

GENDER DIFFERENCES ON THE ATTITUDES OF PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE STUDENTS TOWARDS DANCING

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Abstract

Gender differences and the attitudes of students towards physical activities are at times used as measures or determinants in the effectiveness and success of teaching dance as one of the many activities in Physical Education program which was found out to be beneficial to students' total development; physically, emotionally, mentally and socially. Hence, the belief on female dominance and stereotyping associated with dance, created a stigma among male students to engage in any dance program. The study identifies the current status of the respondents' attitude towards dancing with emphasis on specifying the significant differences on the variables associated to the attitudes of the respondents. The descriptive method of research was employed using two hundred forty nine (249) second year College students consisted of one hundred ninety two (192) female and fifty seven (57) male students. The data in this study were obtained using a researcher-made questionnaire patterned after the Modified Fennema-Sherman questionnaire which underwent validation before its utilization. The mean and t- test used to analyze the collected data and findings revealed that differences in the attitudes of both male and female in terms of perception on teacher's attitude, personal confidence about the subject matter, and the usefulness of the subject content were found not significant except on the subject perceived as a female domain. The conclusions and recommendations based on these findings were identified and discussed.

Keywords: Gender Differences, Attitudes, College Students, Dance

Quality Physical Education (PE) promotes lifelong physical activities because students acquire physical skills and attitudes necessary to remain active for life. However, for P.E. to be effective, it should promote students' fitness through a progressive well- planned approach where the activities are aligned with the purpose of the national physical education standards. In today's world of accountability and litigation, physical educators face a continuous battle of defending the merits of their programs. While strong P.E professionals manage to promote the program, many issues still continue to project negative impression to physical education which affects the proper implementation of the Physical Education program.

One organize activity in the PE program that promotes fitness is dancing. Studies show that cardio-respiratory endurance, good balance and body coordination are among the fitness components enhanced in dancing. More so, emotional and social maturity are among the significant benefits one could get in dancing.

However, it is sad to note that despite the many benefits of dancing, many students still finds it difficult to actively participate in dance activities provided in the P.E. particularly among male students. Yahaya (2003), reiterates that gender and behavior patterns are at times used as measures of determinants of superiority of sex group or a personality type over the other groups in job performance or other tasks. Likewise, Daigle (2003), stressed in her study titled "Gender differences male and

female in physical activities: A comprehensive model approach” the indirect effect of gender on value and meaningfulness, gender appropriateness, perceived competence, as well as engagement in physical education indicate that these variables influence girls’ intention to participate more than boys.

On the other hand, in the study conducted by Birtwistle and Brodie (2003) on children’s attitude towards activity and perceptions of physical education which they used in the analysis of variance techniques, they established a significant differences in the attitudes of the two groups in both the secondary and primary samples, girls were proven to have higher positive attitudes towards physical activity than the boys. Yorac (2004), emphasized that attitudes and learning have always been believed by psychologists and educators to be inextricably linked with each other. Moreover, according to psychologists, behavior is largely due to the individual’s attitude. People tend to behave consistently with their attitude although the relationship is far from being perfect. Attitude exerts pressure on the individual on a particular way. Since attitudes is believe to influence behavior, researchers in the field of physical education have historically examined students’ attitudes toward physical education in the hope of enhancing students’ participation in specific physical activity and performance in physical education in general.

As a physical education professor, the researcher is concerned with the kind of attitudes students have towards dancing. Thus, the study on the gender differences in the attitudes of the Philippine Normal University (PNU) second year college students towards dancing was found to be timely and significant. The main objective of this study is to determine the gender differences on the attitudes of PNU second year college students towards dancing. Specifically, the study describes the attitude of male and female college students towards dancing in terms of the following attitude scales: (a) perception of teacher’s attitudes, (b) personal confidence about the subject matter, (c) subject is perceived as a female domain, (d) usefulness of the subject content. It also establishes the significant difference on the attitudes of male and female college students towards dancing using the same attitude scales. It is also hypothesize that there is no significant differences that exist among the variables of the study.

METHOD

The participants of the study were two hundred forty nine (249) second year college students of the Philippine Normal University, Cadiz City. They are consisted of one hundred ninety two (192) female and fifty seven (57) male students. In determining the respondents of the study, the researcher used total enumeration. The descriptive method was utilized in this study. The method was deemed appropriate because the study described and compared the gender differences on the attitudes of the respondents towards dancing. The research instrument used in this study was developed and patterned after the Modified Fennema-Sherman Attitude Scale. The scale is consisted of four sub-scales: a confidence scale, a usefulness scale, a scale that measures dancing as a female- dominated subject and the teacher perception scale. Each sub-scale is consisted of twelve items where six items measure positive attitude and six measure negative attitude. The developed instrument was evaluated and validated by a group of experts for comments and suggestions before its full utilization, result of the validation using a form by Good and Scates obtained a value of 4.09 interpreted as very good or high degree of validity. A test re-test method was also used to determine the reliability of the same research instrument and it got a high degree of reliability of 0.85.

