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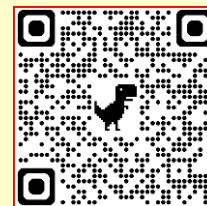
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THE IMPACT OF DANCE SPORT ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Dance is an effective method for promoting the holistic development of young children, encompassing physical, emotional, cognitive, and social aspects. Research has shown that regular dance lessons improve children's flexibility, endurance, coordination, and speed, while also reducing stress, enhancing mood, and fostering positive emotional development.

Dance training stimulates brain and nervous system activity, supporting attention, memory, and creative thinking, which in turn positively influences learning outcomes. Additionally, participation in group dance activities helps develop teamwork, social skills, and self-confidence. Findings from a comparative study indicate that children attending dance clubs exhibited higher physical abilities, greater emotional stability, and better academic performance than those who only participated in regular school classes. These results demonstrate that dance is not only a form of artistic expression but also an educational tool that effectively supports the comprehensive development of children.

KEY WORDS: Dance sport, child development, physical fitness, emotions, cognition, stability, flexibility, coordination, endurance, learning ability, positive mood, healthy lifestyle, art and sport

Main Body

There are various approaches to supporting the development of young children, including movement, sports, and artistic methods. Dance is regarded as a powerful tool that not only develops physical fitness but also supports children's emotional regulation, attention, and creative thinking. Contemporary research shows that dance lessons positively influence children's flexibility, balance, emotional well-being, and cognitive function.

The purpose of this study is to examine how dance lessons affect children's physiological, emotional, and cognitive development, contributing to the promotion of an active lifestyle among primary school students. Dance as an art form has evolved in close connection with human life and labor, with its foundation rooted in

movement. The concept of "movement" should be considered broadly, beyond simple physical actions, as all phenomena in the universe operate with inherent motion and rhythm. Various forms of movement—nature, labor, emotion—directly or indirectly influence human aesthetic, physical, and cognitive development, forming a basis for the evolution of dance. Ancient sages' saying, "life is movement," reflects the essence of human existence. Since the dawn of humanity, movement and labor have been essential not only for physical survival but also for cognitive development. Recognizing rhythm through repetitive movements enhances productivity, revitalizes the mind, and boosts energy, which also forms a foundational principle in dance.

English scholar and dance researcher H. Ellis stated, "Dance is

essentially governed by rhythm and precise rules, and strict discipline ensures that each part adheres to a general law of form and integrates harmoniously.” This definition highlights the characteristics of dance while emphasizing its importance for child development. Through dance, children experience the rhythms of nature, society, and seasonal changes, developing coordination, balance, flexibility, and endurance.

Thus, dance sport serves not only as an artistic expression but also as an educational tool that supports the holistic physical development of children. Rhythm-based instruction strengthens foundational physical abilities, supports proper physical development, and promotes emotional balance and social engagement.

Dance combines aesthetic expression and sports movements, recognized internationally as a distinct sport. Dance training develops core physical abilities—including strength, coordination, speed, flexibility, and endurance—holistically. This comprehensive development is unique among sports, offering benefits for children’s health and growth (Ellis, 2003). Parents enroll children in dance classes for various reasons: some aim for high athletic achievement, others for health benefits, and many for both. In any case, dance is a highly suitable activity for early childhood development.

The ages of 6–9 represent a critical stage in human development, during which children establish the foundations of physical, psychological, and social abilities (Piaget, 1972). Knowledge, habits, and skills acquired at this age serve as pillars for future development, making systematic approaches to holistic development essential (Vygotsky, 1991).

Dance classes cultivate general physical development, including speed, flexibility, endurance, coordination, and work ethic. Game-based dance activities are particularly effective, as children must coordinate their movements with others, enhancing speed, endurance, and coordination simultaneously.

In addition, dance impacts psychological development. Regular lessons foster diligence, focus, discipline, and patience (Smith, 2010). Group participation encourages teamwork, social skills, and self-confidence.

Research shows that dance movements are based not only on repetition but also on rhythm and strict patterns derived from human cultural practices. Movements reflect traditions, religious symbols, and social interactions, evolving through generations.

