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Traditional and Modern Dance Integration: Its Influence on Cultural Appreciation and Learning Engagement Among Grade 7 Learners

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners regarding the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education and its influence on their cultural appreciation and learning engagement. Specifically, the study examined how Grade 7 learners described their experiences in integrated dance activities, the benefits and challenges they encountered, and the recommendations they offered to strengthen dance instruction. Participants were eight purposively selected Grade 7 learners, four male and four female, aged 11 to 12, enrolled at Bagong Silangan High School, Schools Division Office of Quezon City, all of whom had experienced the integration of traditional and modern dance in their Physical Education classes. Data were gathered through in-depth individual interviews structured around an opening question, six major questions, and a closing question, and were analyzed through phenomenological coding and axial analysis, in which significant statements were clustered into twenty-five formulated meanings, sub-themes, and major emergent themes. Trustworthiness was established through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, supported by member checking, peer debriefing, reflexive journaling, an audit trail, and methodological and theoretical triangulation. Analysis of the participants' accounts yielded five major emergent themes: Learning to Coordinate Unfamiliar Movements through Supported Practice; Negotiating Exposure, Confidence, and Enjoyment in Performance; Experiencing Dance as a Shared yet Demanding Group Process; Renewing Cultural Connection through Creative Integration; and Seeking Conditions that Make Integration Accessible and Sustainable. Interpreted through Social Constructivism, Experiential Learning Theory, Self-Efficacy Theory, and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, these themes revealed integrated dance instruction as a multidimensional process shaped by bodily coordination, emotional vulnerability, peer relationships, cultural meaning, and the practical conditions of practice. The findings affirmed learners' renewed appreciation for Filipino cultural heritage, developing confidence, and cooperative engagement, alongside continuing needs for emotionally safe performance preparation, equitable peer support, and accessible practice conditions. These results informed the development of the Dance Integration Enhancement Program: A Learner-Responsive Framework for Integrating Traditional and Modern Dance in Grade 7 Physical Education, intended to help Physical Education teachers, school administrators, curriculum developers, and educational policymakers design more engaging, culturally responsive, and learner-centered dance instruction under the MATATAG Curriculum.

KEYWORDS: traditional dance, modern dance, dance integration, cultural appreciation, learning engagement, Physical Education, phenomenology, Grade 7 learners.

I. INTRODUCTION

Dance is an essential component of Physical Education that provides learners with opportunities to develop physical movement, creativity, emotional expression, social interaction, and appreciation of culture. Beyond the development of movement skills, dance serves as a medium through which learners can encounter, understand, and express cultural traditions while exploring contemporary forms of artistic expression. In the Philippine educational context, dance education introduces learners to traditional Filipino dances that embody history, customs, values, and cultural identity, while also providing opportunities to experience modern dance forms that reflect contemporary interests and modes of expression.

The integration of traditional and modern dance provides a meaningful learning experience because it brings together cultural heritage and contemporary forms of movement. Traditional Filipino dances may expose learners to cultural narratives, indigenous movements, music, costumes, and practices passed down across generations. Modern dance forms, on the other hand, may provide opportunities for creativity, self-expression, innovation, and movement exploration. Bringing these forms together in

Physical Education may create a learning environment in which learners can appreciate cultural traditions while engaging in dance forms that are familiar and relevant to their generation.

In today's rapidly changing society, young learners are increasingly exposed to different cultural influences through digital media, social networking platforms, entertainment, and popular culture. Modern dance genres such as hip-hop, contemporary, jazz, street dance, and other emerging forms have become increasingly visible among young people because of their accessibility and appeal. While these contemporary forms provide opportunities for self-expression and active participation, learners may have fewer opportunities to encounter traditional Filipino dances in their everyday environment. Integrating traditional and modern dance in Physical Education may therefore provide a space where cultural heritage and contemporary interests can be experienced together.

The integration of traditional and modern dance is also consistent with the broader goals of Physical Education, which include developing movement competence, creativity, collaboration, appreciation of culture, and participation in meaningful physical activities. Rather than treating traditional and modern dance as completely separate experiences, teachers may integrate cultural movements, traditional music, cultural narratives, and traditional dance patterns with contemporary choreography and learner-centered approaches. Such integration may allow learners to encounter Filipino culture in ways that are both educationally meaningful and relevant to their present experiences.

The implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum further provides opportunities for Physical Education instruction to promote movement competence, cultural understanding, creativity, collaboration, and meaningful participation. For Grade 7 learners, dance activities can serve not only as opportunities for physical movement but also as experiences through which learners can encounter cultural traditions, express themselves, work with peers, and develop appreciation for Filipino cultural heritage.

Despite the educational and cultural value of dance, there remains a need to understand how learners themselves experience the integration of traditional and modern dance in their Physical Education classes. Existing discussions often emphasize the preservation of traditional dances or the educational value of contemporary dance. However, understanding the phenomenon from the learners' own perspectives may provide deeper insights into the meanings they attach to these experiences, the positive experiences they encounter, and the challenges they face during participation.

This need is particularly relevant among Grade 7 learners, who are beginning their junior high school experience and are exposed to diverse academic, social, cultural, and technological influences. Their experiences may provide important insights into how traditional Filipino dances can be presented alongside modern dance forms in ways that are meaningful, engaging, and culturally responsive.

This study therefore focuses on the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners at Bagong Silangan High School, Schools Division Office (SDO) of Quezon City, during the School Year 2026–2027. Through a phenomenological approach, the study seeks to understand how learners experience, perceive, interpret, and make meaning of traditional and modern dance integration in Physical Education. The narratives generated from the participants may provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and serve as a basis for proposing a Dance Integration Enhancement Program that may strengthen culturally responsive and engaging Physical Education instruction.

Research Question

This qualitative phenomenological study aims to explore and understand the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners regarding the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education at Bagong Silangan High School, Schools Division Office (SDO) of Quezon City, during the School Year 2026–2027. Specifically, the study seeks to understand how learners experience, perceive, interpret, and make meaning of participating in integrated traditional and modern dance activities.

Central Question:

What are the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners regarding the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education at Bagong Silangan High School?

Corollary Questions:

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do Grade 7 learners describe their experiences in participating in traditional and modern dance integration activities in Physical Education?
2. What meanings do learners attach to the integration of traditional Filipino dances and modern dance forms in their learning experiences?
3. What benefits do learners perceive from participating in integrated traditional and modern dance activities?