In the conduct of the study, the researcher personally administered the research questionnaire to the second year college students. The data were then tallied, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted according to the purpose of the study. Mean and t-test were the statistical tools used in this study. To describe the attitudes of the students, the following scales and interpretations were used:

cores	Verbal Interpretation
.21 - 5.00	Strongly Agree
.41 - 4.20	Agree
.61 - 3.40	Undecided
.81 - 2.60	Disagree
.00 - 1.80	Strongly disagree

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Perception of Teacher's Attitudes

Table 1 shows the attitudes of male and female college students toward dancing in the different areas of concern. As shown in this table, male (M=3.56) and female (M=3.52) students agreed that teacher's attitude has an impact on their perception toward their participation and skills in dancing as indicated in their obtained means. This scenario is also true in other disciplines. This is because teachers are mostly looked-up by their students as models. Teachers are proven to have strong influence on their students' decision in all their school undertakings.

The result is comparable to the results obtained in the study of Constantino, et al, (2009) on female student's perceptions about gender-role stereotypes and their influence on attitude toward physical education. It likewise reveals the connection of teacher's attitude towards students' performance. The purpose was to determine how middle school girls perceive their PE teachers' gender-role expectations and how these perceptions affect the girls' participation in and their attitudes toward physical education. The themes that emerged from the participants' responses and the observations are that (a) the teacher's primary expectations for girls and boys was to increase effort and participation in PE, (b) girls hold gender-role stereotypes, and (c) a competitive atmosphere and peers' behavior influence girls' participation in and attitude toward physical education.

Personal Confidence about the Subject Matter

The same attitudes were shared by both males (M=3.58) and females (M=3.44) participants on their confidence in accomplishing all learning experiences associated with dancing. Though males differ from females in their interest and ability in performing the dance activity, both sexes on the other hand agreed that anybody can develop one's personal confidence if given the opportunity to be taught and trained. The results and observations made are similar to the case of "Dance-in-school-initiative" workshop. The case reported that girls were more engaged in dance more than the boys, participated more frequently, opted in to dance more often, had tried a great variety of dance types had more

attendances, dance classes or clubs. They also expressed far more positive attitudes towards dance and their confidence and feelings about their ability to dance were stronger. In contrast, many boys reported that they never tried dancing before and secondary boys in particular, expressed more negative than positive feelings about participating in dance activities; but after the workshop, immediate changes were found in relation to enjoyment of dance, confidence when dancing, and the desire for further participation in dance lessons. There was also increase in boys' overall confidence.

Usefulness of the Subject Content

Both male and female respondents expressed positive agreement on the benefits one could gain in dancing, as shown in the obtained mean computation of (3.82) and (3.79) respectively. Some studies on gender differences revealed several points of interests among male and female, though they differ in some findings, but acknowledging the benefits of engaging oneself in any worthwhile physical activities was consistent in both sexes. This relates to the finding of Eagly(2007) as cited by Ramiz (2007), stating that among adolescent girls, interest in physical education decreases dramatically and drastically. There is substantial evidence that male and female participants approach and perceive sports in different ways. Generally, Males value the competitive aspect of sports and perceive sports as a potential source of material reward and personal recognition compare to females. Moreover, adolescent boys and girls differ on their personal incentives to participate in physical activities. Both boys and girls declared health- related incentives. For boys however, improving strength and receiving more general health benefits is prominent while girls' participation is focused on being with friends. These different approaches may be related directly to traditional gender-role differences in the form of female's communal, person focused orientation and males' instrumental competitive orientation.

Subject perceived as Female Domain

Results of the study reveals that male (M=3.33) and female (M=3.52) are different on their perception towards dancing in terms of gender association with the subject. Males are uncertain of the idea that dancing is dominated by female, whereas females agreed that dancing is an activity associated with women. In relation, Sanderson (2001) conducted a qualitative research which proves that dancing is an immensely popular activity among young people, yet in many European schools, it is often regarded as that aspect of PE curriculum that is most suited to young children and high school girls. She used a questionnaire which included four Likert type dance attitude scales. Further analysis showed that girls displayed more positive attitudes than boys on the two scales. The table below shows the tabular

Table 1
Attitudes of Male and Female College Students toward Dancing

Attitude Scale	Male Mean	Interpretation	Female Mean	Interpretation
1.Perception of teacher's attitudes	3.56	Agree	3.52	Agree
2.Personal confidence about the subject matter	3.58	Agree	3.44	Agree
3.Subject is perceived as a female domain	3.33	Undecided	3.52	Agree
4. Usefulness of the Subject Content	3.82	Agree	3.79	Agree

Table 2 reveals that when t-test for independent means were used to determine significant differences on the attitudes of male and female college students towards dancing with all the areas taken altogether, the test yielded a t-ratio of $t = 0.087$ at $p = 0.931$ which means that there is no existing significant difference among the variables. However, when each area was considered independently, one area was found out to have significance.

