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## Do Our Folk Dances Still Thrive? Personal Experience and Interest of Students Towards Philippine Traditional Dances as Basis on Strengthening the Love for Culture and the Arts

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### ABSTRACT

Folk Dances are significant part of our culture and tradition as Filipino. According to studies and observations, students' interest towards our traditional dances is evidently decreasing, and further investigation must be conducted, and solutions to be provided to further increase students' love for culture and the arts. This correlational study aims to determine the relationship between the level of personal experience and level of interest of students taking Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) and Bachelor of Performing Arts (BPeA) at City College of Angeles towards Philippine traditional dances. Frequency and percentage were used to determine the number of students who answered the online survey questionnaire, while Pearson  $r$  was used to determine the relationship between personal experience and interest. The study findings shown that most of the respondents has only an average experience in Philippine traditional dances. It was also found out that most of the respondents are interested in learning folk dance in respect to dance steps, music, costume and dance history. Lastly, it was found out that the level of personal experience and level of interest of students to Philippine traditional dances are significantly related to each other. Based on the findings of the study, proposed dance programs/activities were designed which can be part of the projects of the Institute of Education, Arts and Sciences, to intensify students' appreciation to the culture and arts of the Philippines steered by one of the core values of the college – Patrimony. Limitation of this study is, it only focuses on BPEd and BPeA students. Additional respondents from other programs which are not part of this study is highly recommended.

### INTRODUCTION

In today's society, dances from other countries of various dance forms already emerged, and are highly popular to Filipinos across various generation. From social media down to actual stage performances, these kinds of dances are still highly demanded. On the other hand, in the academe, observations show that because of modernization, students learn faster and better in modern and other form of dances (Buedron, 2017). Also, they are more fascinated to dance and watch popular dances than to perform traditional dances (Hernandez, n.d.). The growing of modern culture influence specifically modern hip-hop dances causes the students to sometimes ignore and jeopardize the importance of Philippine's culture and tradition (Reyes et al., 2020). Given these findings, it is obvious that students' interest towards Philippine traditional dances is evidently decreasing. That is why teaching our country's dances and staging of cultural events such as presentation of different Philippine traditional dances has been a challenge to all teachers and Filipino dance enthusiasts. It was emphasized by Dacanay et al. (2021) that it is the task of education to maintain the continuity of culture by handing down the existing cultural experiences, traditions and customs from one generation to other. In this current situation, it is necessary to provide such activities or opportunities to all students to heighten their love for our culture and the arts to preserve our diverse and beautiful dances that were developed by our Filipino ancestors.

Philippine Folk dance, or also known as traditional dance (Şuşu, 2018), of a country, which evolved naturally and spontaneously in connection with everyday activities, and experiences of the people. It also represents and embodies a hybrid cultural identity of the Philippines (Namiki, 2011). Traditional dances are the heartbeat of the Filipino people, and it is also the dances which were originated from different and diverse ethnicities (Chen, 2019) and religion. It is one of the ingredients that make us a whole; and the soul of culture (Yin, 2015). These dances are the representation of the lives of our ancestors before, during and after the rule of colonizers. An integral part and symbol of the Filipino culture (Acuña, 2018), as it depicts the values and way of life and mirror the influence of hundreds of years under foreign rule (Cruz & Tullao, 2015). Traditional dances are a true reflection of daily lives of Filipinos in past centuries (Crawford, n.d.), and as an important part of social life (Uhrinová et al., 2016). It is also an integral part of folk culture and the condition of preserving folk traditions, its worldview and way of life (Egorov et al., 2019). Through this, each person involved is being connected with each other and to our tradition, thus establishing unity, mutual understanding and trust (Indak: Preserving Culture through Dance, n.d.). In summary, these dances keep the culture and history of people alive (Johnston, 2017). In Angeles City, Philippines, as observed, there are only few school-based dance troupes catering traditional dances, this is due to the immense popularity of modern,

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pop and hip-hop. This problem may be attributed to the lesser exposure of the students in different activities that are highly focused on the traditional dances of our country. While schools included folk dance as part of the curriculum specifically for those who are pursuing their degrees in Physical Education and Performing Arts, sometimes it is not enough to cover all the important concepts and to learn different folk dances because of time constraint and also, most of the folk dances are highly intricate in terms of its dance figures. Meaning, professors will take much time to teach the dance steps. This can also be a reason behind their low interest towards our traditional dances.

