievement of successful dance movements which includes four main aspects, namely flexibility, balance, technique, and expression. In school, especially at the junior high school level, students are in a period of very dynamic motor and emotional development. Therefore, dance coaching approaches that integrate body exercises are very relevant. Not only does it prepare the body physically, but it also helps students understand the function of the body as the main instrument in dance. In extracurricular training, this method can be a bridge between mastery of dance techniques and the body's readiness to move effectively. Facts in the field show that at first, traditional dance training in schools tended to focus directly on mastering choreography without any mature body preparation stages. This causes students to experience fatigue faster, stiffness, and less ability to control movement details. By implementing physical training, the dance learning process becomes more gradual, adaptive to students' abilities, and oriented towards achieving optimal movement quality. This study aims to comprehensively describe how the physical training process is applied in traditional dance extracurricular activities in the school environment and examine its impact on the success of students' movements. This research not only focuses on the final result in the form of dance performance, but also on the process of forming students' body awareness during training. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more effective and holistic dance learning strategies in schools. With the results of this research, it is hoped that schools, dance coaches, and art education policy makers can understand the importance of physical exercise as a foundation for dance learning. Furthermore, this research can also be a reference for the development of an extracurricular curriculum of dance arts that is not only oriented to the results of performances, but also to the process of forming basic competencies of students' movements as a whole. This research is expected to improve the understanding of students who participate in dance extracurriculars about the importance of physical readiness before dancing and how body exercise techniques can help them master movements better. In addition, this research is also expected to help improve the quality of dance education in general, so that the younger generation can better appreciate and develop dance arts.

This research is based on the theory of body exercise according to Suyadi (2013), which states that body exercise is a physical and psychological training process to harmonize the body, mind, and sense in producing optimal movement. In the context of dance, exercise is the foundation of readiness and movement control. The theory of dance movement from Soedarsono (1999) emphasizes that the success of dance movements is measured through flexibility, balance, technique, and expression. These four indicators are used as a benchmark for training results.

Thus, this theory forms a complementary conceptual foundation: exercise as the main method of exercise, dance movement as the object of its success. The entire theory supports the research framework as a whole, both in terms of the training process and the results of the movements observed during the training process. Lestari (2021) is relevant because it shows the importance of physical exercise in improving students' physical readiness when dancing. This supports the focus of this journal which examines the role of physical training in the success of students' dance movements in schools. Wahyuni (2019) emphasized the importance of practicing basic movement techniques in traditional dance to support flexibility and balance. These findings are in line with this journal which also measures aspects of movement success such as technique, flexibility, and balance as a result of training

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2. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of describing in depth the process of physical exercise training in traditional dance extracurricular activities and its relationship with the success of student movements. The research location was carried out at UPT SMPN 18 Gresik which has an active dance arts extracurricular program.

The subjects in this study are dance extracurricular coaches and extracurricular member students who follow the training process regularly. Data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and visual documentation during the training process. The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself, assisted by observation guidelines, interview guidelines, and documentation sheets. Observations were focused on the form of physical exercise applied. and how it

contributes to head, hand, and foot movement techniques in traditional dance.

Interviews were conducted with dance coaches and students to obtain information about perceptions, experiences, and the influence of exercise on movement skills. Documentation in the form of exercise photos was used to reinforce the field data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

This study found that physical exercise training in traditional dance extracurricular activities at UPT SMPN 18 Gresik was applied through various forms of structured and repetitive basic exercise. Forms of training include warm-up and stretching, flexibility and balance exercise, coordination exercise, body expression and gesture exercise, breathing and concentration exercise. Where during the training process, the trainer also includes basic techniques from traditional dances such as mendhak, ndegeg and several other basic techniques. These exercises are done consistently before the main dance training session begins.

Exercise training has been proven to have an influence on the success of students' movements, especially in the aspects of flexibility, balance, technique, and expression. The results of the observation showed that students who participated in regular exercises experienced an improvement in terms of mastering head, hand, and foot movement techniques.

The following are the results of observations on the form of physical exercise training and aspects of the success of student movements:



Figure 1. Warm-up form of exercise

First, the muscles are warmed up and stretched. This exercise consists of stretching the neck in various directions, rotating the shoulders and arms forward and backward, and standing position touching the tips of the toes. This exercise aims to prevent muscle injuries, increase body elasticity, and prepare the body physically before performing more complex dance movements.



Figure 2. Balance exercises

Second, flexibility and balance exercises are carried out, which include squatting (light knee bending), standing with one leg while

raising your arms, and rotating your body to the rhythm of music. This exercise makes a great contribution to the flexibility of movement and the ability of students to maintain body stability when moving.



Figure 3. Coordination exercises

Third, coordination exercises are carried out to train harmony between the limbs. This exercise is a combination of head movements (noleh and nod), hand movements (ngithing and lambeyan), and foot movements (sisig and folds) which are performed simultaneously. The results of this exercise showed an improvement in the harmony of movement and the ability to integrate various parts of the body simultaneously.