Perception of Teacher's Attitude

It cannot be denied that despite the utilization of technologically advanced gadgets and other latest trends in transmitting knowledge to students, the presence of a teacher inside the classroom still has a big influence on the attitude of students towards the skills that they would love to do and even things that they do not like doing. Changes on the attitudes of students are most likely associated with the teacher's persistent encouragement. Below is a similar case that supports the observation.

This study is focused on pre-service and in-service teachers of primary school P.E. Results of the study proposed that the quality of teaching P.E is associated with teacher's commitment to the subject and the way it is perceived and valued by the teacher. The study also proves that teacher has a considerable influence on the attainment of favorable outcomes for students.

Moreover, the study of Melendez (2004), was able to establish the relationship between teachers attitude towards fitness testing and student performance using the Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment, data revealed the existence of small to moderate relationship between teacher's attitudes and their students' Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment (CFPFA) performance. Significant relationships were also found between each sub-domain of teachers' attitude, and the percentage of students passing all four components of the CFPA. Furthermore, the findings revealed that teacher's attitudes may have some association with students' CPFA performance, and may influence the manner in which the CFPA is administered, and possibly skew students' test performance.

On the contrary, the result of the present investigation on the perception of teacher's attitude reveals that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female ($t = .540$ at $p = .590$) students. This can be associated perhaps with the kind of activity that is being introduced with the students. Wood, et al, (2000) said that teacher's attitude may vary when teaching different subjects as classroom teachers are required to teach a variety of subjects, teachers' attitudes toward different subjects and perceptions of a subject's value need assessment.

Personal Confidence about the Subject Matter

Both male and female students' personal confidence towards dancing do not matter significantly ($t=1.284$ at $p=.200$). The insignificance may hold true when related to the study of Kokac et al. (2005), which states that students have positive attitudes toward P.E because of their desire to be successful or to spend their time without pressure of academic success in P.E lessons. In addition, coeducational P.E courses give equal opportunities to male and female students to participate and interact from each other.

Furthermore, in Turkey, students serve as target audience in all of Physical Education course instruction programs in primary schools, high schools and equivalents. It is stressed that such units have to be practiced together for all students without girl-boy separation (excluding wrestling and soccer branches in girls). Thus, the possibility of different expectations from girls and boys with different physical and emotional status were not considered in the preparation of the program.

It could also be theorized that if a teacher is effective enough in presenting the task to students

with clear instruction to follow and accurate demonstration of skills, it is very possible that students will eventually develop self-confidence in accomplishing the task. Such confidence will be further enhanced if they fully realized the benefits that they could get from studying the skill.

Subject Perceived as a Female Domain

Dance is both physical and athletic activity requiring great skill, strength, and agility. It seems to fit ideally for energetic boys, but in reality, the common perception is banked so much on female dominance. Usually, dance activities in Philippine schools are greatly dominated by women (unless the dance would require a male dancer or partner). Although dancing requires strength and agility, still most male students would prefer joining some challenging activities that would display their muscular prowess over the opposite sex. This observation is true to the present study where dancing is perceived as a female domain activity ($t=-3.171$ at $p=.00$).

Since gender plays an important role in attitudes towards P.E, many studies have compared girls' and boys' attitudes. Hick, et al, (2001) said, boys were found to display more positive attitudes toward physical activities that are challenging and had an element of risk; whereas girls showed favorable attitudes toward physical activities emphasizing aesthetics. However, negative perceptions about men in dance offers benefits for all children that are very similar to those offered by competitive sports: increased strength, coordination, flexibility, and balance. A lasting positive attitude toward fitness and health, increased concentration and focus, a sense of accomplishment through skill mastery and experience with teamwork were also given emphasis.

Anybody who has realized the need or importance of a particular endeavor would not have any second thought of accomplishing such activity. Obviously, the differences on the attitudes of the respondents relevant to the importance of dancing do not have significant difference. Most probably, the premise cited above is one of the reasons. In a typical classroom situation, students, regardless of gender, do not mind doing the task once they find enjoyment in it. This is also possible if students are interested to perform the activity and has identified its benefits. Furthermore, most students are eager to join the activity if it is part of their requirements in P.E.