4. What challenges or difficulties do learners encounter during the implementation of traditional and modern dance integration in Physical Education?
5. Based on the learners' lived experiences, what Dance Integration Enhancement Program may be proposed to strengthen culturally responsive and engaging Physical Education instruction?

II. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This qualitative phenomenological study focuses on the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners in the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education at Bagong Silangan High School, Schools Division Office (SDO) of Quezon City, during the School Year 2026–2027.

The study specifically explores what Grade 7 learners experience when participating in integrated traditional and modern dance activities in Physical Education. It seeks to understand their perceptions, feelings, reflections, interpretations, and meanings associated with these experiences.

The study examines how learners experience traditional and modern dance integration, including the meanings they attach to traditional Filipino dances and modern dance forms, the positive experiences and perceived benefits they associate with participation, and the challenges or difficulties they encounter. It also considers learners' narratives concerning cultural appreciation, creativity and self-expression, collaboration, confidence, participation, and their experiences during Physical Education dance activities.

The study is conducted during the School Year 2026–2027 and is limited to Grade 7 learners who are officially enrolled at Bagong Silangan High School and who have direct experience participating in traditional and modern dance activities as part of their Physical Education classes.

The participants will be selected through purposive sampling. Selection will focus on learners who can provide relevant and meaningful accounts of the phenomenon being explored. The number of participants will depend on the richness of the narratives and the achievement of data saturation.

Data will be generated through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with selected participants. The interviews will provide opportunities for participants to describe their experiences using their own words. The narratives will be examined through thematic analysis to identify significant meanings, recurring patterns, and themes emerging from the participants' accounts.

The study is conducted to develop a deeper understanding of learners' lived experiences and to use these insights as a basis for proposing a Dance Integration Enhancement Program that may strengthen culturally responsive, meaningful, and engaging Physical Education instruction.

The study is delimited to the experiences and perspectives of Grade 7 learners at Bagong Silangan High School. It does not include the perspectives of Physical Education teachers, school administrators, parents, or other stakeholders.

The study does not seek to measure dance performance skills, physical fitness outcomes, academic achievement, or other quantitative indicators. It also does not compare the effectiveness of traditional dance with modern dance or establish statistical relationships among variables.

As a phenomenological study, the research does not aim to produce statistical generalizations. Instead, it seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon based on the personal narratives, perceptions, interpretations, and meanings shared by the participants.

The study also recognizes that participants may have different previous experiences with dance, varying levels of confidence, interests, cultural exposure, and personal attitudes toward Physical Education. These individual differences may influence how participants describe and interpret their experiences.

FRAMEWORK

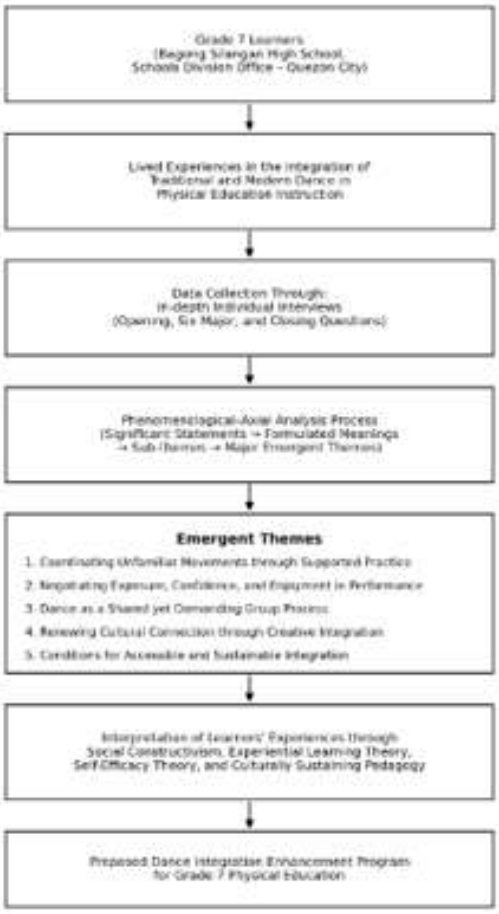


Figure 1. Research Paradigm

At the center of the framework is the phenomenon of traditional and modern dance integration. Dance integration refers to the instructional practice of combining traditional Filipino dances with contemporary dance forms within Physical Education classes. Traditional dances provide opportunities for learners to encounter Filipino history, customs, beliefs, and cultural identity, while modern dance forms invite experimentation, creativity, and contemporary self-expression. As established in the review of related literature, this pairing is not merely a matter of curricular sequencing but a pedagogical stance whose success depends on how deliberately the integration is designed and taught (Li et al., 2024; Lobo, 2026b).

The participants of this study were Grade 7 learners of Bagong Silangan High School, Schools Division Office – Quezon City, who experienced integrated dance instruction in their Physical Education classes. Data were gathered through in-depth individual interviews structured around an opening question, six major questions, and a closing question, eliciting participants' descriptions of the activity, memorable moments, perceived benefits, perceived challenges, the people and conditions surrounding their experience, and their suggestions for future implementation. Their personal narratives were the primary source of data subjected to phenomenological coding and axial analysis.

Rather than the eight broadly anticipated categories originally proposed at the design stage of this study, cultural appreciation, learning engagement, creativity and self-expression, collaboration and teamwork, confidence and personal growth, respect for cultural diversity, motivation to participate, and challenges and coping strategies, the completed axial coding and thematic analysis of participants' verbatim accounts produced five major emergent themes, each comprising two to three sub-themes. These are: (1) Learning to Coordinate Unfamiliar Movements through Supported Practice, describing how learners' varied dance backgrounds and the coordination demands of combining two movement styles were made manageable through teacher modeling and gradual rehearsal; (2) Negotiating Exposure, Confidence, and Enjoyment in Performance, describing the shift from initial nervousness and vulnerability to pride and renewed enjoyment following successful performance; (3) Experiencing Dance as a Shared yet Demanding Group Process, describing how peer encouragement and cooperative movement eased difficulty even

as uneven participation created added responsibility for some learners; (4) Renewing Cultural Connection through Creative Integration, describing learners' growing recognition of the compatibility between traditional and modern movement and their renewed appreciation of Filipino dance as personally and culturally relevant; and (5) Seeking Conditions that Make Integration Accessible and Sustainable, describing the practical conditions of time, space, and instructional pacing that shaped whether learners wanted the activity to continue.