Figure 4. Expression exercises

Furthermore, students take part in body expression and gesture exercises consisting of smiling exercises when making hand movements, eye gaze that follows the direction of the hand or body, and facial expression processing according to the dance atmosphere. This exercise aims to shape students' ability to convey the meaning of dance in an expressive way and strengthen the visual aesthetic aspect in the performance.



Figure 5. Breathing and concentration exercises

Finally, breathing and concentration exercises are carried out with the method of pulling and exhaling slowly, relaxing the body, and sitting quietly at the end of the session. This exercise helps students in maintaining calmness, improving concentration, and maintaining stamina and self-control during dancing.



Figure 6. Aspects of head movement

Based on the results of observations, documentation, and interviews conducted during the training process, it was seen that there was a significant increase in the success of students' movements after participating in regular exercise training. The success of these movements can be seen from several important aspects that are indicators of the quality of dance movements, in the form of movement techniques, flexibility, balance, rhythm, and expression. Here are the results of the students' development after the training:

In the aspect of head movements, students showed better ability to control movements such as tangkep and nodded to the right and left that followed the direction of the hand, as well as bowing movements which are now done more expressively. This development signifies an increase in the focus of the gaze, continuity between the movement of the head and other limbs, and the strengthening of more lively and communicative facial expressions.



Figure 7. Hand gesture aspect

Hand gestures have also experienced a significant improvement in quality. The swiping movement that previously seemed stiff is now done more gently and flowing. The position of the fingers when performing ngruji movements becomes neater, and the mayu movements are done smoothly and the transitions between movements look improved. This shows an improvement in the softness of hand movements, neatness of finger techniques, and students' understanding of the basics of hand techniques in traditional dance.



Figure 8. Footwork aspect

For leg movements, students seem to be more able to maintain balance in lunging movements, master rhythm through trecet movements, and show good body control in upright and degeg movements. This improvement reflects a more maintained stability of the body, increased leg strength, and a smooth transition between the lower and upper positions in dance choreography.



Figure 9. Aspects of the body movement

In the aspect of physical exercise, intensive training yields results in the form of increasing the flexibility of students' bodies. The movement of the ngeleyek to the right and left is now carried out following the rhythm of the music precisely, the gastric movement is carried out rhythmically, and the movement of the godeg seems to be in harmony with the movements of the hands and shoulders. The overall body movement shows the formation of harmony between the upper and lower bodies, as well as the ability to adjust the body to the dynamics of the dance.



Figure 10. Aspects of facial expressions

The facial expression aspect has also made significant progress. Students can be seen to be able to smile naturally throughout the dance, direct their eyes to follow the direction of their hands or body, and display facial expressions that are in harmony with the meaning of dance. This increase shows the growth of confidence, a deepening appreciation of the dance performed, and the ability to convey non-verbal communication through appropriate expressions.

Overall, the development of these five aspects proves that physical exercise training has a real influence on the success of students' movements in dancing the Tanjung Gemirang Dance. The students' movements become more controlled, harmonious, expressive, and have high aesthetic value, in accordance with the technical demands in traditional Javanese dance.

3.2 Discussion

The results of the study showed that physical exercise training had a positive effect on the success of students' movements in the Tanjung Gemirang dance. Every aspect of movement – head, hands, feet, body, and facial expressions – is improved after the application of structured exercises.

This finding is in line with the theory of body exercise according to Suyadi (2013), which states that body exercise trains the integration between physical, mind, and feeling, thereby supporting a more flexible and controlled mastery of movement. Exercises such as stretching, balance, coordination, and relaxation have been proven to help students in controlling movements technically while improving expression in dance.

In addition, the improvement in the quality of students' movements also reflects the achievement of indicators of success in dance movements, as stated by Soedarsono (1999), namely: flexibility, balance, correct movement techniques, and expression. Students who were previously stiff and lacked confidence, after training showed progress in mastering basic movement techniques and were able to perform dance with appropriate expressions.

Thus, physical training has proven to be an effective strategy in increasing the success of dance movements at the school education level, because it is able to build the physical and emotional foundation needed in the process of learning dance art.

4. CONCLUSION

Physical training in the Tanjung Gemirang dance extracurricular at UPT SMPN 18 Gresik showed a significant increase in the success of student movements. Improvements can be seen in the technical aspects of head, hands, feet, body, and facial expressions. This proves that physical exercise training is able to strengthen motor skills, body awareness, and dance appreciation. These findings strengthen the theory of body exercises that emphasize the importance of physical and psychological readiness in mastering movements, as well as the theory of dance success which includes flexibility, balance, technique, rhythm, and expression. Regular and structured training is the key to achieving the success of movement in dance learning in the school environment.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The author is fully responsible for the entire research process, from the preparation of ideas and backgrounds, problem formulation, data collection and analysis, to the preparation of scientific articles. The author also conducts exercise training, direct observation, interviews, documentation, and the preparation of research results and conclusions reports. All stages of research and writing are carried out independently.

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