ISSN 1392-0340 (Print)
ISSN 2029-0551 (Online)
https://doi.org/10.15823/p.2023.152.8

**Pedagogika /** Pedagogy
2023, t. 152, Nr. 4, p. 158–168 / Vol. 152, No. 4, pp. 158–168, 2023

VYTAUTO DIDŽIOJO UNIVERSITETO ŠVIETIMO AKADEMIJA

# Can the Curriculum of Creativity Affect Motivation to Dance?

**Aistė Barbora Ušpurienė**

Vytautas Magnus University, Education Academy, Educational Research Institute, K. Donelaičio g. 52, LT-44242, Kaunas, Lithuania, aiste.uspuriene@vdu.lt

**Annotation.** The aim of this study is to investigate whether the curriculum of creativity affects motivation to dance. The experiment was conducted. Forty dancers were divided into experimental and control groups. The experiment was carried out for sixteen weeks. Dancers in the control group were educated according to a regular programme designed by the teacher, while dancers in the experimental group were given the creativity curriculum. To assess the effect of different curricula on dancers' motivation, a questionnaire survey was conducted at the beginning and at the end of the experiment.

**Keywords:** *creativity curriculum, intrinsic motivation, amotivation, dance.*

## Introduction

In the intricate world of dance education, the role of creativity within the curriculum stands as a pivotal point of discussion (Hanna, 2008; Chappell & Hathaway, 2019). The correlation between a curriculum rich in creative elements and the motivation it instils within dancers is a subject that beckons exploration. As dance remains a pursuit blending technique and artistic expression, understanding how the curriculum shapes and nurtures a dancer's motivation could unravel essential insights for both educators and aspiring dancers alike.

Engaging with the essence of dance education (Risner, 2010; 2014) unveils a multifaceted landscape where technical mastery converges with the unfettered flow of creative energy. The contours of a curriculum, its design, components, and the emphasis it places on fostering creativity, serve as the undercurrent shaping a dancer's journey. It's within

this dance curriculum that the seeds of motivation are sown, sprouting aspirations, perseverance, and love for the art form.

This exploration aims not only to decipher the impact of a creatively enriched curriculum but also to dissect the symbiotic relationship between structured learning and the organic, instinctive creative impulses inherent in dance (Cone, 2009; Cone & Cone, 2011). Furthermore, this examination isn't solely an academic pursuit; it's a revelation that could potentially redefine the paradigms of dance education. Understanding the interplay between structured creativity and the motivation it instills has the potential to reshape not only how dance is taught but also how dancers perceive, embrace, and evolve within the realm of this exquisite art form (Lowatt, 2011; Irving, 2015).

Within the intricate tapestry of dance education, improvisation stands as a pinnacle of creative expression. The ability to move fluidly and spontaneously, guided by emotions and impulses, serves not only as a skill but also as a gateway to boundless creativity. How does the inclusion of improvisational elements within the curriculum shape a dancer's motivation?

This examination is not merely an academic endeavor; it's a revelation that might revolutionize how dance education is perceived and structured. Understanding the nexus between structured creativity, in the form of improvisation, and the intrinsic motivation it evokes could redefine the landscape of dance education, empowering dancers to embrace their art with unparalleled fervor and dedication. The aim of this study is to investigate whether the curriculum of creativity affects motivation to dance.

## Material and Methods

### *Research Sample and Procedures*

An experiment was carried out to achieve the objective of the study. With a theoretically common independent variable – the experimental and control group programme. The dependent variable was the intrinsic motivation of dancers. The aim of the experiment was to investigate the effect of different methods of teaching on the motivation of young dancers. Firstly, an experimental training programme was designed and a convenience sampling method was used to select the participating dance schools for 12–14 years old. The experiment involved 40 dancers who were divided into two groups: experimental and control. Parental consent was obtained from the parents of the children taking part in the experimental programme before the start of the study.The experimental protocol was approved by our Institutional Review Board. Participants and their parents were informed about the purpose of the study and their rights to participate in the study. Study participants were able to decide whether they wanted to participate in the study.