On the contrary, despite teacher's persistent encouragement and motivation even to the extent of giving them extra points to encourage increase in student's participation seems not enough because there are still students who are very timid and shy to participate. Overcoming such shyness and developing self-confidence are some of the great rewards one could get in dancing. Despite this benefit, some students most especially males still avoids maximum participation. Likewise, words of encouragement from teachers are not enough to motivate them to be on the dance floor. These negative attitudes of male students towards dancing are probably the results of several misconceptions and stereotyping towards dancing. Moreover, such understanding on dancing is usually benchmarked on the ideas of people in the community. Thus, significant difference on the attitudes of male and female in their perception towards dancing as a female domain subject is very apparent.

Statements cited above are parallel to following cases in other countries. There are various reasons why boys in America, Britain, and other countries do not want to do ballet. One observer speculates that probably because little boys like to play with guns and do video games. Even if they have wanted to dance and express their sensitive side, peer pressure keeps them from doing it. Girls are encouraged to do this activity not only by their peers, but also by the rest of society. Boys who enter into the arts are usually encouraged to play an instrument or sing. Male dancers have the stigma of being gay.

Whether or not this is relevant, is not important- the stereotype exists. It's usually not until an individual reaches the point in life that he can deal independently with his feelings, ignore everybody else, that they can do the activity.

Usefulness of the Subject Content

One of the major considerations one has to bear in mind when deciding for a topic in class is the usefulness of the subject content. There are students who are not easily swayed by wrong notions on dancing who are very decisive to understand the nature of the activity giving emphasis on the relevance and the benefits of the activity. This scenario is very much observable in the present study since the usefulness of the subject content was found to be insignificant to both male and female students as indicated in the computed data ($t = .359$ at $p = .720$). Similar to the following paragraph, which poses the situation of boys who took a dance class and eventually come to realize the importance of the dance despite the presence stigmas.

The old stigma of boys being “sissy” or “faggot” if they take dance classes is starting to improve nowadays and even in some cases, boys who take dance class is looked upon by his peers as being a “cool kid”. In Europe, (especially in the Soviet Union) young boys who take ballet and dance classes are looked upon with great respect. In Russia, boys compete fiercely to be in a recognized dance troupe.

The preceding cases as stipulated above can perhaps be attributed to the “nonsignificance of male and female in terms of the usefulness of the subject”, because what is being measured by both sexes are more on positive physiological benefits of the subject content rather than negative ones.

Table 2
Differences on the Attitudes of Male and Female College Students towards Dancing

Attitudes Scale	DF	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Perception of teacher's attitudes	247	0.540	.590	Not Significant
Personal confidence about the subject matter	247	1.284	.200	Not Significant
Subject is perceived as a female domain	247	- 3.171	.002	Significant
Usefulness of the subject content	247	0.359	.720	Not Significant
Taken as a Whole	247	0.087	0.931	Not Significant

Significant at $p < 0.05$ level

CONCLUSION

From the findings of this investigation, it was concluded that gender differences had no significant influence on attitudes toward dancing specifically on the perception of teachers' attitudes, personal confidence about the subject matter, and the usefulness of the subject content. However, the stereotyping of dance as a female dominated activity is still found to be significant.

This study has generated some information and insights, which could provide direction to some of the specific concerns in the teaching of dance in the classroom most especially in a female dominated educational institutions like the Philippine Normal University. Although there is no significant difference found on the attitudes of students in terms of the perception of teacher's attitude, personal confidence about the subject matter and the usefulness of the subject content, still the significance is very obvious in terms of their perception toward the subject as a female dominated subject. Since the teacher plays a very vital role in the delivery of effective dance program, it is highly recommended that teachers should double their effort in looking for innovative approaches in teaching dance as a subject or as a fitness activity. First, the teacher should consider the selection of dances which will showcase styles for both male and female students and at the same time would require muscular strength, power and relevant skills. Second, teachers may also introduce the latest dance craze which is popular in today's generation as well as male dominated dances. To address the issue on stereotyping, video presentations and citations of successful male dance artists may also be used as models to inspire and convince male students to embrace dancing as an activity for all. Female teachers may want to invite male dance teachers to team teach with them. Third, teachers should be aggressive in shifting the perspective of male students towards dancing by making them realize that each has a specific role to play even in dancing. Understanding the essence and nature of dancing could also contribute in the appreciation of the cultural context of dance. Fourth, teachers could also adopt a more flexible dress code for classes which is not typical for females. Fifth, teachers should offer more opportunities for boys to perform and finally, teachers could organize dance clinics, seminar-workshops, dance conferences and symposia that could address students' queries about the different fields of dancing. Such understanding would finally lead the students, particularly the male to appreciate and love dancing.

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