These five emergent themes correspond closely, though not identically, to the areas surveyed in the review of related literature, confirming the relevance of that literature while also extending it into the specific, integrated context this study examined. Theme 1 resonates with the literature on motor learning and embodiment in dance (Britten et al., 2023; Clifford et al., 2024; Ørbæk, 2021) and is interpreted primarily through Social Constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978) and Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984). Theme 2 extends the literature on the psychosocial dimensions of dance performance (Ananya & Sethi, 2026; Ayson et al., 2024; Borowski, 2021) and is interpreted through Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1997). Theme 3 builds on the literature concerning peer interaction and the social ecology of the Physical Education classroom (Baena-Morales et al., 2024; Giguere, 2021; Guinto & Campoamor-Olegario, 2025) and is likewise read through Social Constructivism. Theme 4 substantiates and enriches the literature on Philippine traditional dance as cultural heritage and on culturally sustaining pedagogy (Lobo, 2022, 2025, 2026a, 2026b; Paris, 2012). Theme 5 reflects the literature on the structural and curricular conditions of Physical Education under the MATATAG Curriculum (Aquino, 2026; Malinao & Miano, 2025). This alignment demonstrates that the study's findings are neither disconnected from nor simply repetitive of existing scholarship; rather, they particularize established constructs to the specific, lived experience of Grade 7 learners encountering an intentionally combined dance activity.

These five themes are best understood not as isolated outcomes but as interconnected dimensions of a single unfolding experience. Learners' coordination of unfamiliar movement (Theme 1) shaped, and was shaped by, their confidence or vulnerability in performing (Theme 2); both were mediated by the peer and teacher relationships surrounding them (Theme 3); all three occurred within, and gave rise to, a renewed cultural connection (Theme 4); and the sustainability of the entire experience depended on the practical conditions in which it took place (Theme 5). The interaction among these themes offers a comprehensive account of how integrated dance instruction was actually lived by Grade 7 learners, rather than a fragmented list of discrete benefits.

Ultimately, the findings of the study inform the development of a Dance Integration Enhancement Program. Grounded in participants' authentic experiences rather than in the originally anticipated categories, the proposed program is expected to address the specific needs surfaced by the five emergent themes: scaffolded, segmented instructional strategies for coordinating combined movement sequences; structured opportunities for building performance confidence; peer-support and cooperative learning structures that distribute rather than concentrate the demands of group practice; culturally sustaining pedagogical framing that preserves the recognizable meaning of traditional dance; and realistic provisions for practice time, space, and pacing. The program is intended to serve as a guide for Physical Education teachers, curriculum developers, and school administrators seeking to design more engaging, culturally responsive, and learner-centered dance instruction under the MATATAG Curriculum.

Research Design

This study will employ a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners regarding the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education. Phenomenology is an appropriate qualitative approach because it seeks to understand and describe the meanings individuals attach to their personal experiences of a particular phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon is the integration of traditional and modern dance and how learners perceive its influence on their cultural appreciation and learning engagement.

According to Clark Moustakas (1994), phenomenological research aims to describe the essence of individuals' lived experiences by exploring how they perceive, interpret, and make meaning of a shared phenomenon. Rather than measuring variables or testing hypotheses, phenomenology emphasizes participants' personal narratives to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences.

The present study seeks to understand how Grade 7 learners experience the integration of traditional Filipino dances and modern dance forms during their Physical Education classes. Specifically, it aims to explore how these experiences influence their appreciation of Filipino culture, their engagement in learning activities, their creativity and self-expression, and their perceptions of the value of dance education. Through participants' narratives, the researcher intends to identify common patterns, meanings, and themes that characterize their experiences.

Data will be gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with purposively selected Grade 7 learners who have participated in integrated traditional and modern dance activities. The use of semi-structured interviews allows participants to

freely describe their experiences while enabling the researcher to probe further into significant responses. With the participants' consent, the interviews will be audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and reviewed to ensure the accuracy of the collected data.

The interview transcripts will be analyzed using thematic analysis following the procedures described by Braun and Clarke (2022). The analysis will involve familiarization with the data, systematic coding, development of categories, identification of recurring themes, review and refinement of themes, and interpretation of the findings. This analytical process will enable the researcher to capture the essence of the participants' lived experiences and generate meaningful insights into the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education.

The phenomenological research design is appropriate for this study because it provides a rich and comprehensive understanding of how learners experience integrated dance instruction and how these experiences shape their cultural appreciation and learning engagement. The findings are expected to provide valuable insights that will serve as the basis for developing a Dance Integration Enhancement Program that supports culturally responsive, engaging, and learner-centered Physical Education instruction at Bagong Silangan High School.

Data Generation Methods

This study will employ semi-structured, in-depth interviews as the primary data generation method to obtain rich and detailed accounts of the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners regarding the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education. In qualitative research, the term data generation is preferred over data collection because the researcher and participants collaboratively construct meanings through dialogue and interaction rather than merely collecting information. According to John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell (2023), qualitative interviews enable participants to describe their experiences, perceptions, and interpretations in their own words, allowing researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

A researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide will be used to facilitate the interviews. The interview guide will consist of broad, open-ended questions aligned with the objectives of the study, together with follow-up or probing questions designed to encourage participants to elaborate on their responses. Prior to its use, the interview guide will undergo expert validation by specialists in qualitative research and Physical Education to ensure that the questions are relevant, clear, and appropriate for the participants.

Before the conduct of the interviews, the researcher will obtain approval from the school administration and secure written informed consent from the parents or legal guardians of the participants, as well as assent from the learners. The participants will be informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, their right to withdraw at any point without penalty, and the measures that will be taken to protect the confidentiality of their responses.

The interviews will be conducted individually in a quiet and comfortable venue within Bagong Silangan High School at a schedule approved by the school administration. Each interview is expected to last approximately 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the participants' willingness to share their experiences. With the participants' permission, all interviews will be audio-recorded to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the information obtained. The researcher will also prepare field notes throughout the interview sessions to document participants' nonverbal behaviors, emotional expressions, contextual observations, and reflective insights that may enrich the interpretation of the data.