The duration of the experiment was 16 weeks according to the recommendations of the researchers (Miletić, 1999; Kostić et al., 2003; Kautedakis et al., 2007; Uspuriene, 2015; Uspuriene et al., 2019). The dancers in the experimental and control groups were taught three times per week (1.5 hours each). The dancers in the experimental group devoted one time per week to dance-like, but different, creativity-promoting activities:

*Creative Movement Exercises:* Incorporating sessions that focus on exploring diverse movement patterns, rhythm, and body dynamics. This allows dancers to expand their movement vocabulary and break away from conventional forms, fostering a deeper sense of creativity.

*Choreography Workshops:* Providing platforms for dancers to learn the art of choreography. This involves guiding them through the process of creating their own dance pieces, allowing them to express their artistic visions and develop their choreographic skills.

*Improvisation Sessions:* Offering regular improvisation classes that encourage dancers to explore movements freely, allowing for self-expression without the constraints of set choreography. This helps in fostering spontaneity and nurturing individual artistic voices.

*Exploration of Different Dance Styles:* Introducing dancers to various dance styles beyond their primary focus, enabling them to draw inspiration from a wider range of movements, cultures, and artistic traditions.

The control group was taught three times per week under usual conditions, according to the teacher's dance development programme, which did not include any activities to stimulate creativity. In order to determine the effect of different methods and means of teaching, a questionnaire survey was carried out at the beginning and at the end of the experiment to assess the change in dancers' motivation.

The experiment followed the following sequence:

1. to assess the motivation of dancers aged 12–14 to dance;
2. the experimental programme was implemented;
3. the effect of the experimental programme on dance motivation was determined.

The motivation of young dancers (12–14 years old) was measured with The sport motivation scale (SMS) (Pelletier et al., 1995), which is adapted and validated for dancers (Ušpurienė, 2015; Uspuriene & Sniras, 2018). This scale is based on the Self-determination theory (Deci, Ryan, 1985; 2009), which states that motivation has two origins: intrinsic and extrinsic. The Motivation Scale consists of 22 statements, four of which are divided into 6 subscales: intrinsic motivation – *to learn*; intrinsic motivation – *to strive for perfection*; intrinsic motivation – *to experience*; extrinsic motivation – *to identify*; extrinsic motivation – *direct external regulation*; and amotivation. For each statement, respondents were asked to select their answers on a five-point scale ranging from „strongly disagree" (1) to „strongly agree" (5).

### *Data Analysis*

The statistical research data analysis was performed by using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 22.0) programme package. Kholmogorov-Smirnov test and Wilcoxon Z criterion were used for the descriptive index analysis in order to compare two independent samples. Taking into account that the data did not have any normal distribution, the non-parametric Wilcoxon Z criterion was chosen for the evaluation of statistical significance between two groups. Comparing the results of two groups, the statistical significance of differences between the evaluations of motivation indexes in individual groups was calculated. The reliability of differences between appropriate indexes was considered statistically significant when $p < 0.05$.

## Results

The aim of the study was to compare the results of the motivational expression of dancers aged 12-14 in the experimental and control groups. We were most interested in the impact of the creativity curriculum on the intrinsic motivation of dancers who participated in the experiment. The results show that dancers in the experimental group showed a statistically significant increase in the expression of intrinsic motivation subscales "*to learn*" ($Z = -3.189$, $p = 0.001$), "*to achieve perfection*" ($Z = -3.716$, $p = 0.006$), "*to experience*" ($Z = -2.813$, $p = 0.004$) over the 16-week period of the experiment. There was no statistically significant change in the subscales of extrinsic motivation of the dancers in the experimental group during the experimental period: „*direct external regulation*" ($Z = -0.778$, $p = 0.435$), „*to identify*", ($Z = -0.335$, $p = 0.716$). Dancers in the control group showed an increase in the expression of the amotivation subscale ($Z = -1.156$, $p = 0.049$). For the experimental group, the intensity of the "*amotivation*" subscale did not change in a statistically significant way over the 16-week experimental period ($p > 0.05$). It was found that the subscale "*striving for perfection*", indicating intrinsic motivation, was the most pronounced in dancers aged 12–14 years.