The college upholds the practice of patrimony as it is one of the core values of the institution. The school would like to inculcate the love for culture and heritage to the students, through learning our tradition in a formal class setting and by being involved in different cultural activities. As physical education and performing arts teacher, and as an agent of transferring our diverse and rich culture to the next generation, it is our main concern to ensure that these dances are being preserved while taking care of the integrity of our culture.

This study aims to determine the relationship between the level of personal experience and interest of students toward Philippine traditional dances. There are number of studies that were already conducted in connection to these components, but this study may still be significant most especially to the current setting where this study will be conducted since the college upholds Patriotism as one of its core values which aims to strengthen the students' love for culture and heritage. This also adds to the few numbers of researches that were conducted in connection to dance education, as dance research only occupies limited sector in the Philippine scholarship (Villaruz, n.d.). The findings of this investigation are highly significant as these will serve as the basis of the researcher for proposed dance and cultural programs that can be provided to students to heighten their interest and engagement in learning and exploring the beauty and diversity of our culture. Furthermore, this study can also contribute to existing literatures to shed light in the relationship between the variables being investigated. Lastly, this research may be replicable, applied to either new or continuing studies with the addition of other variables that are were not mentioned in this paper and formulation of programs which can be undertaken by different set of respondents.

This research aims to determine the relationship between the level of personal experience and interest of Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) and Bachelor of Performing Arts (BPeA) students toward Philippine traditional dances. It aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How may the respondents be described according to their program?
2. How may the level of personal experience of respondents to Philippine Traditional Dances be

described?

3. How may the level of interest of respondents be described in terms of:

- a. Learning the dance steps
- b. Music
- c. Costume
- d. Dance history

4. Is there a statistically significant relationship between level of personal experience to level of interest?

5. What dance program can be proposed based on the study findings?

Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>): There is no significant relationship between the level of personal experience to level of interest of respondents toward Philippine traditional dances.

This study only focuses on the relationship between the level of personal experience and level of interest of respondents toward Philippine traditional dances. This study will utilize the gathering of data via online survey. The respondents for the study are students from 1st-4th year taking Bachelor of Physical Education and Bachelor of Performing Arts under the Institute of Education, Arts and Sciences at City College of Angeles in Pampanga. This study is only limited to all the aforementioned respondents taking the said degree/s and to a local college setting. It delimits that the study may not be generalize to other population.

## METHODS

This study is a descriptive-correlational study which aims to describe the personal experience and interest level of students toward Philippine traditional dances, and to determine the relationship between the two variables. From the result findings that will be obtained throughout the conduct of this study, a dance program will be proposed that will strengthen students' love for culture and arts, specifically the Philippine traditional dances. The respondents for the study are students taking Bachelor of Physical Education and Bachelor of Performing Arts currently enrolled in the Academic year 2021-2022. Raosoft Sample Size Calculator was used to determine the target sample size from the total population of BPEd and BPA students. From the total population of 561, the target sample size for this study is 229 total respondents with 5% margin of error and 95% level of confidence.

There are three questionnaires were used for the conduct of this study. The first part of the questionnaire will describe the degree/program of the respondents, the second and last part will be the instruments which was adapted from (Babiera II, 2014) which aims to describe the level of personal experience, and the level of interest of the respondents in terms of learning the dance steps, music, costume, and dance history.

Descriptive and correlation statistical treatments will be utilized to analyze the data with the application of IBM SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean and standard deviation will be used to describe the respondents' program specialization, level of personal

experience, and level of interest toward Philippine traditional dances. Pearson  $r$  will be used to determine the relationship between the level of personal experience and the level of interest of the respondents.