Immediately after each interview, the audio recordings will be transcribed verbatim to preserve the authenticity of the participants' responses. The transcripts will then be reviewed while listening to the recordings to verify their accuracy and completeness. Participants will be given the opportunity to review their interview transcripts through member checking, allowing them to clarify, modify, or validate their responses before the data analysis begins.

The generated data will subsequently undergo thematic analysis following the six-phase framework of Braun and Clarke (2022). The researcher will first become familiar with the data through repeated reading of the transcripts, followed by the generation of initial codes. Similar codes will then be grouped into categories from which meaningful themes and subthemes will emerge. The identified themes will be reviewed, refined, defined, and interpreted to capture the essence of the participants lived experiences regarding the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher will employ several qualitative rigor strategies, including member checking, peer debriefing, reflexive journaling, and the maintenance of an audit trail. These procedures will help establish the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of the findings. Through these systematic data generation methods, the study aims to produce rich, authentic, and meaningful insights into how the integration of traditional and modern dance influences Grade 7 learners' cultural appreciation and learning engagement.

Roles of the Researcher and Reflexivity

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument in generating, interpreting, and analyzing data. Unlike quantitative research, where standardized instruments are mainly used to measure variables, qualitative inquiry requires the researcher to actively engage with participants, understand their experiences, and interpret the meanings they attach to a particular phenomenon. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), the researcher's role in qualitative studies involves establishing relationships with participants, facilitating meaningful conversations, analyzing narratives, and ensuring that interpretations accurately represent the participants' perspectives.

In this study, the researcher will assume the role of an interviewer, observer, and interpreter in exploring the lived experiences of Grade 7 learners regarding the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education. The researcher will facilitate semi-structured interviews, encourage participants to share their experiences openly, ask follow-up questions when necessary, and ensure that participants' voices are accurately represented. The researcher will also be responsible for organizing, coding, analyzing, and interpreting the generated data to identify significant themes related to cultural appreciation, learning engagement, creativity, self-expression, collaboration, and challenges encountered during integrated dance activities.

The researcher recognizes that personal experiences, educational background, beliefs, and perspectives may influence the interpretation of qualitative data. Therefore, reflexivity will be practiced throughout the research process. Reflexivity refers to the continuous process of examining and acknowledging the researcher's own assumptions, biases, values, and influence on the research process and findings. According to Braun and Clarke (2022), reflexivity is an essential component of qualitative research because it enables researchers to critically examine how their position and perspectives shape data generation and interpretation.

To maintain objectivity and minimize potential bias, the researcher will engage in several reflexive practices. First, the researcher will maintain a reflexive journal throughout the research process to record personal reflections, observations, decisions, and possible biases that may arise during interviews and data analysis. This practice will allow the researcher to distinguish personal interpretations from the actual meanings expressed by participants.

Second, the researcher will practice bracketing by consciously setting aside personal assumptions and expectations regarding dance education, traditional Filipino culture, and learners' engagement. Although the researcher may have prior knowledge or experiences related to Physical Education and dance instruction, these perspectives will not be allowed to predetermine the interpretation of participants' responses. Instead, the researcher will remain open to emerging meanings and themes derived from the participants' narratives.

Third, the researcher will employ member checking by allowing participants to review selected interpretations or summaries of their responses. This process will help ensure that the findings accurately reflect the participants' experiences and perspectives. Peer debriefing with research advisers or qualitative research experts will also be conducted to examine the consistency and credibility of the analysis.

The researcher will also maintain ethical responsibility throughout the study by respecting participants' privacy, protecting confidentiality, and ensuring that participation remains voluntary. The researcher will avoid influencing participants' responses and will create a safe and respectful environment where learners can freely express their experiences and opinions.

Through continuous reflexive practice, the researcher aims to produce a trustworthy and authentic representation of Grade 7 learners' experiences with traditional and modern dance integration. Reflexivity strengthens the credibility of the study by ensuring that the findings are grounded in the participants lived experiences rather than being shaped solely by the researcher's personal interpretations.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis process in this study will follow the principles of thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2022). Thematic analysis is appropriate for phenomenological research because it enables the researcher to identify, analyze, organize, and interpret recurring patterns of meaning within participants' narratives. Through this process, the researcher will develop themes that represent the essence of Grade 7 learners' lived experiences regarding traditional and modern dance integration.
The analysis will follow the six phases of thematic analysis:

1. Familiarization with the Data

The researcher will begin by becoming deeply familiar with the generated data through repeated reading of interview transcripts and listening to audio recordings. During this phase, initial observations, significant statements, and possible patterns related to cultural appreciation, learning engagement, and dance experiences will be documented.

2. Generation of Initial Codes

The researcher will systematically examine the transcripts and assign codes to meaningful statements or segments of data. Codes will represent important ideas, experiences, perceptions, and emotions expressed by participants. Examples of possible initial

codes include increased cultural awareness, enjoyment in dance activities, improved confidence, teamwork experiences, appreciation of Filipino traditions, *and* challenges in performing dance movements.

3. Development of Categories and Themes

Related codes will be grouped together to form broader categories. These categories will then be examined to identify significant themes that describe the shared experiences of participants. Possible themes may include:

- Rediscovering Filipino Cultural Identity Through Dance
- Dance as a Source of Engagement and Motivation
- Balancing Tradition and Modern Creativity
- Building Confidence Through Movement and Performance
- Collaboration and Social Connection Through Dance
- Challenges and Opportunities in Integrated Dance Learning

4. Reviewing and Refining Themes

The researcher will review the identified themes to determine whether they accurately represent the participants' narratives. Themes will be refined by comparing them with the original transcripts to ensure that interpretations remain grounded in the actual experiences of the participants.

5. Defining and Naming Themes

Each theme will be clearly defined and described based on its relevance to the research questions. The researcher will identify the essential meaning of each theme and explain how it contributes to understanding learners' experiences with traditional and modern dance integration.

6. Producing the Final Report

The final stage will involve presenting the findings through a narrative discussion supported by direct quotations from participants. The researcher will interpret the themes in relation to existing literature and theories, particularly Social Constructivist Theory (Vygotsky, 1978), Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984), and contemporary studies on dance education.

III. RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings of the study exploring the lived experiences of eight Grade 7 learners in relation to the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education. It begins with the participants' backgrounds to establish the context of their accounts, followed by the emergent themes and sub-themes developed through axial coding and the clustering of significant experiences and formulated meanings. The discussion examines the learners' experiences, perceived benefits, challenges, sources of support, and meanings associated with dance participation. Thematic narratives are supported by verbatim excerpts, while the integration of participant voices highlights shared experiences and meaningful differences across their accounts.