**Table 1**

*Mean Evaluation of Alternation of the Subscales of Motivation in 12–14 Years Old Dancers During the 16-Week Period of the Experiment in Points*

| Subscales of motivation | Researched group | Before the experiment | After the experiment | Z | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Intrinsic motivation – to find out. | Experimental group (n=20) | 9.00 | 11.54 | -3.189 | 0.001 |
| | Control group (n=20) | 9.05 | 9.34 | -2.999 | 0.061 |
| Intrinsic motivation – to strive for perfection. | Experimental group (n=20) | 18.99 | 21.81 | -3.716 | 0.006 |
| | Control group (n=20) | 19.05 | 20.01 | -0.396 | 0.691 |
| Intrinsic motivation – to experience. | Experimental group (n=20) | 8.68 | 10.12 | -2.813 | 0.004 |
| | Control group (n=20) | 8.25 | 8.45 | -0.178 | 0.795 |
| Extrinsic motivation – direct external regulation. | Experimental group (n=20) | 14.32 | 14.72 | -0.778 | 0.435 |
| | Control group (n=20) | 14.1 | 14.8 | -1.207 | 0.193 |
| Extrinsic motivation – to identify. | Experimental group (n=20) | 13.05 | 13.55 | -0.335 | 0.716 |
| | Control group (n=20) | 13.75 | 13.06 | -0.231 | 0.818 |
| Amotivation –nonmotivation. | Experimental group (n=20) | 7.7 | 7.9 | -0.635 | 0.533 |
| | Control group (n=20) | 8.5 | 9.3 | -1.156 | 0.049 |

*Note*. N = 40

Table 2 shows the changes in the endorsement of the „*strive for perfection*“ subscale of dancers' motivation over the 16-week experimental period.

For the experimental group, there was a significant increase in agreement with the following subscale statements over the 16-week experimental period (Table 2): „*I enjoy learning new moves while dancing*“ (increase of 1.78 points (73%)), „*I dance because I enjoy improving my weaknesses*“ (increase of 0. 5 points (15%)), „*I dance because I enjoy learning new moves that I didn't know before*“ (increase of 0.9 points (29%)), „*I dance because I feel satisfaction in performing new and challenging dance moves*“ (increase of 0.8 points (21%)).

**Table 2**

*Mean Evaluation of Alternation of Acceptance of the Statements of the Subscale of the Intrinsic Motivation "To Strive for Perfection" in Juvenile (12–14 Years Old) Sports Dancers During the 16-Week Period of the Experiment in Points*

| Subscales of motivation | Researched group | Before the experiment | After the experiment | Z | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I enjoy learning new moves while dancing. | Experimental group (N=20) | 2.43 | 4.21 | -2.632 | 0.007 |
| | Control group (N=20) | 2.86 | 3.25 | -1.002 | 0.287 |
| I dance because I enjoy improving my weaknesses. | Experimental group (N=20) | 3.41 | 3.91 | -2.685 | 0.008 |
| | Control group (N=20) | 3.01 | 3.45 | -1.355 | 0.145 |
| I dance because I enjoy learning new moves that I didn't know before. | Experimental group (N=20) | 3.12 | 4.02 | -2.312 | 0.009 |
| | Control group (N=20) | 3.01 | 3.12 | 0.010 | 0.998 |
| I dance because I really like dance music. | Experimental group (N=20) | 3.02 | 3.20 | -1.332 | 0.092 |
| | Control group (N=20) | 3.00 | 3.00 | 0.000 | 1.000 |
| I dance because I feel satisfaction in performing new and challenging dance moves. | Experimental group (N=20) | 3.8 | 4.6 | -3.207 | 0.001 |
| | Control group (N=20) | 3.6 | 3.8 | -0.226 | 0.523 |
| I feel great pleasure when moving to dance music.. | Experimental group (N=20) | 4.2 | 4.6 | -1.189 | 0.122 |
| | Control group (N=20) | 3.8 | 4.0 | -1.747 | 0.066 |