To facilitate the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained, the researchers will follow a point-scale interpretation to describe responses per item of the respondents' level of personal experience, and level of interest of the respondents in respect to learning the dance steps, music, costume and dance history which

**Table 1.** Descriptive equivalent for the level of personal experience in Philippine Traditional Dances

Range of Weighted Mean	Description
4.50 – 5.00	Very High
3.50 – 4.49	High
2.50 – 3.49	Moderate
1.50 – 2.49	Low
1.00 – 1.49	Very Low

**Table 2.** Descriptive equivalent for the level of interest in Philippine Traditional Dances

Range of Weighted Mean	Description
4.50 – 5.00	Very interested
3.50 – 4.49	Interested
2.50 – 3.49	Somehow interested
1.50 – 2.49	Not interested
1.00 – 1.49	Indifferent

are shown below in Table 1 and 2 respectively, and the correlation coefficient interpretation in Table 3:

Table 4 illustrates the program of the respondents where

**Table 5.** Level of Personal Experience of Students to Philippine Traditional Dances

Personal Experience Questions	Mean	SD	Interpretation	
Elementary Years	1	3.25	1.193	Moderate
	2	3.28	1.145	Moderate
	3	3.23	1.166	Moderate
	4	2.70	1.377	Moderate
	5	2.39	1.377	Low
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>1.052</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Secondary Years	6	3.38	1.242	Moderate
	7	3.46	1.047	Moderate
	8	3.41	1.169	Moderate
	9	3.05	1.445	Moderate
	<b>10</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>1.416</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.20</b>	<b>1.046</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Tertiary Years	11	3.17	1.327	Moderate
	12	3.43	1.261	Moderate
	13	3.59	1.233	High
	14	2.80	1.484	Moderate
	15	2.57	1.431	Moderate
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>1.130</b>	<b>Moderate</b>

During their secondary years, most of the respondents are exposed to a lot of cultural presentation with (M=3.46, SD=1.047) which corresponds to “moderate,” and experience of being a member of a folkloric dance group in school garnered the lowest (M=2.70, SD=1.416) which also corresponds to “moderate.” In general, respondents' experience during their secondary years in Philippine Traditional Dances is “moderate” (M=3.20, SD=1.046).

they belong to. Overall, the total respondents are n=275. The result shown that 73.5% (n=202) from the overall number of respondents are currently enrolled in Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) and 26.5% (n=73) are from Bachelor of Performing Arts (BPeA) program.

Table 5 illustrates the level of personal experience of the respondents in Philippine Traditional Dances. The results shown that during their elementary years, respondents are exposed to a lot of cultural presentation with (M=3.28, SD=1.145) which corresponds to “moderate,” and most of the respondents has “low” experience of being a member in a folkloric dance group in school with (M=2.39, SD=1.377). In summary, most of the respondents' experience during their elementary years in Philippine Traditional Dances is “moderate” (M=2.97, SD=1.052).

**Table 3.** Interpretation of Pearson Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ )

Coefficient Interval	Description
0.00 – 0.199	Very Weak
0.20 – 0.399	Weak
0.40 – 0.599	Medium
0.60 – 0.799	Strong
0.80 – 1.000	Very Strong

## RESULTS

**Table 4.** Students' Program Specialization

Program	f	%
Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd)	202	73.5
Bachelor of Performing Arts (BPeA)	73	26.5
Total (n)	275	100

Lastly, in the tertiary years of the respondents, results shown that most of the respondents are reading folk dance history and literature which they found interesting with (M=3.59, SD=1.233) which corresponds to “high,” and they have “moderate” experience of being a member in a folkloric dance group in school (M=2.57, SD=1.431). Overall, respondents' experience during their tertiary years is “moderate” (M=3.11, SD=1.130).