Table 1

Background Characteristics of the Participants

Participant code	Age (years)	Gender	Prior dance experience	Participation in the integrated activity
ST1_J	11	Male	Traditional and modern dance	Twice a week
ST2_I	12	Female	Traditional and modern dance	Twice a week
ST3_N	11	Male	Traditional and modern dance	Twice a week
ST4_P	12	Female	Traditional and modern dance	Twice a week
ST5_B	12	Female	Traditional and modern dance	Twice a week
ST6_CR	12	Male	Traditional and modern dance	Twice a week
ST7_RS	12	Female	Traditional and modern dance	Twice a week
ST8_KB	12	Male	Traditional and modern dance	Twice a week

The participants were between 11 and 12 years old. ST1_J and ST3_N were 11 years old, whereas the remaining six participants were 12. Four participants were male and four were female. The profile entries recorded prior experience in both traditional and modern dance and participation twice a week for all eight learners.

ST1_J was an 11-year-old male learner from Grade 7, Section Efficiency. His profile recorded previous experience in both traditional and modern dance and participation in the integrated activity twice a week. In describing his usual Physical Education lessons, he explained that the teacher first demonstrated the steps, after which learners practiced independently and performed the dance as an activity. He referred specifically to traditional dances undertaken in class. Before the combined activity, he expected dancing to improve his physical ability and help him learn the history of the dances.

ST2_I was a 12-year-old female learner from Grade 7, Section Discipline. Her profile indicated prior experience in traditional and modern dance and participation in the integrated activity twice a week. Despite this recorded exposure, she did not describe herself as consistently confident in dancing. In the opening interview response, she stated, “I sometimes get nervous because I am not always confident with dancing.” She explained that some steps were difficult, but she continued trying to complete the dance. Enjoyment became more evident when the steps were familiar and she could execute them correctly.

ST3_N was an 11-year-old male learner from Grade 7, Section Love. His profile recorded experience in both traditional and modern dance and participation in the integrated activity twice a week. He described the combined activity as having both easy and difficult elements, which was also what he had expected before joining. He emphasized studying the movements carefully so that he could remember them. His recollections included participation with classmates in a TikTok challenge. Although the group did not win, he described remaining happy and considering how they could perform better in a future competition. The account did not specify the traditional dance component of that particular challenge.

ST4_P was a 12-year-old female learner from Grade 7, Section Benevolence. Her profile recorded experience in traditional and modern dance and participation in the integrated activity twice a week. She described a more extensive dance history, beginning in Grade 2 and including folk or traditional dances and K-pop. She associated Physical Education with discovering her dance talent and identified herself as a member of the Sagayan Dance Troupe. Her elementary traditional dance experience involved coaching that required repetition after mistakes and emphasized precise, controlled movement. She described modern dance as tiring but enjoyable, particularly when the music was familiar to young people. Acceptance into the dance troupe was memorable because she had not expected to be selected. She also reported unfamiliar movement requirements, fatigue, and bodily pain during dance training, while valuing the opportunity to learn. Alumni performances inspired her, and she attributed increased flexibility and encouragement to her coach's support.

ST5_B was a 12-year-old female learner from Grade 7, Section Compassion. Her profile recorded prior experience in traditional and modern dance and participation in the integrated activity twice a week. She generally viewed dance lessons as enjoyable but sometimes challenging and expressed interest in learning new steps and following the rhythm of the music. At the beginning of the combined activity, she felt both excited and nervous. Although the teacher explained the activity and demonstrated basic traditional movements, she remained shy because she was uncertain of her dancing ability and worried about making a mistake.

ST6_CR was a 12-year-old male learner from Grade 7, Section Benevolence. His profile indicated prior experience in both traditional and modern dance and participation in the integrated activity twice a week. In the opening narrative, however, he specifically recalled simple folk dances and basic steps in Physical Education. He preferred movements that were easy, clear, and free from confusion and expected an enjoyable combination of the two styles. This account establishes his preference for manageable instruction without providing an equally detailed history of previous modern dance activities. He described the integrated activity as generally comfortable and lively. Clear teacher guidance and supportive group practice helped him follow the movements, and he remembered the traditional steps and modern rhythm as fitting smoothly together. His principal challenge was briefly losing the transition when the rhythm changed, after which teacher and classmate guidance helped him resume. He considered the time, space, music, and available support adequate. His preference for simple steps, slow demonstrations, and basic folk movements with modern pop elements reflects an account of integration made accessible through clear instruction.

ST7_RS was a 12-year-old female learner from Grade 7, Section Discipline. Her profile recorded exposure to traditional and modern dance and participation in the integrated activity twice a week. She described previous Physical Education lessons as involving dances from different cultures, followed by classroom practice and performance. Despite this exposure, she initially considered dancing frightening and perceived her own ability as limited. She felt shy and judged while performing, making the prospect of demonstrating unfamiliar movements a source of concern. She identified her first combined dance performance as a PETA task. Differences between the steps caused confusion, and she worried about whether she had memorized the sequence sufficiently. Her background reveals a learner whose initial apprehension was accompanied by a developing appreciation of cooperation, self-expression, and respect for traditional dance.

ST8_KB was a 12-year-old male learner from Grade 7, Section Courtesy. His profile listed prior experience in both traditional and modern dance and participation in the integrated activity twice a week. His opening response specifically identified folk dance

experience and clarified that he had not previously experienced a mixture of traditional and modern dance. He expected a usual folk dance lesson and was surprised by the modern movements. He generally found Physical Education dance activities enjoyable, although initial nervousness and physical tiredness were also part of his experience. ST8_KB described learning the footwork before adding arm movements and practicing with classmates until the sequence became easier. Coordinating traditional steps with modern arm movements and beats initially caused confusion and embarrassment. Slow rehearsal, shared counting, and practice without music helped him work through these demands. His account included practical concerns about limited space and the time needed to master steps. He suggested more practice time, additional space, a video or simple guide for home review, and opportunities for students to propose music or dances. He supported preserving correct traditional steps while using modern music. His background therefore combines initial unfamiliarity with integrated dance, gradual learning through peer-supported rehearsal, and a developing interest in an activity he eventually described as his favorite in Physical Education.