International and domestic studies indicate:

- Regular dance training significantly enhances children’s strength, coordination, and endurance.
- Emotionally, it promotes self-expression, awareness of group dynamics, and creative thinking.

- Cognitively, it develops rhythm perception, sequence memory, attention, and concentration.

Dance supports holistic development—physical, emotional, cognitive, and social—while also contributing to cultural and aesthetic education. Early participation enhances motor skills, aesthetic perception, social interaction, and self-confidence. Modern research confirms that dance is essential not only in art education but also in overall child development.

Given increasing sedentary lifestyles, organizing dance training effectively offers new opportunities in health, education, and upbringing. Dance enhances aesthetic perception, stimulates brain activity, improves muscular coordination and flexibility, and develops endurance, as confirmed by multiple studies (Hanna, 1987; Stevens, 2000).

Dance promotes balanced development across physical, emotional, and cognitive domains, making it an integrated cultural-sport activity. This synergy corresponds to children’s age, cognition, and social environment, simultaneously supporting development and instilling positive behaviors. Key areas include:

1. Emotional Development

Emotions encompass internal feelings and psychological states, which influence behavior and social interaction. Dance allows children to express, regulate, and release emotions. For example, exercises such as “emotional dance” help children interpret music through movement, promoting emotional literacy and positive behavior. Study results show that dance participants exhibited fewer negative emotions and improved mood after classes.

2. Physical Development

Physical development includes muscle strength, coordination, endurance, and flexibility. Dance engages all major muscle groups, promoting proper posture, movement, and musculoskeletal balance. Regular dance improves flexibility, coordination, speed, and endurance. Thus, dance is not just a form of exercise but a comprehensive activity supporting physical growth and health.

3. Cognitive Development and Academic Achievement

Dance engages both brain hemispheres, enhancing attention, memory, and creative thinking. Research indicates that children who regularly practice dance perform better academically (Stevens, 2000). Our study confirmed that children in dance classes improved reading, writing, and calculation skills, demonstrating that dance fosters cognitive abilities alongside physical growth.

Study Participants:

1. Students attending only regular school classes (n=13)
2. Students participating in dance clubs (n=13)

Table 1. Child Development Indicators (Initial)

Indicator	Group 1: School Only	Group 2: Dance Club	Conclusion
Positive emotional change	10/13 (77%)	12/13 (92%)	Dance promotes emotional stability and positive mood
Physical ability improvement	10/13 (77%)	12/13 (92%)	Dance participants had higher flexibility, coordination, speed, endurance
Academic achievement	10/13 (77%)	11/13 (85%)	Dance positively influences learning

Table 2. Initial Survey Results

Question	Response	%	Number of children
Why is dance important?	Health	26%	7
	Fun	8%	2
	Flexibility	65%	17
Does dance impact health?	Yes	10%	3
	No	17%	4
Do you dance?	Yes	8%	2
	No	92%	24
Do you want to dance well?	Yes	43%	11
	Very much	50%	13
	No	7%	2

Dance enhances emotional expression and management. Exercises such as “my emotions,” “music and emotional movement” develop awareness of self and others. Movement to music releases endorphins, promoting well-being, confidence, and healthy development. Dance engages muscles, encourages correct posture, stimulates the brain, and improves attention and memory, supporting cognitive growth. Participants showed increased confidence, organization, reduced stress, and proactive attitudes.

Overall, dance is a key tool for developing physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and social skills. Early dance training supports artistic perception, health, positive behavior, and cognitive development.

Conclusion

Dance sport promotes positive emotional development, relaxation, joy, and stress reduction. Participants show improved focus, happiness, and activity. Dance enhances flexibility, speed, endurance, coordination, and proper physical growth, forming a foundation for health. Dance activates neural processes, enhancing attention, memory, and creativity. Dance training correlates with better academic performance. Group participation fosters teamwork, social skills, self-confidence, discipline, and patience. Dance is an effective tool for holistic development in children, supporting health, creativity, learning motivation, and positive behavior, helping children become confident, creative, active, and healthy.

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