*Note*. N = 40

## Discussion

This study is one of the few to focus on the specificities of motivational expression in dancers aged 12–14, and to assess whether a creativity curriculum and the selection of appropriate lesson content to meet the needs of dancers can promote motivational expression. It was hypothesised that a creativity curriculum based on self-determination theory would enhance motivation in dancers aged 12–14. The results of the experiment suggest that the hypothesis was supported. It was found that a creativity curriculum with a variety of approaches can be successfully used to enhance their motivation.

Meanwhile, insights from previous research suggest that motivation is closely related to learning outcomes (Daniels et al., 2009; Puente-Diaz, 2012). Motivation determines why young dancers perform the same task differently under the same conditions and why gifted children perform the same task differently. For example, (Uspuriene, 2015; Uspuriene & Sniras, 2018) have found that technical training is often the predominant focus of competitive dance training, and that monotonous, uniform tasks can lead dancers to be overly competitive or even unwilling to dance.

The data show that for dancers aged 12-14 in the 16-week experiment, the intensity of the two subscales of extrinsic motivation "*direct external regulation*" and "*identify*" and the intrinsic motivation subscale "*strive for perfection*" was highest at the beginning of the pedagogical experiment. The other intrinsic motivation subscales "*to know*" and "*to experience*" were less intense ($p < 0.05$). Meanwhile, in a study (Quested, 2014) with dancers, it is noted that the expression of the intrinsic motivation subscales "*to know*" and "*to strive for perfection*" is equally intense, while the expression of the subscale "*to experience*" is less so.

Looking at the results of the experiment, can be said that the application of a creativity-enhancing programme in dance classes is associated with the promotion of motivational expression in dancers aged 12–14. The dancers in the experimental group showed statistically significant differences ($p < 0.05$) in all subscales of intrinsic motivation – "*to learn*", "*to achieve perfection*", "*to experience*" – during the 16-week experiment. Thus, it is possible to agree with the findings of other researchers (Kerr, 2014) that it is appropriate to implement similar curricula with a variety of tools and methods, and that one of the most important factors that stimulate motivation is the teacher's ability to implement the content of the lessons in a qualitative and creative way.

Meanwhile, in the development of dancers, there is a contradiction in terms of the priority given to the pursuit of excellence and performance or to the development of the children's personality and awareness of their needs (Quested, 2014). However, the results of the study showed that it is possible to reconcile the two, as the creativity-enhancing content of the lessons, which responded to the needs of the young dancers, increased the expression of intrinsic motivation in them. However, it has been argued that achievement motivation is also important in dance, as it is a form of performance motivation, which is related to the need to improve one's skills and to achieve results (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2009; Moreno-Murcia, 2013).

Similar studies show that girls and boys between the ages of 12 and 14 are very active and willing to participate in a wide range of activities (Armstrong & Van Mechelen, 2008). The findings of the present study revealed that during the 16-week experimental period, the expression of the intrinsic motivation subscales showed a statistically significant improvement ($p < 0.05$) in both girls and boys groups.

Before the experiment, the intrinsic motivation of girls and boys in these groups did not differ significantly ($p > 0.05$). However, there are studies that have found statistically

significant differences in intrinsic motivation between subjects of different genders: for example, (Amado et al., 2017) report that adolescent girls are more motivated to dance than boys. This study confirmed that appropriate selection of class content integrating methods that promote creativity and respond to the needs of young dancers can positively influence motivation.