This section presents a detailed descriptive account of each emergent theme, grounded in the learners' own words. Verbatim excerpts are introduced and followed by descriptive commentary that clarifies how each excerpt supports the theme. Excerpts originally given in Filipino, or in a mix of Filipino and English, are presented exactly as spoken and are followed by an English gloss in brackets. The discussion remains data-driven and descriptive.

Table 1

Summary of Emergent Themes and Categories

Theme No.	Emergent Theme	Sub-themes	Central Descriptive Meaning
Theme 1	Learning to coordinate unfamiliar movements through supported practice	Different starting points and simultaneous movement demands; making movements manageable through guidance and gradual rehearsal; bodily adjustment accompanied by physical effort	Learners entered the combined activity with varied prior dance experience and expectations, and found the simultaneous demands of memory, rhythm, and coordination eased through repeated teacher modeling, segmented rehearsal, and persistence, while the body itself registered both growing control and physical fatigue.
Theme 2	Negotiating exposure, confidence, and enjoyment in performance	Feeling visible and vulnerable while learning; finding confidence and pleasure in accomplishment	Performing unfamiliar steps in front of others exposed learners to nervousness, fear of mistakes, and comparison with more capable classmates, yet completing the activity produced pride, reduced shyness, and renewed enjoyment of Physical Education, even where evaluative anxiety persisted for some.
Theme 3	Experiencing dance as a shared yet demanding group process	Finding reassurance through shared struggle and encouragement; building connection through cooperative movement; carrying the demands of uneven participation	Dance was consistently experienced as a social activity: seeing classmates also struggle reduced isolation, teaching and encouragement built cooperation and enjoyment, but uneven learning pace and partner or leadership responsibilities also placed additional burden on some learners.
Theme 4	Renewing cultural connection through creative integration	Recognizing compatibility and present-day cultural relevance; expressing oneself while honoring tradition	Learners came to see traditional and modern dance as distinct yet compatible forms, describing renewed appreciation for Filipino culture as relevant to present-day life and valuing integration that allows personal and creative expression without losing the meaning of traditional movement.
Theme 5	Seeking conditions that make integration accessible and sustainable	Having time, space, and continuing support to learn; shaping a manageable and engaging combination	Participation was shaped by the time, space, and support available for practice, and learners' willingness to continue the combined activity depended on whether the steps remained manageable, the guidance sufficiently patient, and the music and dance choices personally engaging.

The central research question asked how Grade 7 learners experienced the integration of traditional and modern dance in Physical Education. The collective accounts showed that integration was lived as an embodied, emotional, social, cultural, and context-dependent learning process. Learners did not encounter the activity only as the combination of two dance genres. They experienced it through the effort of coordinating unfamiliar movements, the visibility of performing before others, the support and demands of group participation, the rediscovery of traditional dance within a contemporary form, and the practical conditions that either enabled or constrained continued practice. Five findings synthesize these interrelated dimensions and answer the corollary research questions.

Participation in integrated dance required learners to coordinate unfamiliar movement demands from different starting points. Although the participant profiles indicated exposure to traditional and modern dance, the interviews clarified that prior

experience in the two genres did not always mean prior experience combining them. The integrated activity required learners to manage traditional footwork, modern arm movements or stylistic elements, rhythm, memory, transitions, and group timing at the same time. Some initially experienced confusion, stiffness, difficulty following counts, or uncertainty when the music became faster. Others, particularly ST6_CR, found the activity comparatively manageable. These differences showed that the experience of difficulty depended on the relationship among prior familiarity, task complexity, pacing, and the support available during practice. Repeated modeling, separating movement components, shared counting, rehearsal without music, and gradual recombination helped several learners make the sequence more approachable. Physical effort, tiredness, and perceived bodily improvement were also part of this process.

Integrated performance created both vulnerability and opportunities for growing confidence and enjoyment. Learners described nervousness, embarrassment, fear of forgetting steps, concern about being judged, and comparison with classmates who appeared more capable. A mistake was emotionally significant because it occurred where classmates and teachers could see it. At the same time, successful completion, encouragement, clearer understanding, and repeated participation allowed some learners to become less shy, feel proud, or enjoy Physical Education more. ST5_B continued after classmates helped with a forgotten step, while ST7_RS reported reduced concern about judgment. ST8_KB moved from staying at the back to participating more openly and later described the activity as a favorite part of Physical Education. ST2_I, however, continued to value correctness and grades even while understanding the integrated activity more clearly. The finding therefore did not describe a uniform progression from fear to confidence. It showed that accomplishment, enjoyment, willingness to participate, and comfort with evaluation were related but distinct experiences.

The activity was experienced as a shared learning process that offered reassurance while also creating responsibilities and tensions. Participants repeatedly described classmates as sources of counting, demonstration, reminders, encouragement, and companionship. Seeing others struggle reduced the sense of being alone, and shared practice helped learners recover when they became confused. Group performance also created connection because success depended on moving with others rather than simply completing individual steps. Yet cooperation required work. Uneven pacing meant that some learners waited, some felt responsible for teaching, and some worried about delaying the group. ST3_N described the burden of helping classmates who were difficult to teach, while ST7_RS recognized that personal difficulty could affect the group's progress. Laughter could accompany supportive recovery in one account and distracting behavior in another.

Creative integration renewed cultural connection when contemporary expression remained connected to recognizable and respected traditional content. Participants described traditional and modern dance as different yet compatible. Modern music or movement made the activity feel current and personally engaging, while traditional steps provided a connection to Filipino culture, history, and older generations. Several learners expressed appreciation, respect, pride, or a desire to continue learning after experiencing the combination. The cultural meaning of the activity was not dependent on complete technical ease; appreciation could develop even when performance remained challenging. Learner recommendations also placed clear boundaries around innovation. ST8_KB wanted the traditional steps to remain correct even if modern music was used, and ST4_P wanted the origin or significance of traditional dances explained before performance.

Learners' willingness and ability to continue integrated dance depended on accessible and responsive learning conditions. Adequate rehearsal time, usable space, patient pacing, teacher guidance, peer assistance, simple review materials, and meaningful learner choice emerged as conditions that shaped participation. ST3_N reported that limited time affected completion and also noted that extended practice could become tiring. ST8_KB described a cramped space and requested a video or simple guide for home review. In contrast, ST6_CR considered the available time, space, and support sufficient. The finding therefore does not establish a uniform shortage. It shows that the adequacy of conditions varied and that planning should respond to the actual class and task. Learners were more willing to continue when the combination remained manageable, the guidance was clear, and the music or movement choices were engaging.