Table 6 illustrates the level of interest of students to Philippine traditional dances in respect to learning the dance steps, music, costume and dance history. In terms of learning the dance steps, the results shown that most of the respondents are “interested” in learning the dance steps of Spanish influenced dances with (M=3.92,

**Table 6.** Level of Interest of Students to Philippine Traditional Dances

Interest	Question	Mean	SD	Interpretation
In terms of learning the dance steps	Interested in learning the dance steps of Ifugao dances (Ragragsakan, Idaw, etc.)	3.83	1.112	Interested
	Interested in learning the dance steps of Spanish influenced dances (Cariñosa, etc.)	3.92	1.076	Interested
	Interested in learning the dance steps of Muslim Dances (Kasanduayan, etc.)	3.72	1.176	Interested
	Interested in learning the dance steps of Tribal dances (Dugso, etc.)	3.77	1.134	Interested
	Interested in learning the dance steps of Rural Dances (Tinikling, Maglalatik, etc.)	4.14	1.070	Interested
	Total		3.88	1.020
In terms of Music	Interested with the music of Ifugao dances (Ragragsakan, Idaw, etc.)	3.68	1.147	Interested
	Interested with the music of Spanish Influenced dances (Cariñosa, etc.)	3.90	1.144	Interested
	Interested with the music of Muslim dances (Kasanduayan, etc.)	3.64	1.207	Interested
	Interested with the music of Tribal dances (Dugso, etc.)	3.69	1.179	Interested
	Interested with the music of Rural dances (Tinikling, Maglalatik, etc.)	3.99	1.104	Interested
	Total		3.78	1.069
In terms of Costume	Interested with the costume of Ifugao dances (Ragragsakan, Idaw, etc.)	3.89	1.194	Interested
	Interested with the costume of Spanish Influenced dances (Cariñosa, etc.)	4.16	1.052	Interested
	Interested with the costume of Muslim dances (Kasanduayan, etc.)	3.95	1.140	Interested
	Interested with the costume of Tribal dances (Dugso, etc.)	3.92	1.123	Interested
	Interested with the costume of Rural dances (Tinikling, Maglalatik, etc.)	4.19	1.047	Interested
	Total		4.02	1.016
In terms of Dance History	Interested with the history of Ifugao dances (Ragragsakan, Idaw, etc.)	3.89	1.110	Interested
	Interested with the history of Spanish Influenced dances (Cariñosa, etc.)	4.00	1.052	Interested
	Interested with the history of Muslim dances (Kasanduayan, etc.)	3.86	1.116	Interested
	Interested with the history of Tribal dances (Dugso, etc.)	3.85	1.136	Interested
	Interested with the history of Rural dances (Tinikling, Maglalatik, etc.)	4.07	1.054	Interested
	Total		3.93	1.034

SD=1.0176), and “interested” in learning the dance steps of Muslim Dances even though it garnered the lowest among the respondents. In this, most of the respondents are “interested” in learning the dance steps of various Philippine traditional dances (M=3.88, SD=1.020). In terms of Music, results shown that respondents are “interested” with the music of Rural dances with (M=3.99, SD=1.104), and “interested” with the music of Muslim dances even though it garnered the lowest among the respondents. Overall, most of the respondents are

“interested” in the music of various Philippine traditional dances (M=3.78, SD=1.069). In regards to their interest to the costumes in Philippine traditional dances, the result shown that respondents are “interested” with the costume of Rural dances with (M=4.19, SD=1.047), and are “interested” with the costume of Ifugao dances (M=3.92, SD=1.123) even though it has the lowest mean among the respondents. Most of the respondents are “interested” in the costumes of various Philippine Traditional Dances (M=4.02, SD=1.016). Lastly, in terms

to their interest in Dance History of various Philippine Traditional Dances, the result shown that most of the respondents are “interested” with the history of Rural dances (M=4.07, SD=1.054) and still “interested” with the history of Tribal dances (M=3.85, SD=1.136) even it got the lowest mean among the respondents. In summary, most of the respondents are “interested” in studying the dance history of the traditional dances of the Philippines

(M=3.93, SD=1.034).