However, a number of important limitations of this study cannot be overlooked. Firstly, the sample is made up of dancers from only one dance school. I believe that in future similar studies a larger representative sample should be sought. Secondly, the creativity programme was applied to dancers aged 12–14, which raises doubts about the applicability of the results to other samples. Thirdly, the results are presented before and after the experiment, and it may be appropriate for similar work to present data six months or more after the experiment in order to assess the long-term effectiveness of the curriculum. It can be stated that these shortcomings make it difficult to interpret the results of the study more broadly.

In this context, it is reasonable to suggest that further research is needed to investigate how long it takes for young dancers to stabilise their motivation in lessons or competitions after a creativity curriculum. I believe that an analysis of the effectiveness of curriculum methods when focusing on the motivation of young dancers through the individualisation of the curriculum could be a direction for further research. Future researchers should also consider whether similar curricula are always targeted in their content and whether they are appropriate for developing young dancers' motivational constructs. Long-term, similar research is needed, in addition to the need for dance educators and their students to understand how effective they can be in the face of difficulties when motivation to dance is lost.

## Conclusion

In summary, the sixteen-week experiment showed the effect of the creativity programme on the motivation of dancers aged 12–14: the variety of methods used in the experiment had a positive impact on dancers' motivation. After the creativity-enhancing curriculum, the experimental group showed statistically significant changes on the expression of subscales indicating intrinsic motivation: "*to learn*", "*to strive for perfection*", "*to experience*".

## References


Amado, D., Sánchez-Miguel, P. A., & Molero, P. (2017). Creativity associated with the application of a motivational intervention programme for the teaching of dance at school and its effect on the both genders. *PLoS one*, *12*(3), e0174393. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0178891

Armstrong, N., & Van Mechelen, W. (2008). *Paediatric exercise science and medicine*. University Press.

Chappell, K. A., & Hathaway, C. (2019). *Creativity and dance education research*. University Press.

Cone, T. P., & Cone, S. L. (2011). Strategies for teaching dancers of all abilities. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, *82*(2), 24–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2011.10598578

Daniels, L. M, Pekrun, R., Stupnisky, R. H., Haynes, T. L., Perry, R. P., & Newall, N. E. (2009). A longitudinal analysis of achievement goals: From affective antecedents to emotional effects and achievement outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, *101*(4), 948–963. https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/a0016096

Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. Plenum.

Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (2009). The „what" and „why" of goal pursuits: human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, *11*(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01

Doug Risner, Ph. D. M. F. A. (2010). Dance education matters: rebuilding postsecondary dance education for twenty-first century relevance and resonance. *Journal of Dance Education*, *10*(4), 95–10. https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2010.529761

Hanna, J. L. (2008). A nonverbal language for imagining and learning: dance education in K–12 curriculum. *Educational Researcher*, *37*(8), 491–506. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X083260322

Irving, L. T. (2015). Teaching statistics using dance and movement. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *6*(50), 1–3. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00050

Kautedakis, Y., Hukam, H., Metsios, G., Nevill, A., Giakas, G., & Jamurtas A. (2007). The effects of three months of aerobic and strength training on selected performance-and fitness-related parameters in modern dance students. *The Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research*, *21*(3), 808–812. https://journals.lww.com/nsca-jscr/abstract/2007/08000/the_effects_of_three_months_of_aerobic_and.26.aspx

Kerr, J. H. (2014). *Motivation and emotion in sport: Reversal theory.* Psychology Press.

Kostić, R., Miletić, D., Jocić, D., & Uzunović, S. (2003). The influence of dance structures on the motor abilities of preschool children. Facta Universitatis. *Series Physical Education and Sport*, *1*(9), 83–90. https://scindeks.ceon.rs/article.aspx?artid=0354-47450209083K

Lovatt, P. (2011). Dance confidence, age and gender. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *50*(5), 668–672. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.12.014

Miletić, D. (1999). Factors of successfulness with folk dances. *Fourth ECSS Proceedings Book. Rome, Italy*, 374–379.