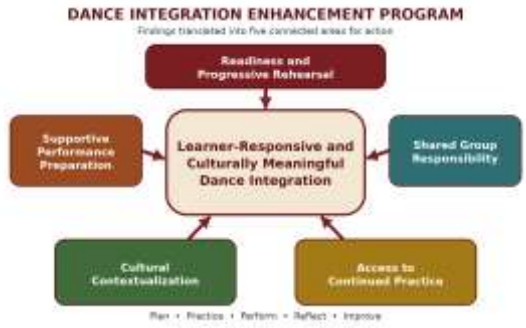
The following conclusions are drawn from the participants' voices, the relationships among the five themes, and the literature and theoretical perspectives . They are stated as answers to the research questions and remain within the boundaries of the qualitative evidence.

1. **The integration of traditional and modern dance is experienced as a multidimensional learning process, not merely as a combined choreography.** For the eight Grade 7 learners, integration acquired meaning through the interaction of bodily coordination, emotion, social relationships, cultural interpretation, and the conditions of practice. No single dimension sufficiently explains the experience. A technically manageable sequence may still produce evaluative worry, while a difficult sequence may still generate cultural appreciation or enjoyment. The central contribution of the study is therefore the

recognition that integrated dance becomes educationally meaningful through the way it is taught, shared, understood, and supported.

2. **Progressive and responsive instruction makes unfamiliar combinations more accessible while preserving the integrated character of the activity.** Segmenting footwork and arm movements, counting, slowing the sequence, rehearsing without music, modeling repeatedly, and gradually recombining the parts helped learners manage simultaneous demands. Temporary separation functioned as scaffolding rather than rejection of integration. The participants' different starting points also establish that one fixed pace or sequence cannot be assumed to fit all learners. Responsive instruction requires the teacher to observe when support should be added, sustained, adjusted, or gradually reduced.
3. **Confidence can grow through accomplishment and encouragement, but completion does not necessarily remove anxiety.** Some participants became more open, less shy, or more willing to continue after repeated practice and group success. ST2_I's continuing concern with correctness and grades establishes an equally important conclusion: visible participation and successful completion cannot be treated as proof of emotional comfort. Culturally engaging instruction must therefore include emotionally safe preparation, clear performance criteria, constructive feedback, and opportunities to disclose continuing difficulty without embarrassment.
4. **Peer participation is a significant resource when cooperation is structured, equitable, and guided.** Shared counting, reminders, demonstration, and encouragement helped learners persist and understand the sequence. At the same time, uneven learning pace and concentrated teaching responsibility sometimes made group work demanding. Cooperative learning in integrated dance should therefore be organized through clear roles, rotation of responsibilities, respectful communication, and teacher monitoring.
5. **Creative integration can strengthen perceived cultural relevance when innovation remains accountable to the traditional form and its meaning.** Participants valued the possibility of expressing themselves through contemporary elements while retaining correct traditional steps and learning why the dance matters. Their voices support culturally sustaining practice in which heritage is treated as a living resource rather than as a static display. The conclusion is not that any fusion automatically preserves culture. Respectful integration requires recognizable movement content, accurate contextualization, and reflection on what is retained, adapted, and communicated.
6. **Accessibility and sustainability depend on locally responsive arrangements for time, space, pacing, resources, and learner agency.** The variation between learners who found support sufficient and those who requested more time, room, or review materials shows that provision should begin with an actual needs assessment. More rehearsal is valuable only when it remains purposeful and physically manageable. Home resources can extend practice, but printed or offline options are necessary so participation does not depend on internet access or a personal device. Learner choice can increase ownership when exercised within cultural, curricular, safety, and feasibility boundaries. School support is therefore important not because every class requires the same resources, but because teachers need workable conditions in which to adapt instruction.
7. **The perceived benefits of integrated dance are meaningful but should not be interpreted as measured or universal outcomes.** Participants reported greater coordination, confidence, enjoyment, cooperation, self-expression, and cultural appreciation. These perceptions explain the value learners attached to the experience and support the development of the practical output. They do not establish quantified improvement in physical fitness, academic achievement, mental health, or long-term cultural competence. The phenomenological design supports depth of meaning rather than causal attribution or statistical generalization. This distinction strengthens the usefulness of the findings by identifying what the study can responsibly claim and what must be examined through later implementation and evaluation.
8. **A Dance Integration Enhancement Program is warranted as an evidence-informed response to the conditions identified by learners.** The findings converge on five connected areas for action: readiness and progressive rehearsal, supportive performance preparation, shared group responsibility, cultural contextualization, and access to continued practice. A program organized around these areas directly answers the fifth corollary question and provides a practical pathway for translating learner experience into instructional improvement. Its status remains proposed. Its feasibility, acceptability, cultural responsiveness, and contribution to learner experience should be established through careful implementation, documentation, and evaluation in the intended setting.

Practical Output of the Study



The principal practical output of the study is the Dance Integration Enhancement Program: A Learner-Responsive Framework for Integrating Traditional and Modern Dance in Grade 7 Physical Education. The program is designed as a flexible instructional and school-support framework rather than a replacement curriculum or a fixed choreography package. It translates the five emergent themes into five program components that PE teachers and school leaders can adapt to the learners, cultural material, schedule, facilities, and resources available in their setting. A separate full presentation of the program accompanies this chapter as Appendix A and contains its operational procedures, implementation cycle, monitoring plan, and sample tools.

The purpose of the program is to strengthen the accessibility, emotional safety, cooperative quality, cultural meaning, and continuity of integrated dance activities. Its rationale arises directly from the participants' collective experiences. Learners needed movement complexity to be made manageable without removing the challenge of integration; they needed preparation that recognized the visibility and evaluative pressure of performance; they benefited from peer assistance but required a fairer distribution of group responsibilities; they valued creative expression while asking that traditional steps and meanings be respected; and they identified practical conditions that affected whether practice could continue. The program responds to these needs through the following components.