Table 7 illustrates the relationship between the level of personal experience and interest of students towards Philippine traditional dances. The result shown that there is a significant relationship between level of personal experience in elementary to learning the dance steps ( $r = .498$ , and  $p < .01$ ), music with ( $r = .454$  and  $p < .01$ ), costume ( $r = .475$  and  $p < .01$ ) and dance history ( $r = .425$

**Table 7.** Correlation between Level of Personal Experience and Level of Interest of Students to Philippine Traditional Dances

Correlations	Personal Experience					
	Elementary		Secondary		Tertiary	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
<b>Interest in Philippine Traditional Dances</b>						
Learning the Dance Steps	.498	<0.01	.624	<0.01	.566	<0.01
Music	.454	<0.01	.551	<0.01	.558	<0.01
Costume	.475	<0.01	.551	<0.01	.511	<0.01
Dance History	.425	<0.01	.558	<0.01	.589	<0.01
N	275		275			

\*\**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

and  $p < .01$ ). The level of experience in secondary years was also found out to be statistically significant to learning the dance steps ( $r = .624$  and  $p < .01$ ), music ( $r = .551$  and  $p < .01$ ), costume ( $r = .551$  and  $p < .01$ ) and dance history ( $r = .558$  and  $p < .01$ ). Lastly, the level of experience in tertiary years is significantly related to learning the dance steps ( $r = .566$ , and  $p < .01$ ), music ( $r = .558$ , and  $p < .01$ ), costume ( $r = .511$  and  $p < .01$ ) and dance history ( $r = .589$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Overall, it can be determined that there is a statistically significant relationship between the level of personal experience and level of interest of the students in Philippine traditional dances.

**Discussion**

The overall level of experience of students in Philippine traditional dances was found out to be moderate. Meaning, their overall experience in traditional dance is average. It can be implied that there are only an average number of activity-related that were provided by their former and present institutions in connection to our traditional dances such as being involved as folk-dance presenter/demonstrator, exposure to various cultural presentations, involvement in folk dance competitions inside and outside the school, and being a member of a folkdance group; or on the other hand, it can also be students who wishes not to participate. The finding of this study is not far from the result of Reyes et al. (2020) where BSEd students specializing in MAPEH has low level of personal experience in Philippine traditional dances. In this, it is highly recommended to provide more opportunities to students to enrich their experiences towards traditional dances.

Students are found out to be interested in the traditional dances of the Philippines most specifically in learning the different dance steps from various dances, the music, costume and its history. The finding of this study is different from the results of Reyes et. al. (2020) wherein students on the local of the study have low interest

toward the traditional dance of the Philippines.

In the Philippines, we have various traditional dances that are very much different in terms of its dance steps and how it is being performed. From the results obtained, most of the students are interested in learning the dance steps of our various traditional dances. On one hand, dances that were influenced by Spanish people garnered the highest mean among the five suites. These dances are also called as western influenced dances. Since Angeles City was colonized by Spaniards before, some of our culture and tradition were highly influenced. Our dances are westernized; but the Filipino culture and tradition are still manifested to these dances. In this, it can be stated that the students are interested to know and learn the dance steps that were taught to us by Spaniards. But overall, it is noteworthy that students of City College of Angeles are interested in learning all of the dance steps across the five suites of traditional dances that are mentioned to this study. Students may be provided such opportunities on learning these different dance steps by exposing them through different dance activities where various and unique Philippine traditional dances can be taught to them.

The students were also found out to be interested in the music of our country’s traditional dances. Meanwhile, music from the rural dances garnered the highest mean among the five suites of Philippine traditional dances. These are also called as dances of the countryside which are usually performed by people situated in the barrios. The music accompanies the dance itself. It is an essential in the overall performance of a traditional dance. The music in traditional dances is being played through different musical instruments such as rondalla (for rural and Spanish influenced dances), gangsa (for Ifugao) and alike. There are also dances that are usually being sung by the performers which are called dance with songs – a special classification of our traditional dances. In totality, it

is highly notable that students of City College of Angeles are interested the beauty of the music of our traditional dances. It is highly recommended to provide experiential learning activities that will heighten the interest of the students to our folk music through different seminars/webinars and other music-related activities.