Moreno-Murcia, J. A., Gimeno, E. C., Hernández, E. H., Belan-do Pedreño, N., & Rodrigez Marín, J. J. (2013). Motivational profiles in physical education and their relation to the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Sports Science & Medicine*, *12*(3), 551–558. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3772601/

Pelletier, L. G., Fortier, M. S., Vallerand, R. J., Tusan, K. M., Briere, N. M., & Blais, M. R. (1995). Toward a new measure of intrinsic motivation, extrinsis motivation and amotivation in sports: The sport motivation scale (SMS). *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, *17*(1), 35–53.

Puente-Diaz, R. (2012). The effect of achievement goals on enjoyment, effort, satisfaction and performance. *International Journal of Psychology*, *47*(2), 102–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/00207594.2011.585159

Quested, E. (2014). Profiles of perfectionism, motivation, and self-evaluations among dancers: An extended analysis of Cumming and Duda (2012). *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, *45*(4), 349–368. http://www.ijsp-online.com/abstract/view/45/349

Risner, D. (2014). Bullying victimisation and social support of adolescent male dance students: an analysis of findings. *Research in Dance Education*, *15*(2), 179–201. https://doi.org/10.1080/14647893.2014.891847

Cone, T. P. (2009). Following their lead: supporting children's ideas for creating dances. *Journal of Dance Education*, *9*(3), 81–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2009.10387390

Ušpurienė, B. A. (2015). *Modeling of coaching in juvenile sports dancers (9–11) years old.* [Doctoral dissertation. Lithuanian Sports University]. Lithuanian Sports University.

Uspuriene, A. B. P., Malinauskas, R. K., & Sniras, S. A. (2019). Effects of education programs on dance sport performance in youth dancers. *European Journal of Contemporary Education*, *8*(1), 136–143. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1212298

Uspuriene, B. A., & Sniras, S. A. (2018). Effect of sports training programme on juvenile sports dancers' motivation. *Pedagogics, Psychology, Medical-Biological Problems of Physical Training and Sports*, (3), 163–169. https://doi.org/10.15561/18189172.2018.0308

# Ar kūrybiškumą skatinanti programa gali motyvuoti šokti?

**Aistė Barbora Ušpurienė**

Vytauto Didžiojo universitetas, Švietimo akademija, Edukologijos tyrimų institutas, K. Donelaičio g. 52, LT-44242, Kaunas, Lietuva, aiste.uspuriene@vdu.lt

## Santrauka

Šio tyrimo tikslas – išsiaiškinti, ar kūrybiškumą skatinanti programa gali motyvuoti šokti. Tyrimo tikslui pasiekti buvo atliktas pedagoginis eksperimentas. 40 šokėjų (12–14 metų) buvo suskirstyti į dvi grupes: eksperimentinę ir kontrolinę. Eksperimentas buvo

vykdomas 16 savaičių. Kontrolinės grupės šokėjai buvo ugdomi pagal įprastą mokytojo sudarytą programą, o eksperimentinės grupės šokėjams buvo taikoma kūrybiškumą skatinanti programa. Siekiant įvertinti skirtingų mokymo programų poveikį šokėjų motyvacijai, eksperimento pradžioje ir pabaigoje buvo atlikta anketinė apklausa. Kaip parodė tyrimo rezultatai, skirtingos mokymo programos darė poveikį skirtingų subkategorijų šokėjų motyvacijai tiek atsižvelgiant į jaunųjų šokėjų lytį, tiek į jų motyvaciją prieš eksperimentą. Kūrybiškumą skatinančios programos įtraukimas į šokėjų ugdymo programą labiausiai paveikė vidinės motyvacijos subkategoriją mokytis ir identifikuotis. Įprastinė šokėjų ugdymo programa didžiausią poveikį darė motyvacijos trūkumo (angl. *Amotivation*) subkategorijai.

**Esminiai žodžiai:** *kūrybiškumo programa, vidinė motyvacija, motyvacijos trūkumas (angl. Amotivation), šokis.*

Gauta 2023 12 01 / Received 01 12 2023
Priimta 2023 12 18 / Accepted 18 12 2023