1. **Readiness and Progressive Rehearsal** begins with a brief assessment of prior exposure, movement familiarity, confidence, health and safety needs, and experience with combining genres. Traditional and modern components are introduced clearly, practiced in manageable parts, and gradually recombined through modeling, counting, tempo adjustment, repetition, and checks for understanding and fatigue. This component applies the supported participation reflected in Theme 1 and is compatible with Vygotsky's (1978) scaffolding and Kolb's (1984) learning through experience and reflection.
2. **Supportive Performance Preparation** establishes emotionally safe routines before graded or public performance. The teacher explains criteria, distinguishes practice errors from final evaluation, provides specific formative feedback, normalizes requests for help, permits low-risk rehearsal, and checks confidence as well as technical completion. The component responds to Theme 2 and recognizes that greater participation may coexist with continuing worry. It draws on the self-efficacy perspective of Bandura (1997) and the performance and social-emotional concerns discussed by Ayson et al. (2024) and Borowski (2021).
3. **Shared Group Responsibility** structures peer learning through rotating roles such as movement guide, rhythm counter, observer, encourager, and help-seeker or teacher liaison. Role rotation prevents one capable learner from becoming the permanent instructor and gives every learner a defined contribution. The teacher observes the quality of interaction, responds to exclusion or distraction, and provides direct support when peer assistance is insufficient. This component translates Theme 3 into an equitable cooperative structure consistent with Giguere (2021) and Baena-Morales et al. (2024).
4. **Cultural Contextualization** connects movement practice with the origin, purpose, meaning, and recognizable features of the selected traditional dance. Learners examine which elements should be retained, which contemporary features may be introduced, and how the final performance communicates respect. Brief stories, visual references, guided questions, and post-performance reflection help ensure that engagement with modern music or movement does not displace cultural understanding. This component responds to Theme 4 and is grounded in culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) and the literature on cultural continuity, documentation, and contextualized instruction.
5. **Access to Continued Practice** coordinates time, space, pacing, learning resources, and bounded learner choice. The teacher and school identify realistic rehearsal periods and safer practice areas, provide simple printed and offline review aids alongside digital options where feasible, and invite learner suggestions for music or movement within clear cultural and curricular limits. This component responds to Theme 5 and recognizes both reports of sufficient support and requests for

improved access. It reflects the contextual concerns raised by Malinao and Miano (2025) and Aquino (2026) without assuming identical resource needs across classes.

The intended users are Grade 7 PE teachers, MAPEH coordinators, school leaders, and curriculum or instructional support personnel. Learners are not merely recipients; their reflections, reported confidence, questions, and recommendations form part of the program's continuing review. The proposed cycle includes preparation and context scanning, readiness assessment, culturally informed lesson design, progressive instruction and rehearsal, supported performance, learner reflection, and program adjustment. A flexible eight-session prototype is provided in the separate output, but schools may modify the sequence according to the required competency, class schedule, selected dance, and available facilities.

Program monitoring emphasizes evidence that is feasible in the PE setting. Suggested sources include teacher participation notes, readiness and confidence checks, role-rotation records, short demonstrations, learner exit reflections, cultural understanding prompts, and an end-of-cycle review. These records are intended to identify which supports learners use, where confusion or anxiety continues, how responsibilities are distributed, what cultural meanings learners can express, and whether time, space, and resources are adequate. They are not substitutes for a formal evaluation design. Before wider adoption, the program should be reviewed by school personnel and, where appropriate, knowledgeable cultural practitioners or reliable cultural sources. It should then be piloted, revised through learner and teacher feedback, and evaluated for feasibility, acceptability, cultural responsibility, and its relationship to the intended learner experiences.

The program is limited by the evidence from which it was developed. It reflects interviews with eight Grade 7 learners in one school and has not yet been implemented as a complete intervention. It does not prescribe one correct model of fusion, promise specific learning outcomes, or replace Department of Education competencies, teacher judgment, school safety requirements, or appropriate cultural consultation. Its value lies in providing an organized, evidence-linked framework that can be tested and improved while keeping participant voices visible in instructional decisions.

The following recommendations are proposed as specific and researchable directions arising from the findings, delimitations, and status of the practical output.

1. Pilot and evaluate the Dance Integration Enhancement Program in the intended school setting. An initial process evaluation should document implementation of the five components, teacher and learner acceptability, time and space requirements, cultural review procedures, and the usefulness of the proposed monitoring tools. Revision should occur before broader implementation.
2. Conduct a longitudinal qualitative study across a complete dance unit or school year. Repeated interviews, learner reflections, and observations can examine how movement confidence, performance concern, cooperation, and cultural meaning develop over time. Particular attention should be given to learners whose anxiety remains even when they complete the activity.
3. Compare progressive rehearsal approaches using clearly defined conditions. Future studies may compare segmented rehearsal, whole-sequence rehearsal, different uses of tempo and counting, or alternative forms of teacher and peer modeling. The purpose should be to understand which learners benefit under which conditions, rather than to assume a single method is universally superior.
4. Examine the quality and distribution of peer support in integrated dance. Research can document role rotation, peer explanation, help-seeking, leadership burden, exclusion, and the ways laughter or correction are interpreted. Including both learners who give assistance and those who receive it would clarify how cooperative structures become supportive or demanding.
5. Investigate cultural understanding alongside engagement. Future inquiry should examine what learners know about the origin, purpose, and recognizable features of the selected traditional dance before and after integration. Learner accounts may be considered together with teacher explanations, choreography decisions, and review by appropriate cultural resource persons. This would distinguish attraction to modern elements from informed cultural appreciation.
6. Include multiple stakeholders and varied settings. Studies involving PE teachers, MAPEH coordinators, school leaders, parents, and cultural practitioners can extend understanding of feasibility, cultural responsibility, safety, resources, and policy support. Research across other schools, grade levels, and communities can explore transferability while preserving the particular context of each site.
7. Assess access through both digital and non-digital practice supports. Studies can examine the usefulness and equity of videos, printed count sheets, illustrated step guides, school-based review opportunities, and peer-supported practice. Access to devices, internet, home space, and adult support should be documented rather than assumed.

8. Use mixed evidence when examining proposed benefits. If future research seeks to determine changes in coordination, task-specific self-efficacy, participation, or cultural understanding, it should combine validated measures or structured performance evidence with interviews that preserve the learners' interpretation of those changes. This would complement the phenomenological contribution of the present study without converting personal meaning into a score alone.

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