Additionally, it was found out that students are interested in the costume of our traditional dances. Students were interested in learning the costumes of our rural dances. In connection to this, costume plays an important role in the overall aesthetic and cultural value of a specific traditional dance, most especially in the Philippines. A dance costume reflects the social behavior and cultural value of a specific group or ethnicity. It is a very important aspect of cultural performances and the dance itself, have a direct correlation with each other. It also helps in the expression of the mood and nature of the dance, but most importantly, its cultural background. According to (Roberts, 2019), dance costumes in national dances help reflects the role, express its content and embody the depth of dance.

In case of the interest of students toward dance history, study finding revealed that students are interested in learning the history of our traditional dances. History of rural dances the highest mean among the five suites. It is important to note that history allows us to gain a better understanding of the events, challenges and celebrations that helped to form the people who developed our different traditional dances. It also tells us about our society: what they have come and fought through, valued, social constructs religion, climate and among others. These dances are part of our identity as Filipino. These represent the past lives and daily living of our ancestors. In order for us to understand our traditional dances better, we should be able to study its history first and how it was developed by the people in order for us to appreciate it more and embody the dance itself.

Lastly, it was found out that there is a statistically significant relationship between level of personal experience and level of interest of students in Philippine traditional dances. Based on the results there is a moderate significant relationship between personal experience in elementary to learning the dance steps, music, costume and dance history. It was also found out that there is strong significant correlation between personal experience in secondary years to learning the dance steps, music, costume and dance history. A strong significant correlation was also found out between the relationship of personal experience in tertiary years to learning the dance steps, music, costume and dance history. Overall, it can be stated that there is a significant relationship between personal experience and interest of students in Philippine traditional dances. The result of the study was supported by the findings of Reyes et al. (2020), but contradicted the result on the relationship of experience to interest in terms of music and costume. The findings of Javiña (2020) also supported this study specifically the relationship between interest and dance history which is

the interpretation of dance literature which is about the history of dances.

Traditional dances are considered as culture in-action. As Filipino, it is our responsibility to study and learn our traditional dances as it is the way of preserving our culture and a way of passing our beautiful and rich tradition to the next generations. Being able to learn how a traditional dance is performed and its history, it can be a positive indication that our culture still lives on. Based on the results of the study finding, a proposed dance programs for BPEd and BPeA Students is designed to address the needs of the students in order provide meaningful experience and heighten their interest towards Philippine traditional dances which may result to individuals who has a deep love for culture and the arts.

## CONCLUSIONS

After obtaining data from 275 students through an online survey, it was found that most of the respondents have an average experience in Philippine traditional dances from their elementary to tertiary years. On the level of interest of the students, it was found that most of the respondents are interested about learning the dance steps, the music, costume and history of our traditional dances. Lastly, in regards to the relationship between the level of personal experience and interest of the students towards Philippine traditional dances, it was found out that there is a significant relationship between personal experience and interest of BPEd and BPeA Students. Thus, rejecting the null hypothesis formulated for this study. In this, it can be concluded that personal experience has a connection to the interest of the students in particular to Philippine traditional dances. Meaning, the more they obtain experience from their elementary to tertiary years, the higher their interest improves which can result to an intensified appreciation for culture and the arts. Since the school practices patrimony as this is one of the core values of the college, the Institute of Education, Arts and Sciences (IEAS) with the help of the Center for Culture and the Arts (CCA) Office shall design dance programs for BPEd and BPeA, with the support and supervision of administrator and professors, where they can join and involve themselves, which may provide meaningful experience and as well as enjoyment to the students while learning the diversity, richness and beauty of our various dances while maintaining the integrity of our culture.

One of the limitations of this study is that, there are only few numbers of studies that were conducted in connection to these components most especially in a local setting. Also, this only focuses on students taking BPEd and BPeA and does not embody the entire studentry of City College of Angeles. The respondents for this may be extended from other programs which are not part of this study of the same setting and scope for future studies and determine if the results will be similar. Lastly, results of this study may be used as basis for future researches that can be conducted outside the academia (other set of population) to further propagate the importance of our

traditional dances and the preservation of our country's beautiful and rich culture and arts.

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